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Buddhist Tree: From the Narrative in Tipitaka to the Practical Use in Landscape Design

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Abstract

Tree is a type of plant frequently used in landscape design. The Bodhi tree is recognized as symbolic of Buddhism and has been planted in many Buddhist places. However, there are more trees related to Buddhism and also various usages of trees in the landscape of Buddhist places. This research seeks to explore the relation between trees mentioned in Tipitaka and their usage in the landscape, aiming to identify more options for tree usage in Buddhist places. Through the document research focusing on trees related to Buddha, especially the ones providing space underneath for sitting meditation, thirty-three trees have been found, e.g. Bodhi tree, Sal tree, Banyan tree, Indian oak, Milky tree, and Mango tree. This finding implies the benefit of trees for meditation. Following the observation of trees in temples in Bangkok, Thailand, along with the analysis applying the landscape approach, the use of Buddhist trees can be applied in three aspects: spiritual, functional, and environmental aspect. For the spiritual aspect, trees can be sacred and used as a symbol referring to Buddha or his dharma. In terms of physical function, trees can create outdoor space for various activities, provide shade space for sitting, and serve as a visual element. For the environmental aspect, trees can absorb pollution, support site irrigation, enhance microclimate conditions, etc. It is suggested that all the thirty-three trees found in Tipitaka are selected to be appropriately planted in Buddhist places to create a more meaningful and functional use of Buddhist trees in landscape design.

Keywords: Buddhism, Landscape Design, Tipitaka, Tree

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Introduction

Plants used in landscape architectural design can be classified into 5 types: tree, shrub, vine or liana, groundcover, and aquatic plant. This category is mainly due to the physical appearance of the plants. Tree is a woody plant with a single trunk straight up from the ground to a certain height, then the branches spread out. Tree height is at least 3 meters. Trees have a lifespan of many years and can be used to provide shade, control view, prevent wind, etc. (Arayanimitsakul, 2015a; Veesommai, Siriphanich, Menakanit, & Pichakum, 1999). Therefore, trees are highly useful and can be considered as a main landscape element.

The use of trees in Buddhist places, for example, in the Sukhothai period, trees with fragrant flowers were usually planted as an offering to bring devotion to Buddha. The temples would have planted large trees to provide shade, for the advantage that they have a long life and are easy to maintain (Sukawattana, 1995). Trees are suitable for a hot and humid climate thus the temples should have planted trees for shade and a natural atmosphere. They may be connected to the teachings, to help creating a place for listening to the Dharma in quiet and peaceful surroundings with good ventilation (Poshyanandana, 2015).

In terms of trees in Buddhism, there are several trees related to the Buddha's life, mostly associated with major events such as birth, enlightenment, the first teaching, and passing away (Cheykiwong, 2008; Nanakorn, 2019). The Bodhi tree and the Sal tree are well recognized as symbolic of Buddhism and consequently have been planted in many Buddhist places. But there are other trees related to Buddhism that could be perceived as Buddhist sacred trees. For that reason, it is important to study and collect information on trees mentioned in Tipitaka, both the names and their context, aiming to understand the usefulness of those trees.

This research contains two objectives: (1) to study and collect information on trees in Tipitaka and analyze the use of trees using the landscape architectural design approach and (2) to suggest the practical use of trees in landscape design. This is a documentary research by studying and collecting information on trees that appear in Tipitaka which is regarded as the primary source of information on Theravada Buddhism. The data analysis using the landscape architectural design approach along with the content analysis, together with the field study to observe the use of trees in the temples in Bangkok, Thailand, in order to suggest more options for tree usage in Buddhist places.

Trees in Tipitaka

The search through Thai Tripitaka, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University edition (Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 1996) which comprises 45 volumes (volume and page, i.e. vol./p., are indicated in the blanket after the reference number, e.g. [7, 10/5] means Thai Tripitaka volume 7 page 5), obtains information on trees that related to Buddha, namely Buddhist sacred tree. Thirty-three names of trees were found. These trees are in various contexts as follows:

The enlightenment of all Buddhas occurs under the trees as mentioned in Tipitaka, in Maha Pathana Sutra states that Vipassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Khae Foi tree, Sikhi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ma Muang tree, Vessaphu Buddha attained enlightenment under the Sala tree, Kakusanda Buddha attained enlightenment under the Suek tree, Konagamana Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ma Duea tree, Kassapa Buddha

attained enlightenment under the Sai tree, and Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under the Assattha tree [7, 10/3-4]. In Khuddaka Nikaya Phutthawong Jariyapitaka states that Dipangkorn Buddha attained enlightenment under the Liap tree [7, 33/165], Kondanya Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ka Nang tree [7, 33/600], Mangkala Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ka Ka Thing tree [7, 33/606], Sumana Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ka Ka Thing tree [7, 33/611], Revata Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ka Ka Thing tree [7, 33/617], Sobita Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ka Ka Thing tree [7, 33/622], Anomadassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Rok Fa tree [7, 33/627], Pathum Buddha attained enlightenment under the Oi Chaang tree [7, 33/632], Narada Buddha attained enlightenment under the Oi Chaang tree [7, 33/638], Pathumuttra Buddha attained enlightenment under the Son tree [7, 33/644], Sumedha Buddha attained enlightenment under the Sa Dao tree [7, 33/649], Sujata Buddha attained enlightenment under the Pai tree [7, 33/654], Piyadassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Kum tree [7, 33/659], Atthadassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Cham Pa tree [7, 33/664], Dharmadassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ma Klam Luang tree [7, 33/669], Siddhartha Buddha attained enlightenment under the Kan Ni Ka tree [7, 33/674], Dhissa Buddha attained enlightenment under the Pra Du tree [7, 33/679], Pussa Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ma Kham Pom tree [7, 33/684], Vipassi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Khae Foi tree [7, 33/689], Sikhi Buddha attained enlightenment under the Kum Bok tree [7, 33/694], Vessaphu Buddha attained enlightenment under the Oi Chaang tree [7, 33/700], Kakusanda Buddha attained enlightenment under the Suek tree [7, 33/705], Konagamana Buddha attained enlightenment under the Ma Duea tree [7, 33/710], Kassapa Buddha attained enlightenment under the Sai tree [7, 33/716], Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment under the Assatthaphruek tree [7, 33/714]. This finding implies the benefit of trees for meditation and attainment of enlightenment eventually.

Gautama Buddha was born under the Sala tree in Lumpini Forest and attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree [7, 37/802/839]. He passed away and accessed nirvana between the two Sala trees in Kushinagar [7, 10/145], at that time, both Sala trees were in full bloom and the flowers fell on his body to worship the Buddha [7, 10/147-148].

A single tree related to the dwelling place of Gautama Buddha, for example, after the enlightenment, he was seated at the Bodhipruek tree near the bank of the Neranjara River [7, 4/1], then went to sit and contemplate under the Ajapala Ni Khrot tree, the Mucalinda or Chik tree, and the Rajayatana (Ked) tree consequently [7, 4/7-9]. There are some trees mentioned as places for sitting, contemplating, resting, and conversing on dharma such as the Gautama Ni Khrot tree in Rajagir [7, 10/128], the Rajasala tree in Supakwan Forest in Ukkattha [7, 10/5], the beautiful Rang tree in Palilayaka Forest in Kosambi [7, 17/130], the Sa Dao tree in Werancha [7, 23/219], and the Sai tree named Supradita Jatiya in Suan Tan Num, Rajgir [7, 4/55].

A group of trees or groves related to the dwelling place of Gautama Buddha for example the forest of Thong Kwao tree in Kosol [7, 13/186], the Pai forest in Kimila [7, 19/465], Sisapawan or the See Siat forest in Alwi [7, 20/189], Pesakalamikathayawan or the Phe Ka forest in Pakka [7, 22/436], the Sala forest named Thepwan in Kosol [7, 13/531], and the Ma Muang (mango) orchard of Chewaka Komaraphat or Chewakampawan in Rajgir [7, 23/270]. There are also several mango orchards mentioned in Tipitaka, e.g. Amphawan in Pava, Amphapaliwan in Vesali, and mango orchard of Pavarik Sedhi in Nalanda.

All the tree names found in Tipitaka are verified with the book of Thai Plant Names (Smitinand, 2014), the main resource for plant botany in Thailand. Details of all thirty-three trees consist of the name as in Tipitaka, scientific name, and volume of Tipitaka in which the tree appears are shown in Table 1: Trees in Tipitaka that related to Buddha.

No.	Name in Tipitaka	Scientific Name	Volume of Tipitaka
1	Kan ni ka	*Pterospermum acerifolium* (L.) Willd.	27 32
2	Ka ka thing (Kra thing)	*Calophyllum inophyllum* L.	28 32 33
3	Kum (Kum nam)	*Crateva religiosa* G. Forst.	4 26 27 28 32 33
4	Kum bok	*Crateva adansonii* DC. subsp. trifoliate (Roxb.) Jacobs	33
5	Ka nang	*Homalium tomentosum* (Vent.) Benth.	28 33
6	Khae foi	*Stereospermum cylindricum* Pierre ex P. Dop.	10 26 27 28 32 33
7	Cham pa	*Magnolia champaca* (L.) Baill. ex Pierre	28 32 33
8	Chik, Mucalinda	*Barringtonia acutangula* (L.) Gaertn.	4 25 28
9	Chang nao	*Ochna integerrima* (Lour.) Merr.	27 28 32
10	Suek, Phruek	*Albizia lebbeck* (L.) Benth.	10 18 26 28 32 33
11	Thong kwao	*Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.	13 18 19 27 28 32 33
12	Thong laang, Parijata	*Erythrina subumbrans* (Hassk.) Merr.	4 14 19 23 25-30 32 33
13	Sai	*Ficus annulata* Blume	2 4 7 10 11 13 15 18 19 22 25-28 32 33
14	Ni khrot	*Ficus benghalensis* L.	4 10 15 19 21 25 33
15	Pra du	*Pterocarpus macrocarpus* Kurz	28 32 33
16	Pai	*Bambusa* spp.	1 2 5 7 10 13 15 16 19 21 22 23 25-30 32 33 35
17	Phe ka	*Oroxylum indicum* (L.) Benth. ex Kurz	22 23 26
18	Bodhi, Pho, Assattha phruek	*Ficus religiosa* L.	2 4 10 12 13 18 19 25 27-33
19	Ma duea	*Ficus racemosa* L.	2 10 13 15 18 19 23 25-30 32 33
20	Ma klam	*Adenanthera pavonina* L.	27 32 33
21	Ma kham pom	*Phyllanthus emblica* L.	2 4 5 7 15 19 24-28 32 33
22	Ma tum	*Aegle marmelos* (L.) Correa ex Roxb.	10 12 13 15 17 24 25 27-29 32 33
23	Ma muang	*Mangifera indica* L.	1 2 4 5 7 9-11 13 17 18 21-29 32 33 36 37
24	Rok fa	*Terminalia alata* B. Heyne ex Roth	28 32 33
25	Rang	*Shorea siamensis* Miq.	5 12 17 21 25 27 28 32
26	Rajayatana (Ked)	*Manilkara hexandra* (Roxb.) Dubard	27 28 32 33
27	Liap	*Ficus subpisocarpa* Gagnep. subsp. Subpisocarpa	19 27 32 33
28	Son	*Dacrydium elatum* (Roxb.) Wall. ex Hook.	27 28 32 33
29	Sa dao	*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.	1 5 20 23 24 26 27 31-33
30	Sala	*Shorea robusta* C. F. Gaertn.	10 12 13 15 19 20 22 23 25-28 32 33 37
31	See siat	*Acacia catechu* (L. f.) Willd.	10 20 27 28
32	Wa	*Syzygium cumini* (L.) Skeels	1 4 12 13 19 26-29 32 33 37
33	Oi chaang	*Lannea coromandelica* (Houtt.) Merr.	26-28 33

Table 1: Trees in Tipitaka that related to Buddha.

Of all the trees related to Buddha that are found in Tipitaka, some trees are significant due to their connection with Gautama Buddha. Pho, Assattha Phruek, Assattha, or Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa* L.), Figure 1, is relevant to the enlightenment. Sala tree or Sal tree (*Shorea robusta* C. F. Gaertn.), Figure 2, is relevant to the birth and demise. Ni Khrot or Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis* L.), Figure 3, Chik, Mucalinda, or Indian oak (*Barringtonia acutangula* (L.) Gaertn.), Figure 4, and Rajayatana, Ked, or Milky tree (*Manilkara hexandra* (Roxb.) Dubardfor), Figure 5, are relevant to contemplation after the enlightenment. Ma Muang or Mango tree (*Mangifera indica* L.), Figure 6, is relevant to several dwelling places.

Figure 1: Bodhi tree.

Figure 2: Sal tree.
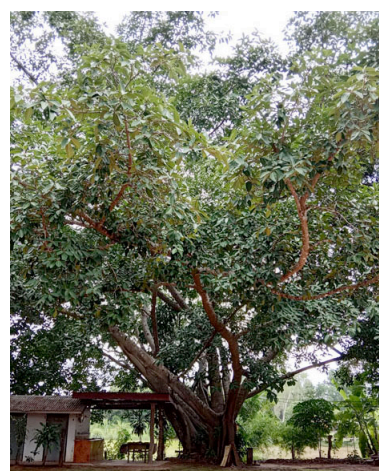
Figure 3: Banyan tree.

Figure 4: Indian oak.

Figure 5: Milky tree.

Figure 6: Mango tree.

Analysis of trees in relation to open space and usage reveals that the area under the tree is suitable and present for sitting because of shade and natural surroundings, whether by a single tree or a group of trees. A tree can provide underneath canopy space for usage, such as sitting and meditating, listening to dharma or conversing on dharma, and resting. The appropriate tree, therefore, should be large with a broad canopy for shade, no brittle branches, and not too many fallen leaves, flowers, or fruits.

The Use of Trees in Landscape Design

A tree is a natural landscape element, be a view and good scenery, helps to create a comfort zone and pleasant atmosphere, enhance the ecosystem and a better environment. The use of trees in landscape architecture generally concerns space usage, desired atmosphere, and

changes, as it is a living thing that constantly changes, such as growing, spreading branches, and flowering. The selection for usage must also take into account the suitable soil and weather conditions (Arayanimitsakul, 2015b). Therefore, the considerations for using trees in landscape architectural design consist of:

- Characteristics of trees: size, leave, shape and density of canopy, flower, fruit, stem, root, growth rate, longevity, durability, and propagation (Arayanimitsakul, 2015a; Arayanimitsakul, 2015b).
- Benefits of trees: functional usage, aesthetic, ecology (Arayanimitsakul, 2015a; Arayanimitsakul, 2015b; Harris & Dines, 1998).
- The balance of utility, price, durability, safety, and maintenance (Harris & Dines, 1998).

Landscape architecture encompasses the planning of the use of plants including tree, shrub, vine or liana, groundcover, and aquatic plant (Harris, 2006). Planting design includes identification of location, type of plant, and amount. According to the information from Tipitaka, the observation of trees in temples in Bangkok, Thailand, and the landscape analysis, the application of Buddhist sacred trees in the landscape can be divided into 3 aspects: spiritual aspect, functional aspect, and environmental aspect.

A. Spiritual Aspect

Trees can be sacred and used as a symbol referring to Buddha or his dharma. This is a form of using trees in temples and other Buddhist places for a long time. However, only a few trees have been used in this aspect, such as the Bodhi tree and the Sal tree. There are more sacred trees as stated in Tipitaka that can be used in order to refer or worship to Buddha or to convey Dharma. It can also help to promote knowledge of Buddhism and enhance understanding of important trees in Buddhism. It is possible to plant a single tree as a highlight of the area, or to plant trees in groups or in rows to be suitable for certain usage. The consideration of the location and number of trees depends on the condition of the area as the main factor.

B. Functional Aspect

In terms of physical function, trees can create outdoor rooms for various activities, provide shading space for sitting, and serve as landmarks or other visual elements. The use of trees for functional purpose can enhance the effectiveness of a master plan or layout. Trees can be used to: divide the land use area, create space, create awareness of the area, manage view or visual quality, emphasize main buildings, create a good environment, and control access. For example, planting trees around the land plot as a buffer, screening the view and preventing interference from the outside, using flowering trees at the entrance to emphasize the gateway and create a visual point, planting trees along the sides of the road to screen sunlight and reduce pollution, planting trees around concrete parking lots to provide shade and reduce heat and glare, planting trees between two different land use zones, planting trees on the west and south of the building to prevent sunlight and filter heat into the building.

C. Environmental Aspect

Trees as a natural element can immensely help to improve environmental conditions, for instance, provide shade, filter sunlight, reduce heat and glare, cool down the temperature, be a source of oxygen, purify the air, filter dust, absorb pollution, absorb noise, reduce the intensity of wind, protect soil surface, reduce soil erosion, maintain soil fertility, support in

drainage, help water seep into the soil, reduce the amount of run-off water, enhance site irrigation, protect waterfront area or river banks, be a sanctuary for animals, etc. In the unused area, mixed trees should be planted to create ecological green space.

In conclusion, it is suggested that all thirty-three trees found in Tipitaka be selected to be appropriately planted in Buddhist places, aiming to create more meaningful and functional use of Buddhist sacred trees in the landscape. The three aspects: spiritual aspect, functional aspect, and environmental aspect, should all be taken into consideration in order to enhance the effectiveness of trees in the landscape, and to increase the value of Buddhist sacred trees as well.

Conclusions

The research entitled "Buddhist Tree: from the Narrative in Tipitaka to the Practical Use in Landscape Design" contains two objectives: (1) to study and collect information on trees in Tipitaka and analyze the use of trees using the landscape architectural design approach and (2) to suggest the practical use of trees in the landscape. Through the document research focusing on trees associated with Buddha in Tipitaka, the primary source of information on Theravada Buddhism, thirty-three names of trees have been found. These trees could be considered Buddhist sacred trees, e.g. Bodhi tree (*Ficus religiosa* L.), Sal tree (*Shorea robusta* C. F. Gaertn.), Banyan tree (*Ficus benghalensis* L.), Indian oak (*Barringtonia acutangula* (L.) Gaertn.), Milky tree (*Manilkara hexandra* (Roxb.) Dubardfor), and Mango tree (*Mangifera indica* L.). These trees are mentioned as present places for sitting or resting. All the Buddhas have attained enlightenment under the tree. This finding implies the benefit of trees for meditation or enhancing mindfulness. In terms of space usage, a tree provides space underneath its canopy with shade and natural surroundings. Whether a single tree or a group of trees, space underneath the canopy can be used for sitting and meditating, resting, listening to dharma, and conversing on dharma, for example. The use of trees to connect the space, create a specific area for usage, indicate a boundary, and divide a large space into subspaces, like building a room, with the canopy of trees acting like a roof (Siriphanich, 2015).

According to the observation of trees in temples in Bangkok, Thailand, and the analysis concerning landscape design, the use of Buddhist sacred trees in outdoor environments can be divided into 3 aspects: spiritual aspect, functional aspect, and environmental aspect. For the spiritual aspect, the tree is sacred and can be used as a symbol or a place of worship for Buddha or dharma. In terms of physical function, a tree as a landscape element can create an outdoor room or space for various activities, provide shading space for seat or meditation, enhance the present atmosphere, and serve as a landmark or visual element. And for the environmental aspect, trees can be dedicated to reducing pollution and enhancing site irrigation, air quality, and microclimate conditions, for example. It is suggested that all thirty-three trees found in Tipitaka be selected to be appropriately planted in Buddhist places, aiming to create more meaningful and functional use of Buddhist sacred trees in the landscape.

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Enriching Multicultural Awareness of Young Children Through Children's Literature and Art Activities

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Abstract

With the rise of globalization and the age of technology, society has become more diverse. Current literature recognizes awareness of diversity, particularly Multicultural Awareness, as an important asset for an individual to adjust, build relationships, and ultimately thrive in our globalized society. However, despite being identified as a learning competency in the K-12 curriculum of the Department of Education in the Philippines, there appears to be a significant need for more literature regarding implementing or integrating multicultural awareness in the education sector. With this in mind, this capstone project has produced a set of instructional modules to be facilitated by teachers, aiming to develop multicultural awareness among Kindergarten students through a familiar and exciting medium for young children: Children's Literature and Art Activities. This project consists of 10 modules covering children's literature and art activities that aim to instill multicultural awareness among Filipino children. In particular, the modules follow the framework and definition established by the Department of Education as they aim to introduce the different cultural dimensions to Kindergarten students. The children's literature and art activities included in this project would allow young Filipino children to explore and be immersed in different cultures from around the world.

Keywords: Multicultural Awareness, Children's Literature and Art Activities, Instructional Modules

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Introduction

Awareness of diversity has been an important asset in our modern society. Through this awareness, individuals can gain different learning opportunities, achieve personal growth, and enrich their perspectives. While previously impossible due to the limitations of technology and the physical boundaries between countries, diversity in today's world has become relevant to everyday life. Globalization paved the way for multiculturalism, which, in turn, helped establish the importance of taking part and taking advantage of diverse spaces. To navigate such spaces successfully, individuals must be competent in addressing new challenges in integrating with people from various cultures.

Multicultural awareness, which refers to an individual's ability to recognize the differences between their values and beliefs compared to others (Soekarman & Bariyyah, 2016, p. 16), is a term that has gained much attention in recent years because of globalization and diversity. In the 21st century, multicultural awareness and cross-cultural competence are necessary skills that help individuals grab global opportunities, participate in diverse spaces, and interact with various cultures (Klafehn, 2017). This implies that employers have come to expect individuals entering the workforce to be adept at identifying their similarities and differences in culture and perspective (Klafehn, 2017). As such, to prepare individuals for the new requirements of the 21st-century workforce, the education sector must adapt to help children grow and develop multicultural awareness.

From the Philippine context, developing multicultural awareness is a goal that needs more attention, given the global movement toward supporting and promoting diversity and multiculturalism. A recent study found that multicultural awareness in the Philippines needs to be improved in the classroom setting (Munalim, 2019). It was also found that practices that help trigger and enrich the development of multicultural awareness are limited to specific subjects, such as English (Munalim, 2019).

This insufficient approach of the education sector in helping Filipinos become ready for global integration is further heightened by the increasingly diverse society in which the population operates. Based on the 2019 Annual Report of the Bureau of Immigration, there are 148,387 registered foreign nationals living in the country – Chinese nationals topped this list with 56,015, followed by Indians with 26,533, Americans with 10,566, Taiwanese with 8,557, and South Koreans with 8,157 (Ramirez, 2019). In addition, it was also found that children tend to confuse local and foreign cultures because of the increasingly diverse media they are exposed to (National Council for Children's Television (NCCT), 2015, pp. 66-68). This confusion should be considered a sign that Filipino children may struggle as contributors to society due to their lack of multicultural awareness that could help them successfully integrate into both local and global environments.

Objectives of the Project

With this in mind, this capstone project aims to provide an opportunity to enrich multicultural awareness through art activities. It intends for young children to (1) be aware of social issues and differences in culture, (2) develop a positive cultural attitude, and (3) promote a collaborative relationship between different cultures.

Significance of the Project

The implementation of this project will be of great benefit to the following stakeholders:

a. *School*. This capstone project will enable the school to promote an inclusive environment that showcases diversity. The modules in this project allow the school's administrative team to initiate the development and planning of a more multiculturally aware curriculum.

b. *Students*. The project will help the students grow into members of society who are fully aware of their own culture, the value of other backgrounds, and the social injustices that result from mishandling these differences. This would help develop their character and enrich their multicultural awareness.

c. *Teachers*. This capstone project will help enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perspectives on different cultures. It would also help them with personal growth, character development, and striving for multicultural awareness and acceptance.

d. *Education*. The modules of this project could provide a platform for the education sector to advocate multicultural awareness actively. This project could help foster innovative approaches to teaching multicultural awareness to young learners.

Conclusions

With the rise of globalization and the age of technology, society has become more diverse. The increased connectivity brought about the rise of the digital age and the movement of the labor sector; current literature has identified the necessity of becoming more culturally aware. The Department of Education here in our country has also identified this as a learning competency. Despite this, there is a significant lack of literature regarding implementing multiculturalism awareness in the education sector in the Philippines.

This capstone project aims to address these implications. In particular, it focuses on using art activities to enrich young learners' multicultural awareness through something they are interested in and familiar with. To achieve this goal, an instructional module on Multicultural Awareness with a 10-part lesson plan has been designed.

Following the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework of the Department of Education, the lesson plans developed were patterned to the Circular Themes. The modules were designed to follow a sequential manner, starting with self-awareness and slowly expanding the scope to family, school, community, Asia, and worldwide. Different kinds of art activities were employed in the module implementation. These art activities aim not only to enrich multicultural awareness but also to develop psychomotor and social skills. Students created different artworks in recognition of the difference of people in terms of cultural backgrounds. Each lesson ended by highlighting respect, kindness, and positive attitude toward people from different cultures.

For this project, modules were designed to focus on kindergarten students. It is limited in terms of the scope of implementation. However, multicultural awareness, like any concept under the socio-emotional development domain, would require a consistent review and enrichment throughout a student's education. Thus, it is recommended that future researchers explore the level of multicultural awareness among primary, intermediate, junior high, and senior high students. Furthermore, with the teacher's perspective and biases as critical factors

in multicultural education, it is also recommended that future researchers look into the possibility of creating a workshop or guide for teachers in teaching multicultural awareness.

This project concludes with one final message: start now. Multicultural Awareness is not often discussed in the classroom, yet our current society is on the brink of a cultural transformation. Social issues and injustices have often been reported, with different people calling out justice for the marginalized. It is important for us, particularly those in the education section, to start enriching multicultural awareness so that our students do not be left behind.

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Seeking the Social Spaces for Students in High-Rise Vertical University Campuses of Bangladesh: An Emerging Need in Higher Education

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Abstract

In recent times, with constrained land scenarios, the university campuses have been designed as high-rise vertical buildings under private governance in Bangladesh. The essential educational functions are tightly arranged within the high-rise building while the social spaces often remain inconsiderate. Building's circulation spaces like lift lobbies, stair or corridors are used as interaction spaces by the students. In the rented campus, the students are merely allowed to stay in these spaces after class hours. Although social interaction among students in the higher education sector influences lifelong learning. Professional architects try to design internal open space or plaza as the social spaces in the high-rise universities. However, this research tries to find a pattern of social spaces integrated within the whole building system. Student interview and observation methods are used in two case studies to find the existing social spaces, designed or modified within the campus. The space syntax method is used to find the spatial structure of these social spaces within the building system. The case studies represent different architectural characters, which helps to explore the common pattern of social spaces. It is found that the spatially most integrated and well-connected spaces of a vertical university are chosen as social spaces by the students. Findings also reveal that, there is a need of social space for the students staying in the upper floor classrooms. Hence, students functionally modify provided spaces as their comfortable social space.

Keywords: Higher Education, Vertical University Campus, Student's Informal Interaction, Social Spaces, Informal Learning at University Campus

Introduction

The higher education facilities in Bangladesh were inaugurated in 1921 during the British reign (Miah, 2012). The first university of Bangladesh was Dhaka University modeled after British Universities. The political change throughout the 19th century led to plan and establish new universities under the multiple former governments. In 1971, after the liberation war, Bangladesh was formed as a new nation with its own authoritative body. The 'University Grant Commission' was formed in 1973 to monitor and circulate the higher education facilities with administrative authority among Bangladeshi nation (Sarkar & Hossain, 2018).

The demand for higher education facilities in Bangladesh increased among the people eventually. The population number was such increased that, it created immense pressure on student's admission in the existing public universities and resulted in session clogging. Since 1990, government encouraged private organizations to provide higher education facilities with administrative and infrastructural support. These support systems are monitored by University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh. According to UGC, there are 55 public universities and 110 private universities till year 2023. Among these private universities, only 44 universities are operating in their own campus (University Grants Commission, 2023).

The public universities are often designed as horizontal campuses, with multiple buildings accommodating multiple departments and functions. These buildings are designed and built according to phase-wise master planning. Eventually government occupies a huge amount of land area and proposes phase-wise expansion for these public universities (Sarkar & Hossain, 2018). The Chittagong University occupies the largest land area of 2100 acres and Bangladesh University of Textiles (BUTEX) has the smallest land are of 12 acres, among all other public universities (University Grants Commission, 2023). In this big amount of land area, there are ample opportunities for ambiguous or designed social spaces used by the students. Sometimes the surroundings of cafeteria building or the auditorium complex or the department are used as social space by the students.

Figure 1: Student's Social Interaction in the 'Teacher- Student Center (TSC)'
at Dhaka University

On the other side, the private universities usually accommodate the educational functions and administrative departments in a same building. Due to land constraints and other financial factors, the minimum built area (rented or owned) of a private university is defined as 25,000 square feet by UGC. The table 1 shows the land area of some renowned private universities of Bangladesh. This data was found in their accompanying websites.

Sl no.	Name of the University	Land Area
1.	East West University	2.45 Acres
2.	Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology	1.676 Acres
3.	State University of Bangladesh	3 Acres
4.	BRAC University	7 Acres
5.	South East University	1.3 Acres
6.	University of Asia Pacific	1 Acre
7.	North South University	5.5 Acres

Table 1: List of Some Renowned Private Universities With Their Land Area

This universities are designed as high-rise building, accommodating all the necessary functions in different floors or wings. Professional Architects design internal plaza or open space, terraces, wide corridors to fulfill the social need for the students. Although often the architects are pressurized by the university administrative team to design least ambiguous open spaces due to the financial factors. Sometimes they pressurize modification after construction too. In the rented campus, these ambiguous spaces are also considered for rent. Eventually, in some cases these spaces are considered as less important. As a result, the ambiguous spaces which are somewhat used as social spaces, remain inconsiderate. In this research, the author tries to find the spatial pattern of social spaces within the restricted land scenario. Two case studies have been chosen where the ambiguous open spaces and terraces or corridors are not modified after construction and remained as per design with regular use by the students.

Figure 2: Wide corridor (15 feet) in front of the classrooms designed by the Architect of University of Asia Pacific, where students can interact. The corridor is equipped with drinking water provision and signage.

Why Social Space in University Campus?

Social space is a virtual or physical place where people gather and interact. For the city people, the city centers, public spaces or parks, restaurants etc. act as social space. This is an informal kind of space which are produced by the society according to the spatial practices that exist in the society (Carter, 2004). Purpose of social spaces are mostly recreational, motivational and information sharing. University is a formal educational institute where students are adult learners. Numerous studies discuss about the importance of university campus environment not only for education but also as a center of community development (Gulwadi, et al., 2019). To ensure lifelong learning for an adult learner in higher education, both formal and informal learning are necessary in university campus (Rownak, K.S., 2023).

Hence spaces for both formal and informal learning are equally important in university campus.

Informal learning spaces are defined as non-discipline specific spaces frequented by any users where self-directed learning activities are undertaken by the learners outside the classroom period (Harrop & Beatrice, 2013; Ibrahim & Fadzil, 2013). These spaces are ambiguous like the open spaces, terraces or lobbies- corridors etc.

Figure 3: Terrace at Southern wing designed by the Architect of North South University, where students can interact. The terrace is equipped with drinking water provision.

According to Fisher (2005), there are three learning possibilities in university campuses- i) instructional learning, ii) practice-based learning and iii) informal learning or self-directed learning. The self-directed learning is a primary criterion for adult learners in higher education (Knowles, 1975). Hence, it can be said that the social spaces in universities are the spaces where the learners interact and attain the informal learning process. There is no way to ignore these social spaces in university campus.

The List of Student Activities As Informal Learning Process in University Campus

To understand the social experiences in campus learning process Crook & Mitchell (2012), taken a rigorous field survey with student's interview, recording audio diaries and spot conversation. They found four types of social engagement in learning scenario, which are:

- Focused Collaboration: Occasions of traditional and relatively intense joint problem solving. These are likely to be planned and strongly outcome-oriented.
- Intermittent Exchange: Whereby students convene for independent study that permits an occasional and improvised to-and-fro of questioning or commentary.
- Serendipitous Encounter: that is, Chance meetings with peer in which study related issues (and perhaps other matters) are discussed briefly and on the fly.
- Ambient Sociality: Students identify the importance of simply 'being there' as participants in a studying community.

Based on their research and a pilot study, in 2017 Wu., X. et.al. divided the socializing and informal learning activities into six degrees of informal learning process. Both of these

research lead to the overall scenario of the student activities in their university campuses. These student activities are quantified during field survey. The activities are summarized in the following table 2 (Rownak, K.S., 2023):

Activity Code name	Campus Activity Name	Type of Social Engagement/ Interaction in Learning Scenario	Degree of Informal Learning Process	Type of students' Activity on campus	State of Activity	Volume of Activity
(a)	Classes	Ambient Sociality	—	Formal	Static	8 person or more
(b)	Lab/Studio Sessional Work	Focused Collaboration	—	Formal	Static	8 person or more
(c)	Group Study/ Discussion Upon any Ideas from Books / Internet or other resources	Focused Collaboration	Focused informal Learning/ Intermittent Exchange	Informal	Static	2, 3-5, 5-7, 8 person or more
(d)	Study Alone	Ambient Sociality	Focused Informal Learning	Informal	Static	--
(e)	Having Snacks/ Coffee/ Lunch	Serendipitous Encounter	Dietary related activities	Informal	Static/ Moving	2, 3-5, 5-7, 8 person or more
(f)	Casual Meet up with Friends	Serendipitous Encounter	Focused Socializing	Informal	Static/ Moving	2, 3-5, 5-7, 8 person or more
(g)	Play Games	Focused Collaboration	Focused Informal Learning	Informal	Static	2, 3-5, 5-7, 8 person or more
(h)	Wait For Someone/Group	Serendipitous encounter	Serendipitous encounter	Informal	Static	2, 3-5 person
(i)	Student Club Meeting/ Practice	Focused Collaboration, Intermittent exchange	Intermittent exchange	Informal	Static	2, 3-5, 5-7, 8 person or more
(j)	Exhibition/ Student's Fair/ Cultural Program/ Flash mob/ Festival	Focused Collaboration, Ambient Sociality	Focused Socializing, Ambient Sociality	Informal	Static/ Moving	8 person or more
(k)	Seminar/ Workshop	Focused Collaboration, Intermittent Exchange	Intermittent exchange	Formal/ Informal	Static	8 person or more
(l)	Class Presentation /Jury	Intermittent Exchange	---	Formal	Static	8 person or more

Table 2: List of Student Activities in University Campus

Methods

The case studies are selected upon representing different morphological characteristics. The floors of University of Asia Pacific are vertically well-connected and the floors of North South University are horizontally well connected. The UAP (University of Asia Pacific) campus has square form plan whereas the NSU (North South University) has two linear wings connected through bridges. Survey at two different kind of case studies unveil the spatial logic for student's interaction in the social spaces.

For conducting student's interview, a focus group of 10 students are formed. They are provided with the questionnaire format and floor plans. Individually they interviewed 10 other students and note down their preferred social space. In UAP there are 111 responses and in NSU there are 123 responses. Multiple observation points are defined from where the time-lapse videos and still photos are recorded to monitor students' informal activity locations.

The space syntax method is used to understand network representations of space to find the relationships between space and the society for the purpose of architectural research design (Al-Sayed, 2014). The axial map is the fundamental syntactic representation of space. An axial line is defined as the longest line representing the maximum extension of a point of space (Hillier, 1984).
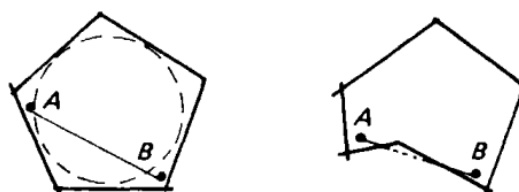
Figure 4: Convex Space and Concave Space with an Internal Axial Line

The integration value of an axial line depicts a normalized measure of distance from a space or origin to all others in a spatial system (Hillier, 1984). The higher integration value of any axial line in any space means the space is nearer to the origin of space in the system. The highly integrated spaces create a foreground network of that system which holds the top 10% of integration value in the system.
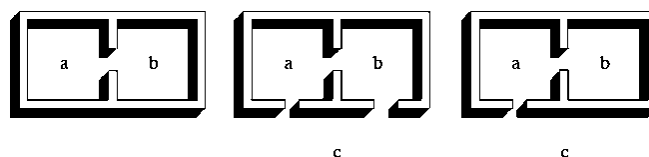
Figure 5: Configurational difference of spaces which are apparently symmetrical according to their permeability (Hillier, 2007)

Local integration value means the normalized measure of origin of space at local radius 3, which forms the local pattern of spatial networks. The global integration value means the normalized measure of distance from the space of origin at infinite radius. The connectivity value means the number of other spaces connected to the specific space. Higher connectivity value of an axial line of any space depicts higher connection of that space with other spaces. These measures are found from a simulation software named—Depthmap. Simulating all the

floor plans together in this software provides the syntactic analysis defined by the space syntax theory and thus calculate these spatial measures.
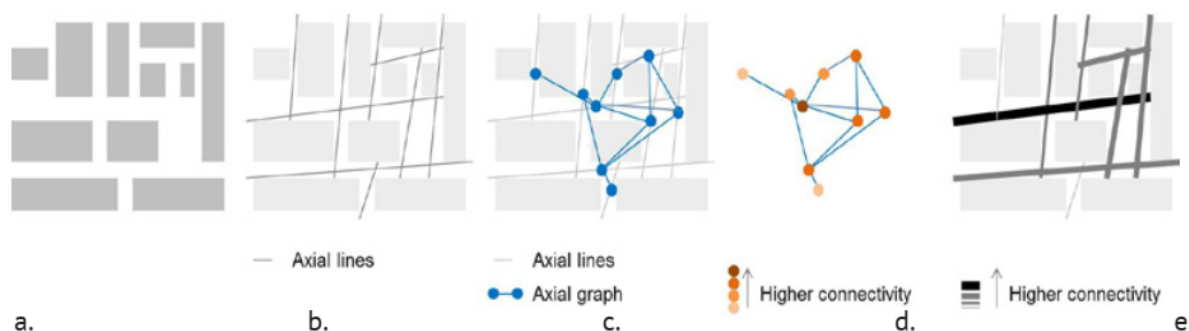
Figure 6: The axial representation of space syntax. An urban space (a) represented by the fewest and longest axial lines (b), axial lines are represented by a graph (c), The graph connectivity is by highlighted in (d & e) (Al-Sayed, 2014)

Analysis and Findings

In the case study UAP, the internal open space is made of front plaza, internal plaza and the back plaza. The recorded student activities are highest in these cumulative spaces. Right after comes the classrooms itself and the corridors and library. Finding the spatial values, it is seen that these spaces hold the top 10% spatial values of the system.

Top 10 % values range of the spatial system in this case study:
- Local integration: 2.71-3.705
- Global Integration: 1.148-1.587
- Connectivity: 11-23

Space name	Average Local Integration value	Average Global Integration value	Average Connectivity value
Front Plaza and Plaza Stair	2.7	1.085	10.78
Internal Plaza with Transient space and extension	2.92	1.15	12.69
Back Plaza with transient space and extension	2.71	1	11.3
Cafeteria & Juice Bar	2.67	1.12	9.8
Auditorium	2.48	0.911	7.5
Multipurpose Hall	2.6	1	9.11
Library	2.48	0.95	10.75
Classrooms/ LAB	2.98	0.98	4.11
Corridors	2.84	1	15.7
Lift Lobby	1.9	0.85	8

Table 3: Average Spatial Values of the Social Spaces at UAP
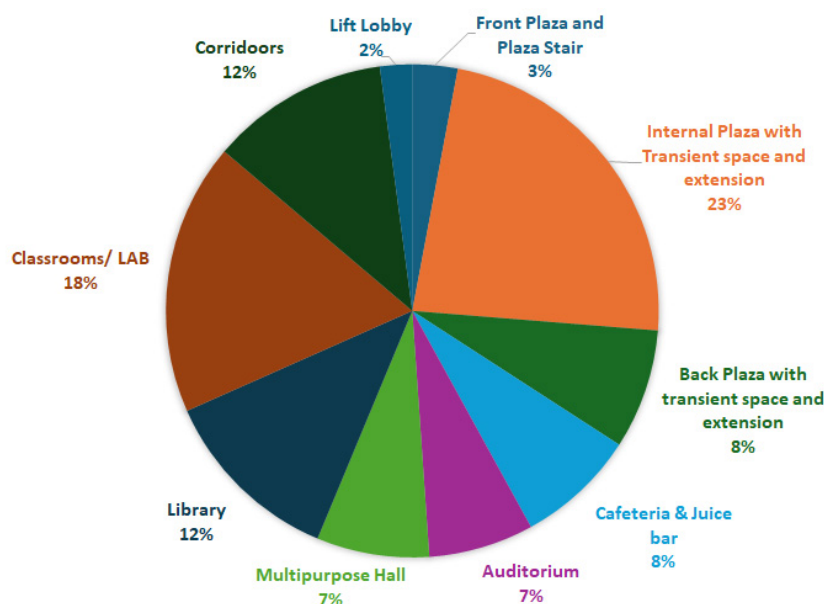
Figure 7: The Percentile Value for the Recorded Informal Activities in UAP Campus

In the case study NSU, the entry plaza, gallery plaza, north plaza, east plaza, amphitheater and the upper plaza made up the internal open space. The survey reveals that these parts altogether accommodate the highest informal activities. Right after comes, cafeteria and the terraces. Regarding the spatial values of these spaces, it is also seen that they contain the top 10% spatial values of the system.

Top 10 % values range of the spatial system in this case study:
- Local integration: 2.99-6.51
- Global Integration: 1.07-1.3
- Connectivity: 12-48

Space name	Average Local Integration value	Average Global Integration value	Average Connectivity value
Entry plaza with entry lobbies	4.11	1.25	36.00
Gallery plaza with transient spaces	3.55	1.13	26.00
North plaza	3.27	1.03	17.50
East plaza	3.30	1.10	19.14
Open Amphitheatre	3.61	1.06	25.57
Upper Plaza with sideways	2.65	1.00	8.66
Female and Male Lounge	3.85	1.20	28.50
Cafeteria and snacks bar	3.69	1.19	27.50
Club rooms, Exhibition spaces and Gymnasium	2.37	1.00	6.37
Corridors	3.43	1.25	19.25
Study Hall	3.32	1.09	16.40
Auditorium lounge and Rehearsal room	2.90	0.85	9.46
Library	3.53	0.78	14.40
Terraces	2.52	1.01	8.71
Upper Terraces	2.35	0.82	6.09
Multipurpose hall	2.88	0.67	9.23
Classrooms	2.05	0.825	3.00
Classroom Corridors	3.25	0.88	5.00

Table 4: Average spatial values of the social spaces at NSU.
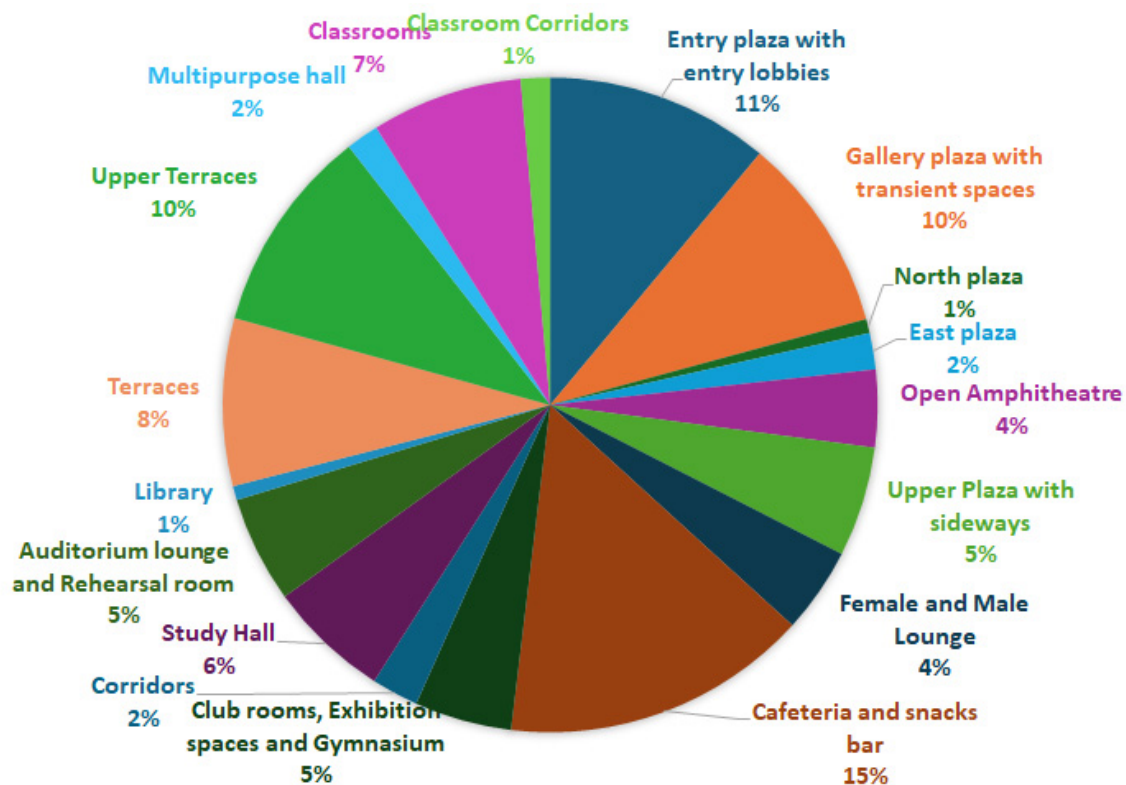
Figure 8: The Percentile Value for the Recorded Informal Activities in NSU Campus

Conclusion

From the analysis above, it can be said that the main social space of a vertical university campus is its internal open space. The more integrated and connected parts of the internal open space attracts more social interaction. Apart from the internal open space, students adopt other spaces like, classrooms, corridors, terraces or cafeteria as their comfortable social space if these spaces belong to the top 10% spatial value of the system. Further research is needed to find the gender priorities of the social spaces, surveillance in these spaces, the area of required space according to the volume of user group and focus upon any specific informal learning activity in university campus.

Acknowledgements

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Politeness Strategies in an Indonesian Graduate EFL Classroom

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Abstract

In teaching English as a foreign language, politeness has become a major issue. It is regarded as one way to maintain effective classroom interaction. This research aims to analyse the types of politeness strategies used by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom and factors influencing politeness strategies by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom. Qualitative research methods were used in this study to analyse politeness strategies used in the discussion performed by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom. Data was collected through recording and observation techniques to find out more about the success of politeness strategies in speaking, especially in the discussion context. Data was taken from the University Graduate Students during teaching and learning process in the classroom. The participants studied in this research included seven people who took Language in Use course in the 1st Semester. Data analysis used Brown and Levinson (1987) theory that classified four politeness strategies. Based on the research, it was found that there are three types of politeness strategies occurred in the speech of University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom which are shown in 26 speech data which includes four off-record, five on-record-negative politeness, and seventeen on-record-positive politeness utterances. It is also can be seen that the most dominant strategy used by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom was On-Record-Positive Politeness. Then, factors that influence politeness used by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom are payoff and relevant circumstances.

Keywords: Classroom Interaction, EFL Students, Politeness Strategy

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Introduction

Politeness is an essential aspect of human behavior and interaction. Polite behavior also includes using language to communicate, whether verbally or nonverbally. It concerns the entire attitude that has an impact on a person's life. To interact with one another, they must be courteous. Because people use politeness in their social interactions and specific contexts, as well as knowing what to say, how to say it, when to say it, and how to interact with other people, it is important to investigate (Yule, 2000). In a particular setting or group, such as classroom interaction, politeness is essential because rude behavior leads to disagreements between teachers and students. This indicates that politeness is practiced in the classroom to foster positive relationships, interpersonal communication, and ease of communication among teachers and students. Yule (2000) explains that people employ politeness to build communication harmony. To put it another way, being polite assists in avoiding conflict that may arise in daily interactions, including interactions in the classroom.

Classroom interaction can be defined as the teacher conducts some activities to ensure that the students have a good outcome at the end of the lesson. (Schwarz, 1994). In the classroom, the teacher serves as a role model, and students will imitate what the teacher taught. As a result, students and teachers should engage in effective classroom interaction. At school, most students speak rudely. Then, it is the responsibility of teachers to educate their students how to speak in a polite way, and teachers must also speak politely in front of their students to encourage them to do the same. Furthermore, communication between teachers and students will foster effective classroom interaction. Languages will be used in the classroom by the teachers and students to communicate verbally and nonverbally. So, in order to clearly communicate their ideas, they must use efficient communication techniques. Several studies have shown that teachers and students need communication strategies in the classroom to convey their ideas (Aladdin, 2012; Moazen, Kafipour, & Soori, 2016; Mahmud, 2017; Somsai & Intaraprasert, 2011; Tan, Nor, & Jaradat, 2012).

Teachers and students, who are the key participants in classroom interactions, have various ways of speaking to one another. According to Kingwell (1993), communicating involves "phrasing interests and arguments or the most effective delivery of information" in addition to "without hurting other people's feelings." This implies that in order to communicate, people will consider both the information's content and its transmission technique. Therefore, effective communication aims to not only successfully relay messages but also to foster comfortable interaction between the interlocutors, which can create intimacy and a sense of community. Politeness strategies can be employed to achieve this effective communication. However, in communication contexts such as education and classroom interaction, it also highlights the important roles of politeness. Because politeness in the context of teaching languages is thought to improve learning by creating a lively and friendly environment in the classroom, it means that establishing politeness strategies in the classroom is an effective way to achieve the effectiveness of classroom interaction.

In Indonesia, there are several studies on politeness in classroom interaction which only focus on politeness strategies between teachers and students' interaction but did not particularly focus deeply on the interaction among the English students themselves. Whereas, at the present, the interaction in teaching and learning activities in the classroom is not only carried out by the teacher and students but also by interactions between students. For example, with the development of an educational curriculum called the Independent Curriculum that carries the principle of "freedom to learn", it has an impact on changes in learning methods that are

more focused on student-centered, so learning activities carried out by involving students in discussion or presentation activities and the teachers only provides feedback at the end of the learning session. It can be seen that politeness studies that explore the strategies of English students in-depth are still limited and therefore need to be explored further.

Regarding these phenomena, politeness strategies in the classroom, particularly by EFL students, are still significant issues that need to be investigated. However, very few research has examined how EFL students' strategies for expressing politeness, particularly in university settings. This study proposed new phenomena of politeness strategies. The communication context of classroom presentations and discussions among EFL university students becomes a potential place for observing politeness strategies and as a result, provides significant advances in the politeness research, particularly politeness studies in EFL classroom interaction.

This study also referred to previous research that was very related to the topic of this research as a reference, the first study has been conducted by Rejeki and Azizah (2019) in investigating politeness strategies performed by EFL learners with English native speakers in Medical Students. The aims of the research were to find out what politeness strategies used by EFL learners when they are having a conversation with English native speakers and the factors for selecting these particular strategies. The second study had been conducted by Togatorop (2019) in examining the politeness strategies used in interactions between the banking and finance students at Murni Sadar Polytechnic Pematangsiantar. The aims of this study were to discover the most common type of politeness strategy employed by students when speaking with their friends and to identify the different types of politeness strategies. The third study has been conducted by Mahmud (2019) in investigating the use of politeness strategies in the classroom context by English university students. This study aims to explore the politeness strategies of English students at one of the universities in Makassar. The fourth study had been conducted by Surjowati (2021) in analysing the politeness strategies used by the students with regional multicultural background. This study aimed to describe the politeness strategy used by the students of Language and Science Faculty in Wijaya Kusuma Surabaya University with different regional multicultural backgrounds. The last study had been conducted by Panggabean et al. (2022) examined the politeness strategy employed by EFL students in oral presentations at Unirow Tuban. The study focused on examining politeness strategies used by the sixth semester EFL students who took the Research on ELT course.

Among those studies examined the politeness strategy used by students in EFL Classroom Interaction. Because, at the present the interaction in teaching and learning activities in the classroom face the development of an educational curriculum called the Independent Curriculum that carries the principle of "freedom to learn", it has an impact on changes in learning methods that are more focus on student-centered, so learning activities carried out by involving students in discussion or presentation activities and the teachers only provides feedback in the end of the learning session. However, this study focuses on examining politeness studies which explore deeply about the English students' strategies in presentation and discussion in the EFL Classroom specified in university level. Moreover, this study attempts to provide insight into students during the teaching and learning activities in maintaining communication with their teachers and also other students.

Based on the context of the explanation mentioned above, the study focuses on investigating how EFL students use politeness strategies in the classroom and factors that influence EFL

students to employ politeness strategy. Because the researcher believed that EFL university students who are studying English must practice some politeness strategies, this study appears to be several of both positive and negative politeness strategies theories by Brown and Levinson (1987). Therefore, the researcher conducts this research entitled "Politeness Strategies in an Indonesian Graduate EFL Classroom".

Method

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research design to support the research. Creswell (2012) stated that that qualitative research is employed to investigate and understand the significance that individuals or groups attribute to social human issues. The researcher attempted to confront the student's positive and negative politeness strategies in accordance with the research objectives. In an EFL classroom, student-to-student interaction is the main focus of this study. According to Hardiana (2019), qualitative research aimed to understand a particular field. It aimed to provide an explicit description of the participants' overall structures, orders, and patterns. So, through qualitative methods, the researcher could find out what was experienced by the subject related to this research.

In addition, while making observations, the researcher took field notes. Field notes were obtained on the students' interactions and behavior, particularly their utterances. This research was conducted in EFL Classroom of Language in Use course in the postgraduate program at one public university in Bandung. The researcher identified the students' positive and negative politeness strategies that could be seen during the class through observation and field notes. In addition to collecting data through observation, the researcher also recorded the entire teaching and learning process.

The participants of this study were students in EFL classroom of Language in Use course in the postgraduate program at one public university in Bandung. The participants were 7 students which were selected purposively. They were students of a Postgraduate Program and took Language in Use course where students were assigned to give a presentation and followed with discussion activities on one Language in Use cases.

In this study, observations and field notes served as the instruments, and audio recordings served as the supporting data. Researcher are involved in observing, taking notes and recording student interactions in presentation and discussion activities. Then, field notes and audio recordings were then transcribed or documented in accordance with the information gathered during the observation for data coding and data analysis.

Observation and field notes were the instruments that the researcher used for data collection as a research procedure. The procedure was carried out through several stages. First, the researcher asked for permission from the lecturer and the students consent to participate in this study on November 17th, 2022. The lecturer was also given adequate information about the study. Then, the researcher observed the students' presentation discussion on November 24th, 2022. The researcher used a mobile phone to record the presentations. The next step is to identify and analyze the interactions in the classroom which contains of politeness utterances.

The data analysis is constructed based on the discourse analysis framework, which depends on data recording, transcription, selection, and interpretation. The definition of discourse analysis is "the study of language-in-use; the study of language used in the world, not merely

to say things, but to do things" (Gee, 2011). The data were then chosen based on the objectives of the current study, with the content based, due to the lengthy and numerous transcriptions. The information was then translated into conversational forms, where it was subsequently analyzed. Then, based on the framework of politeness strategies developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), relevant data were identified, analyzed, and discussed in order to investigate the students' politeness strategies.

Findings and Discussion

The findings in this study discuss the result of the research questions, the researcher used the theory of politeness from Brown and Levinson (1987), so the researcher found the politeness strategies used by students in EFL classrooms, as follows:

No	Sentences	Type of Politeness Strategy	Factors Influencing Politeness Strategies	Coding
1	S1: I hope everyone, all is happy and healthy and staying safe, especially from the earthquake that happen several times this week.	Use in-group identity marker	Payoff	01/EFLCL/UIM
2	S1: And then next side, I'm sorry. Reference and inference.	Apologize	Payoff	02/ EFLCL/AP
3	Audience: Please show us this slide refers to a reference	Assert or Presuppose Speaker Knowledge of and Concern for Hearer's Wants.	Payoff	03/ EFLCL/APS
4	S1: in my opinion for that context, before we say "open pages like 90, everything, the first thing we have to say is which book. So ya, just say to the student which book they should open. Audience: Okay so the point is, before we ask the student to open their book or to do something, we have to explain or introduce first in the beginning of our lesson. Thank you.	Seek Agreement/ Safe topics	Payoff	04/ EFLCL/SA
5	S1: S2, Welcome S2, okay because S2 is coming so let's end this section.	Joke	Relevant circumstances (Relative power)	05/ EFLCL/JK

6	Audience: S1, I wanna ask more, do you think that the relationship or the closeness between two people will inference about his reference maybe? S1: I think yes, the closeness will make it easier to have a successful conversation.	Seek Agreement/ Safe topics	Payoff	06/ EFLCL/SA
7	S1: So do you think guys that children may often use this reference more than us, and when we compare it with indirect speech, maybe we cannot implement in children, but I think maybe children use more references. Do you have an opinion in this case guys? Or do you agree with me?	Seek Agreement/ Safe topics	Payoff	07/ EFLCL/SA
8	Audience: I'm sorry, I'm having that trouble for understand it.	Apologize	Relevant circumstances	08/ EFLCL/AP
9	S1: Okay so I'll repeat. I'll make it in bahasa ya guys, *jadi aku merasa kalau anak-anak itu lebih sering menggunakan reference gitu ga sih, kaya itu misalnya hafid bilang "kesini aja teh, biar kehujanan", mereka itu ga sadar kalau kalau misalnya org lain ga paham, tapi dia tetap menyampaikan apa yg dia maksud. Sementara di materi lain, kaya di indirect speech, kita tau kayaknya itu ga bisa diimplementasikan dengan baik oleh anak-anak gitu maksudnya.* Yah so, do you get the point? What's are your opinion guys? Or do you agree with me, that children are use more reference than us maybe? Audience: Yes I agree, in my opinion, because children are actually not really well aware in the name of something	Seek Agreement/ Safe topics	Payoff	09/ EFLCL/SA
10	S1: Okay class, Thank you for your time and attention, and have a good day everyone.	Use in-group identity marker	Payoff	10/ EFLCL/UIM

Table 1: Politeness Strategies Used by Students in EFL Classrooms

In this section the researcher will discuss the two problem formulations in this research, namely the types of politeness strategies used by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom and factors influencing politeness strategies by University Graduate Students in Indonesian EFL Classroom.

Positive Politeness

The researcher found 4 positive types of politeness strategies used by the students in EFL classrooms, they are:

1) Use In-Group Identity Marker
The speaker might implicitly assert the common ground with the hearer that is carried by that description of the group by expressing in-group membership in any of innumerable ways. These include ellipses, language or dialect or slang forms, and in-group address usages. The research found 2 data of this type, as follows:

> **01/EFLCL/UIM**
> S1: Assalamu'alaikum, I hope **everyone, all** is happy and healthy and staying safe, especially from the earthquake that happen several times this week.
> Audience: Waal'aikumsalam Wr, Wb.
> S1: Well here I want to explain my understanding about reference and inference about pragmatics.

The opening extract above presents that the student used an in-group identity marker strategy. Address forms used to convey such in-group membership include the generic names and terms of the addressee. When the student gives a kind of greeting like "Assalamu'alaikum, I hope everyone, all is happy and healthy and staying safe, especially from the earthquake that happen several times this week". This sentence refers to all audiences in the whole class before she starts her presentation. Because greeting each other is an activity to melt an awkward atmosphere. The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. The speaker employs that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, the speaker can minimize the FTA by assuring the listener that he/she likes the audience, hopes good things for the audience and build a good relation.

> **10/ EFLCL/UIM**
> S1: Okay **class**, Thank you for your time and attention, and have a good day **everyone,** Wassalamu'alaikum.
> Audience: Ok. Have a good day. Wa'alaikumsalam, Wr. Wb.

The sentences above present that the student used an in-group identity marker strategy. Address forms used to convey such in-group membership include the generic names and terms of the addressee. In the sentence above, the student closes her presentation by saying "Okay **class**, Thank you for your time and attention, and have a good day **everyone,** Wassalamu'alaikum". The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. The speaker employs that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, the speaker can minimize the FTA by assuring the listener that he/she likes the audience, hopes good things for the audience and avoid incurring a future debt.

2) Assert or Presuppose Speaker Knowledge of and Concern for Hearer's Wants

Asserting or implying awareness of the hearer's wants and a willingness to satisfy them is one way to imply that the speaker and the hearer are cooperators and, therefore, to potentially put pressure on the hearer to cooperate with the speaker. The research found 1 data of this type, as follows:

> **03/ EFLCL/APS**
> Audience: **Please show us** this slide refers to a reference!

The example above shows cooperation emphasized by the speaker (audience). He demonstrated his knowledge of the audience. He confirms or implies knowledge of the listener's desire and willingness to re-show them the material. Thus, the positive face of the listener has been satisfied because he has been appreciated by the speaker. The factor that influences the use this strategy is Payoff. The audience employs that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, the audience can avoid or minimize the debt implications of FTAs such as offers from him.

3) Seek Agreement/Safe Topics
Seeking ways to agree with the Hearer is another way to save her positive face. Raising weather-related subjects and repeating what the preceding speaker has stated in a conversation might emphasize the seek for agreement. The research found 4 data of this type, as follows:

> **04/ EFLCL/SA**
> Audience: Please show us this slide refers to a reference. For example when you are teaching your student, maybe they will, misunderstand the meaning itself, and here I want to ask about your solution may be, if your student is false to answer or wrong and then for example in such a situation when you ask your student, "please open page 99", and they misunderstand which book, because they have many books.
> S1: in my opinion for that context, before we say "open pages like 90, or everything, the first thing we have to say is which book. So ya, just say to the student which book they should open.
> Audience: **Okay so the point is**, before we ask the student to open their book or to do something, we have to explain or introduce first at the beginning of our lesson. Thank you.

The presentation quote above shows that the student seeks approval from the audience. Raising a safe topic allows the speaker to emphasize her agreement with the listener and therefore to satisfy the listener's desire to be right, or to be corroborated in her opinion. In this case, the audience as listeners wants to agree with the speaker when she tries to explain what the question is, in that case, the audience tries to approve by saying "Okay so the point is before we ask the student to open their book or to do something, we have to explain or introduce first at the beginning of our lesson. Thank you Milla". The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. The audience employs that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, the audience can minimize the FTA by assuring the listener that he/she likes her explanation.

> **06/ EFLCL/SA**
> Audience: S1, I wanna ask more, do you think that the relationship or the closeness between two people will inference about his reference maybe?

S1: **I think yes,** the closeness will make it easier to have a successful conversation. The presentation quote above is almost the same as the previous data, it shows that the audience seeks approval from the speaker. In this case, the speaker as the listener wants to agree with the audience when she asks her opinion about the relationship or the closeness between two people will inference about his reference, in that case, S1 tries to approve by saying "I think yes". The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. The speaker employs that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, the speaker can minimize the FTA by assuring the listener that she agrees with her/his question and avoid the debt implications of FTAs such as request/ next question or argumentation.

07/ EFLCL/SA
S1: so do you think guys that children may often use this reference more than us, and when we compare it with indirect speech, maybe we cannot implement in children, but I think maybe children use more references. **Do you have an opinion in this case guys? Or do you agree with me?**

09/ EFLCL/SA
S1: Okay so I'll repeat. I'll make it in bahasa ya guys, *jadi aku merasa kalau anak-anak itu lebih sering menggunakan reference gitu ga sih, kaya itu misalnya hafid bilang "kesini aja teh, biar kehujanan", mereka itu ga sadar kalau kalau misalnya org lain ga paham, tapi dia tetap menyampaikan apa yg dia maksud. Sementara di materi lain, kaya di indirect speech, kita tau kayaknya itu ga bisa diimplementasikan dengan baik oleh anak-anak gitu maksudnya.* **So I feel that children use references like that more often, like for example Hafid says "Just come here, let's get caught in the rain", they don't realize that for example other people don't understand, but he still conveys what he means. Meanwhile, in other materials, such as indirect speech, we know that it doesn't seem to be implemented well by children, that's what I mean. Yah so, do you get the point? What is your opinion guys? Or do you agree with me**, that children are use more reference than us maybe?
Audience: **Yes, I agree**, in my opinion, because children are actually not really well aware in the name of something.

The presentation quote above is also almost the same as the previous data, it shows that S1 seeks approval from the audience. In this case, the audience as the listener wants to agree with her, when S1 asked what they thought of children are using more reference than them by saying "do you get the point? What's is your opinion guys? Or do you agree with me, that children are using more reference than us maybe?", in that case, the audience tries to approve by saying "Yes I agree". The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. Both the speaker and the audience employ that politeness strategies because they can get the advantage, in this case, both of them can minimize the FTA by assuring the listener that she/he agrees with the opinion.

4)　Joke
Jokes are based on common beliefs and background knowledge, which redefine the size of FTA. A basic positive-politeness strategy for easing the hearer is to joke. In an effort to define the size of the FTA, jokes can also be used as an example of politeness strategies. The research found one data in this type, as follows:

05/ EFLCL/JK
S1: **S2, Welcome S2, okay because S2 is coming so let's end this section**. Hehehe.
Audience: Oh OK. Thank you.
All Audience: (laughing)

The presentation quote above shows that S1 used a joking strategy to calm the position of her friend who was late for class. She tried to say it in a very polite way and broke the class mood. S1 did it by saying " S2 welcome S2, okay because S2 is coming so let's end this section". The expression above shows that the speaker is influenced by relevant circumstances factors in the dimension of relative power. This speech shows that as a speaker, he has the authority or power to organize the event or the course of the presentation.

From the research findings above, the researcher found several positive politeness strategies used by students in EFL classrooms. The data finding was discussed by using the politeness strategies theory by Brown and Levinson. The students used various positive politeness, such as use in-group identity marker in data numbers 1 and 10, assert or presuppose speaker knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants in data number 3, seek agreement/safe topics in data number 4, 6, 7, 9, and joke in data number 5. In line with Brown and Levinson (1987) stated that the nature of a transaction made by verbal exchange is often made explicit in the way in which it is behaving as in any public transaction or performance action. People are more aware of what people are saying in verbal exchanges (request, suggestion, criticism, complaint, and suggestion) than of what they openly say they are doing with specific linguistic details.

Researcher also found that the factors that influence speakers to use positive politeness strategies are payoff and relevant circumstances. Payoff are in data numbers 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10. Then for the relevant circumstance in data number 5. According to (Brown and Levinson, 1987) in payoff factor, the speaker employs the politeness strategies because they can get advantages. Then the relevant situation circumstance found in this research is relative power. Power (P) is generally meant to mean that we tend to use a greater level of politeness towards people who have power or authority over us compared to those who do not (Brown and Levinson, 1987). In this case, the speaker in a presentation has authority over the course or continuation of the presentation.

Based on the results above, it is known that the positive politeness strategies became the most widely used ones in the class. This result is in line with research conducted by Rejeki and Azizah (2019).

Negative Politeness

The researcher only found a negative type of politeness strategy used by the students in EFL classrooms, such as: apologize. There are four ways to convey apologizing, a) recognizing the pressures and distractions provided, b) showing reluctance and use of certain expressions, c) delivering the reason that forced the speaker for doing that and d) begging for forgiveness and begging the speakers delay the FTA from the utterance that are delivered.

08/ EFLCL/AP
Audience: **I'm sorry**, I'm having that trouble for understand it.
S1: Okay so I'll repeat. I'll make it in bahasa ya guys, jadi aku merasa kalua *anak-anak itu lebih sering menggunakan reference gitu ga sih, kaya itu misalnya hafid*

bilang "kesini aja teh, biar kehujanan", mereka itu ga sadar kalau kalau misalnya org lain ga paham, tapi dia tetap menyampaikan apa yg dia maksud. Sementara di materi lain, kaya di indirect speech, kita tau kayaknya itu ga bisa diimplementasikan dengan baik oleh anak-anak gitu maksudnya. Yah so, do you get the point? What's is your opinion guys? Or do you agree with me, that children are use more reference than us maybe?
Audience: Yes I agree, in my opinion, because children are actually not really well aware in the name of something.

In the sentence above, by apologizing the audience can show their reluctance to touch the negative face of the listener and thereby repair some. In this case, the audience felt he did not understand what S1 had said, so she tried to apologize in the hope that S1 could repeat what she had said more clearly. The factor that influences the use of this strategy is Payoff. The audience employs that politeness strategies because she can get the advantage, in this case, the audience give respect to the speaker and hope that there will be a good answer to her request.

From the research findings above, the researcher found one negative politeness strategy used by students in EFL classrooms. The data finding was discussed by using the politeness strategies theory by Brown and Levinson. The researcher only found a negative type of politeness strategy used by the students in EFL classrooms, such as apologizing. Based on the theory by Brown and Levinson (1987), by apologizing for doing an FTA, the speaker can indicate his reluctance to impinge on the hearer's negative face and thereby partially redress. The deferential use of hesitation and bumbliness discussed above is one way of showing this reluctance, but many expressions in common use have the same effect. Researchers also found that the factor that influences speakers to use this politeness strategy is Payoff. Where payoff is used because they can get advantages. By employing negative politeness strategy, the speaker gets benefit in: paying respect, deference, to the addressee in return for the FTA, and thereby avoiding incurring a future debt; and maintaining social distance, and avoiding the threat of advancing familiarity towards the addressee (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Research conducted by Surjowati (2021) states that the non-Javanese students used strategies of apologizing and being pessimistic in negative politeness strategy while the Javanese students used strategies of apologizing, hedging, and giving deference. It is known that students use apology strategies to respect the person they are talking to.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that the EFL students employed several types of politeness strategies in their presentation and discussion of both positive and negative politeness based on Brown and Levinson' theory (1987). These results show that the concept of politeness strategies is useful in the context of Indonesian EFL classrooms, especially at one of public universities in Bandung. These findings also reveal that students in EFL classrooms use positive politeness strategies. The researcher found four positive types of politeness strategies, which include using in-group identity markers as many as 2 data, asserting or presuming speaker knowledge of and concern for hearer's wants as many as 1 data, seeking agreement/safe topics as many as 5 data, and making jokes as many as 1 data. In addition, just one negative type of politeness strategy, such as apologizing, was found among the negative politeness strategies used by the students in EFL classrooms. Researcher also found that the factors that influence speakers to use positive politeness strategies are payoff and relevant circumstances.

The results of this study are expected to have a significant contribution to the way that English is taught in universities, especially in Bandung. The results can also be used as additional information by other universities in Indonesia, particularly for those who are involved in EFL classroom interaction (teachers and students), to help them determine how to interact with one another in an effective way when teaching English. The results of this study are intended to contribute to the literature on politeness studies in a classroom context. However, further research is needed to find out how the politeness strategies used among teachers and students in their activities in the classroom is influenced by other factors such as age, gender, and cultural background, especially regarding the language choice to be used in communication.

Acknowledgements

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Empowering Academia Through Self-Narratives for Professional Development in Synthetic and Human-Generated Podcasts

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Abstract

Social and emotional learning are defining characteristics for mapping identities not only in personal schemata but also professionally speaking. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are driving principles for students as well as teachers. A person who is heard, understood, and included will bring forth the best possible outcomes for one's community. In this paper, advancing inclusive leadership and leveraging self-narratives through AI will be tackled through the means of podcasting both in real-life narratives with global contributions and a sample synthetic podcast series of interviews. The presenter will juxtapose and demonstrate the difference between a human-conducted and an AI-generated podcast. On the same scale, in this session, the presenter will showcase the importance of articulating the voices of English Language teachers (ELT) and global leadership not only in Tunisia as a case study but also in a global stance. Light will be shed on the "Ikigai", which is a borrowing from a Japanese concept that means the purpose of life, for each guest in the podcast series. During these interviews, interviewees imparted their personal and professional narratives by relating their "Kaizen", which is a theory of continuous improvement, to teaching and leadership development in the education field. All these transformations have been endorsed and enhanced through AI-powered content from generating AI music, videos, and generic voice creation through open AI and AI Labs. Proportionally, podcasting has been adapted as an active learning experience and a growth mindset opportunity to leverage the competencies of Engineering students to fit into the CDIO standards.

Keywords: Self-Narratives, Empowering, AI-Generated, Podcasts, Humanist, Ikigai, Kaizen, Life Purpose, Improvement, CDIO Standards: 2,7,8

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Introduction

Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it.

Bakhtin (1984, p. 183)

The notion of the self has been approached differently over the ages whether in literature, artistic creation, or research studies. The post-covid era is characterized by a paradigm shift in perceiving and expressing individual and collective identities. This paper will focus on the interconnectedness between the human psyche, the dialogic self, and various metacognition aspects responsible for shaping the self, identity, and life purpose, ikigai, and kaizen, continuous improvement through self-narratives in podcasting which is presented as a new journalistic and educational tool.

As a research study, this paper will tackle the cross-cultural and cognitive dialectics of ikigai and kaizen, language implicature, and adaptation of the concepts in global contexts with TESOL professionals and undergraduate students in Tunisia as a case study. Digital storytelling offers a new human approach to identities and the self through podcasting for educational purposes. One of the colleagues interviewed conveyed that the Ikigai International Podcast served as a possible tool for critically examining the social and emotional dimension of life in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Lin, 2023).

The focus of this qualitative narrative inquiry is to collect stories and perceptions, aspirations, life purpose, challenges encountered, and motives from Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESOL) and to investigate to what extent the intersection between their mission, passion, vocation and professional can lead to a purposeful life. As defined by the Japanese government, ikigai is defined as "the zest of life [...] it refers to that which brings value and joy to life: from people, such as one's children or friends, to activities including work and hobbies" (Ikigai, 2022). Other perspectives on ikigai were approached by theorists like Marc Winn such as in the famous Venn Diagram of the crossing of passion, mission, vocation, and profession.

The Ikigai and Kaizen podcasts explored the concept which is rooted in the Japanese culture and its adaptation to the Western and Eastern worlds. Research also includes undergraduate software engineering university students studying English as a second language and enrolled at MUST University which is aligned with the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET) accreditation criteria. The podcasting experience tackled their personal interests, hobbies, life purpose, and goals. A qualitative narrative inquiry design involves collecting experiences and personal explanations, which can lead to strategic and purposeful collective actions (O'Tool, 2018; Cline, 2021).

This paper is divided into four sections. First, the theoretical background related to narratology and podcasting, narrative podcasting, will be explored to theorize the impact of the latter on this experience participants. The next section will scrutinize the different case studies elaborated on this project at the organizational and institutional levels. Afterward, the correlation between ikigai, Kaizen, podcasting, and professional development will be analyzed through two interrelated surveys, one for teachers and the other for students.

Methods

Design

This article is framed on the mixed method approach narrative inquiry qualitative and quantitative and the discourse was analyzed through a constructivist method as the blend between the two approaches. A mixed-methods approach is a research methodology in its own right. As stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), a mixed-methods research design is a research design that has its own philosophical assumptions and methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it includes philosophical assumptions to provide directions for the collection and analysis of data from multiple sources in a single study (Dawadi et al., 2021).

Among the modalities conducted in this research is podcasting for educational purposes whereby it employed as a tool for self-expressionism, indeed, during the ikigai and kaizen talk shows guest speakers told their stories about their life purpose as constructed from their life experience at professional and personal stances. This preoccupation with the self is not just with our own selves. We also want to witness others finding out who they are, what they are made of, and if they can change (Coward, 2013, p. 88).

Among the ELT available podcast talk shows that deal with either teaching practice or theme-based dialogues, the ikigai & kaizen podcasts provide a distinctive narrative of professional development blended with coaching. Narrative podcasting serves as a powerful tool to harness professional development through storytelling techniques and personal narratives. In the Ikigai & KaiZen podcasts, a qualitative and narrative inquiry was established in interviewing teachers at a global stance articulating leadership voices, and at another scale integrating podcasting in educational programs for mapping future careers and empowering leadership skills in undergraduate learners studying English as a second language.

The narrative inquiry method was used as a steppingstone to cover personal stories of TESOLers and EFL students.

> Narrative inquiry is relatively new among the qualitative research designs compared to qualitative case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and grounded theory. What distinguishes narrative inquiry is it beings with the biographical aspect of C. Wright Mills' trilogy of 'biography, history, and society'(O'Tolle, 2018). The primary purpose for a narrative inquiry study is participants provide the researcher with their life experiences through thick rich stories. Narrative inquiry was first used by Connelly and Calandinin as a research design to explore the perceptions and personal stories of teachers. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990)

The ikigai and kaizen podcasts participants offered varied layers of their lives as impactful stories. Each narrative mirrors the delicacy and the art of being an English language teacher from their very first taught lesson to the most prominent conference they organized or attended.

Participants: Case Studies of Tesol Professionals and Undergraduate Students (MUST)

Data Collection

Ikigai & Kaizen in Tesol

Data was collected through two different means: audio-visual via interviews and textual retrieved from two surveys, one for professionals and another one for teachers. Participants in these podcasts were identified according to their professional profiles such as achievements, professional development they provide to others like volunteering in ELT communities in teachers associations, personal development blueprint, prowess and interests, and quality service. Volunteer interviewees in the TESOL field include 18 teachers for the IKIGAI International Podcast and 14 for the KaiZen Experience. The podcasting experience was segmented into three interconnected phases: pre-interview, the storytelling exeperience, and post-narrative.

In the pre-interview phase, an onboarding process is established whereby the guests receive a serious of reflection questions framed from the Ikigai's Venn Diagram, a link to an ikigai personality test and a surprise question kept secret until the day of the interview. Usually, the unrevealed questions are personalized to the speaker's ikigai test result asked either by the host or an AI avatar speaking assistant. The ikigai and kaizen podcasts rely on co-creating meaning of every guest's life purpose through narrative podcasting. During the podcast episode, every participant was asked about 1) Why did you choose your actual profession? If it was not a choice, what has paved the way for you to work in this field?; 2) What do you think are the utmost skills your (ELT) community needs from you?; 3) What are the top three skills you think you can be paid for? (not necessarily linked to teaching); 4) When was the last moment you felt extremely happy about a professional/personal milestone?; 5) Can you list out as many skills as you think you have mastered apart from teaching and training?; 6) A surprise question (to be revealed on the day of the interview). Following the interview, a follow-up survey was communicated to participants to share their insights and feedback.

As for the KaiZen podcast, the approach was slightly different yet interconnected with ikigai. The focus was continuous improvement not only at the individual level but also collectively. A case study reminiscent to the kaizen experience is with Blue Ocean Language Center which is a language and business school in Syria with an innovative strategy.

The specificity of Kaizen in this case study is the leagership strategy which is a porte-manteau of leardership and management whereby the manager of the business demonstrates the criteria not only of successful management but also transformational leadership in the sense Mr. Safwan A. Kadoura deals with his work partners as his collaborators not his employees. As defined Masaaki Imai, Founder of Kaizen Institute, "KAIZEN™ means improvement. Moreover, it means continuing improvement in personal life, home life, social life, and working life. When applied to the workplace KAIZEN™ means continuing improvement involving everyone – managers and workers alike". The second episode of the KaiZen podcast illustrates the synergy of such zenitude in leadership with Blue Ocean.

Ikigai and Kaizen at the Magrebian University of Science and Technology (MUST) University

Among other case studies explored within the Tesol field, in this article, podcasting for educational purposes is applied in curriculum design at MUST University which is a private establishment providing the North American system benchmarks blended with national higher education criteria in Tunisia. The syllabus of the English Composition course endorses the integration of the podcasting experience to enhance engineering competencies and maintain sustainability as guiding principles. MUST University. This section of the research paper will shed light on the best practices of CDIO[1] standards correlated to podcasting and identified through the ILOs[2] matrix for each course.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and CDIO Standards for Students: 2,7,8

This paper covers part of the course syllabus ENG121 entitled English Composition and the convergence of the ILOs, ABET student outcomes, with the revisited Bloom's Digital Taxonomy with more focus on AI capabilities, and human distinctive skills. This approach follows the UNESCO's Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research, the 17 SDGS, the ABET ILOs for software engineering, and Bloom's revisited Taxonomy, creating a comprehensive quality course. The course is planned to fine-tune the course learning objectives (CLOs) with podcasting to the CDIO standards for students: 2,7,8 which are: learning outcomes, integrated learning experiences and active learning.

Results

Ikigai & Kaizen With Teachers

The survey shows that the importance of the podcasts' episodes results differs from teachers to students. As shown in the bar chart below, the podcast articulated aspects of social emotional learning (SEL), inclusive leadership and self-improvement for professionals.
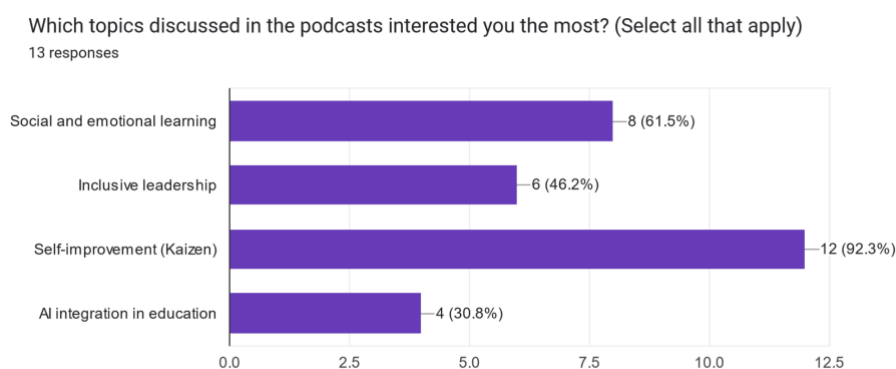
Figure 1: Topics Discussed in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts

The ikigai podcasts mirrors in itself the inclusive aspect as it has hosted global professionals from countries including the USA, Honduras, Senegal, the UK, Brazil, Egypt, Tunisia, Japan, Canada and many more. Global leaders discussed addressed their best teaching practices,

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[1] CDIO: Conceive, Design, Implement, Operate
[2] ILOs: Intended Learning outcomes (ABET)

lessons learned from their community service and provided insights for novice teachers on how to be agents of change in the field of ELT.

Following the survey investigation, speakers have conveyed that 69.2% think that the DEI was articulated in the podcasts as demonstrated in the pie chart below.
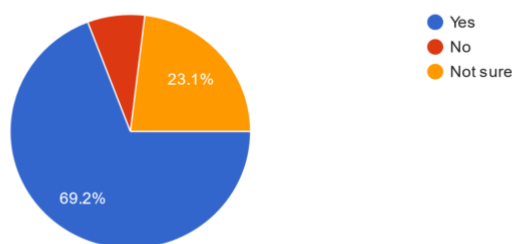
Figure 2: Topics D.E.I in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts

Innovation was incorporated in the ikigai and KaiZen podcasts at the level of experimentation with artificial intelligence. Indeed, in the last part of the interview, the guest is asked a question by an AI chatbot and is invited to converse with the tool. The AI-powered experience was assessed as followed:
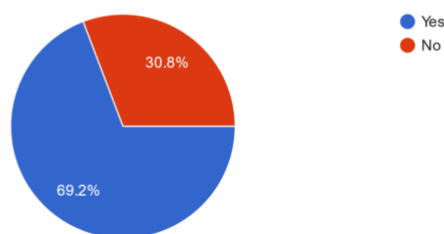
Figure 3: Integration of AI in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts

With a percentage of 69.2%, participants expressed that the AI assistant and co-host experience enhance the Ikigai and KaiZen podcasts while 30.8 did not related to the new tool in podcasting.

At a larger stance, the podcast serves as an inspiration to the interviewees to further pursue a purposeful life. On a scale from 1 to 3, 53.8% expressed their interest in adopted this philosophy to their lives.

How likely are you to apply insights from the podcasts in your personal or professional life?
13 responses
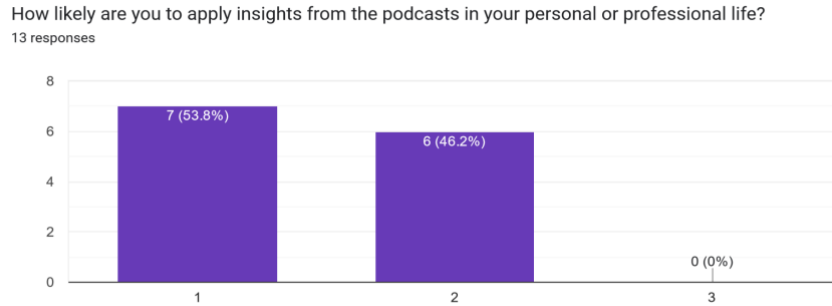
Figure 4: Likelihood to Apply Ikigai and Kaizen to Participants' Lives

The Ikigai Venn's diagram intersects with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in all its aspects of psychological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization. Someone's vocation can be what "the world needs from you", doing what "you love" is what keeps your passion for life ongoing, one's self-esteem can be cultivated from achieving one's passion, mission, profession and vocation to sparkle one's self-actualization for the "zest of life", ikigai (Ikigai,2022).
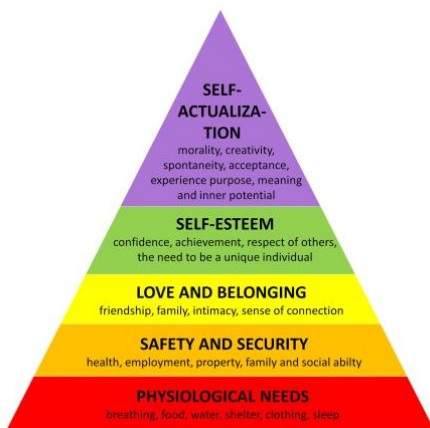
Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Figure 6: Ikigai Venn Diagram

As for to what extent the concepts of ikigai and Kaizen were articulated, 76.9% positively embrace transformational habits.

Do you think the podcasts effectively articulated the concepts of Ikigai & Kaizen (finding purpose in life and transformational habits once at a time)?
13 responses
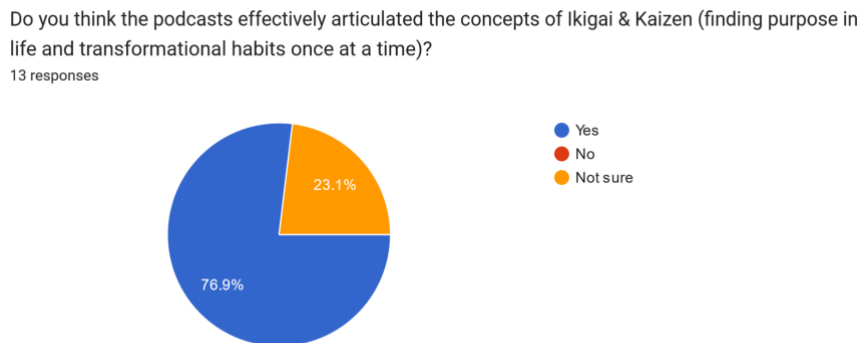
Figure 7: Topics Discussed in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts

Ikigai & Kaizen With Undergraduate Students

Podcasting was used as a means to leverage the competencies of Engineering students to fit into the CDIO standards. Kaizen is the major topic favored according to the post-course survey as 50% of the students preferred topics of self-improvement according to the bar chart below.
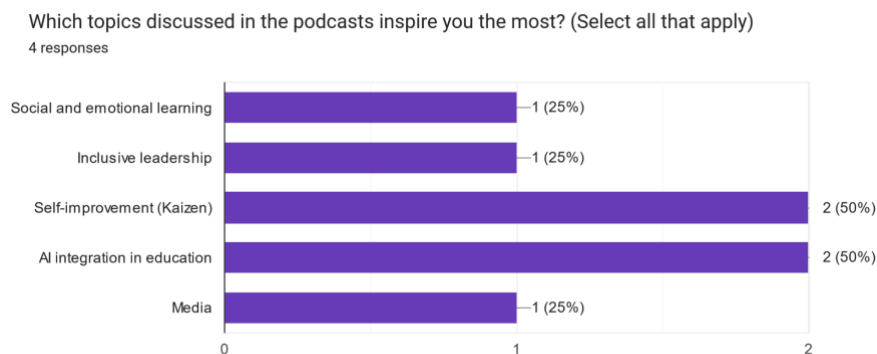
Figure 8: Topics discussed in the Ikigai & KaiZen podcasts for students

As for the DEI aspect, 100% of students consider that the podcast was diverse enough, equitable and inclusive to all.
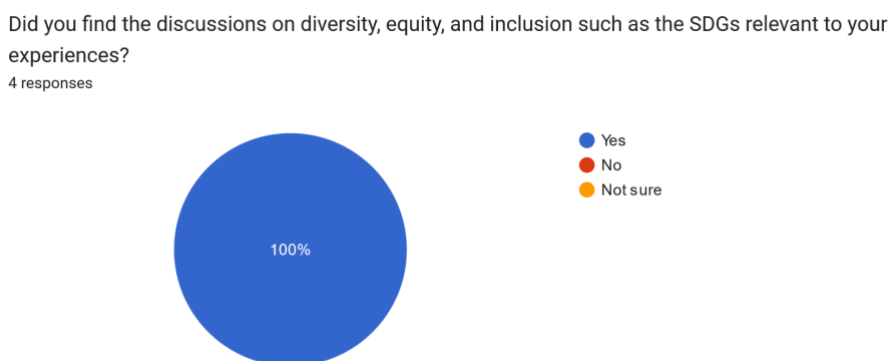
Figure 9: DEI in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts for Students

Concerning the AI avatar section, participants perceive that the experience was "very intriguing to see how AI analyze questions and respond to them" and also consider the AI avatar as unbiased and guided introspection."

According to the graph below, the majority of participants think that the integration of AI technology has enhanced the podcasting experience. Proportionally, podcasting has been adapted as an active learning experience and a growth mindset opportunity to leverage the competencies of Engineering students to fit into the CDIO standards.

Do you feel that the integration of AI technology enhances the experience your podcast?
4 responses

● Yes
● No

100%
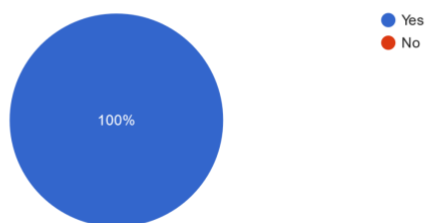
Figure 10: AI Technology in the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts for Students

In the syllabus devoted to the advanced technical communication course, the curriculum is designed with instructional methodology relying on the revisited Bloom's Digital Taxonomy in which the learning experience is scaffolded from low-order to high-order thinking skills blended with active learning andragogy[3].
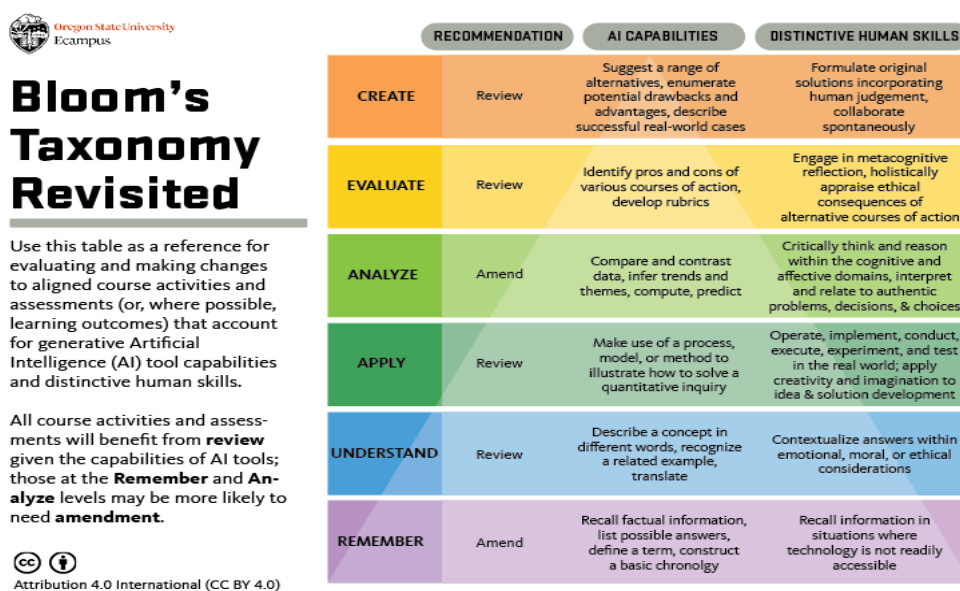
Figure 11: Bloom's Taxonomy Revisited

Instructional design relies mainly on building up on distinguished human skills and engaging students in metacognitive learning experiences. The active learning approach, essentially a student-centered approach, contextualizes meta-learning on research and project-based tasks powered by artificial intelligence such as creating discussion boards, blogs, videos, presentations and most significantly in the case of this case study, podcasting for educational purposes.

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[3] Andragogy: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-40274-7_54
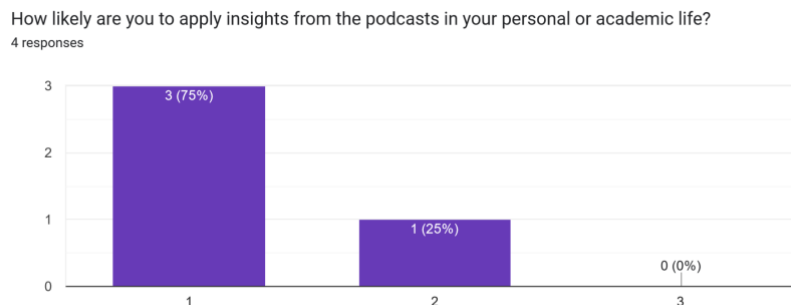
Figure 12: Likelihood of Applying ikigai and kaizen for students

As indicated above in the chart, 75% of undergraduates are more likely to apply ikigai and kaizen to their personal and academic lives.
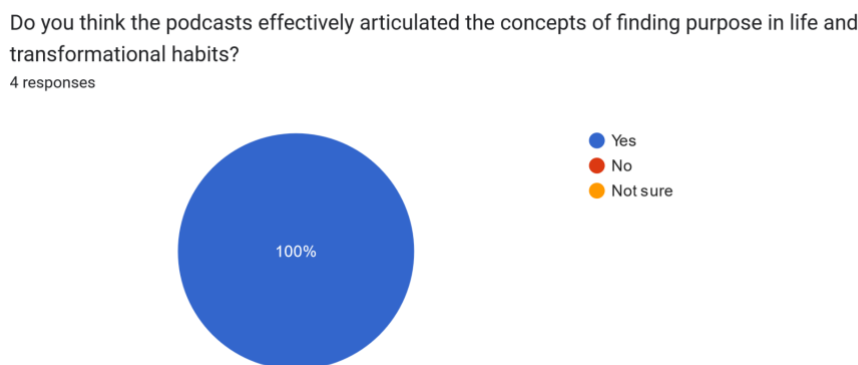
Figure 13: Relevance of the Ikigai & KaiZen Podcasts for students

The majority of participants consider applying ikigai and kaizen in their lives as indicated above in the graph.

Discussion

Results have shown that both concepts, ikigai and kaizen are relevant to academia including teachers and students and express their interest in applicating them to live a purposeful life. Most importantly all stakeholders perceive the importance of articulating one's voice and podcasting is one possible effective tool.

As for the juxtaposition of the human and the AI-Synthetic podcasts, results have shown that the majority appreciate innovation in the narrative experience through AI, yet there are exceptions that prefer the human interaction and see no purpose in implementing AI.

Conclusion

This paper is an initiative to bring academia together including professors, students, and global citizens to ponder upon one's purpose for life. This is not an attempt to define or frame ikigai or kaizen but rather has a holistic vision to the multiplicity of perceptions to one or more terms embraced in life. Participants considered that podcast "natural the way it is" and not having a journalistic style. Other colleagues believe that "these podcasts are great and will definitely be

of benefit to teachers looking to improve both their teaching practices in a holistic way and it's a wonderful growth mindset tool as well". As plus Delta, some improvements suggest "interviewing some rising voices in different parts of the World. They embody leadership in their field." From students' standpoints, they would appreciate keeping the same podcast but working on the project as a group work. As Ibn Khaldoun states, the inherent social nature of human being, one cannot live in dissociation with one's community regardless of one's age group.

Acknowledgments

Appendix

The Matrix of Assessment of the ILOs from the syllabus of the ENG121 English Composition Course at MUST University.

ILOs	Assignment: AI-Powered Digital Stories	Assignment: Conversational Skills with Open AI	Assignment: Episode 1: MUST Education Podcast	Assignment: Writing An Article: E-magazine Project (STEP 1)	Assignment: E-Magazine Project (STEP 2): Writing a Haiku Poem	Assignment: MUST UNiversity Podcast: Episode 2
1						
2						
3	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	X	X	X			X
5	X		X		X	X
6	X		X	X	X	X
7	X	X	X			X

Student Outcomes (SOs) from the syllabus of the ENG121 English Composition Course at MUST University.

1. An ability to identify, formulate, and solve complex engineering problems by applying principles of engineering, science, and mathematics
2. An ability to apply engineering design to produce solutions that meet specified needs with consideration of public health, safety, and welfare, as well as global, cultural, social, environmental, and economic factors.
3. An ability to communicate effectively with a range of audiences
4. An ability to recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in engineering situations and make informed judgments, which must consider the impact of engineering solutions in global, economic, environmental, and societal contexts
5. An ability to function effectively on a team whose members together provide leadership, create a collaborative and inclusive environment, establish goals, plan tasks, and meet objectives.

6. An ability to develop and conduct appropriate experimentation, analyze and interpret data, and use engineering judgment to draw conclusions.

7. An ability to acquire and apply new knowledge as needed, using appropriate learning strategies.

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An Earthquake Risk Assessment and the Imperative of Conserving Archaeological Sites in Gujarat, India

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Abstract

The proximity to the convergent boundary of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates makes Gujarat a seismically active region in India. It is divided into four earthquake zones: II, III, IV, and V, with V being the most active. Though earthquakes are highly devastating to archaeological sites, among the numerous measures implemented to minimize the impact of earthquakes, they are often overlooked. Earthquakes collapse and displace the fragile structures and stratigraphy of subsurface sites. Therefore, for effective heritage management, assessing the risk of earthquakes before a disaster is crucial. In this study, a risk assessment was carried out for 508 archaeological sites in Gujarat, associated with the Indus civilization and regional Chalcolithic cultures, using hazard, value, and vulnerability parameters. Hazard is the source of harm; value is the significance; and vulnerability is the internal weakness. The earthquake potential was measured using the magnitude and intensity of earthquakes in the last 70 years. The value of archaeological sites was estimated based on their physical structure and tourism potential. The vulnerability was assessed using the three climate change indicators: exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity. The earthquake zones, the state of preservation of sites, and the protected status of the sites served as the parameters for the vulnerability indicators, respectively. The results show that 41 sites are at high risk from earthquakes. Prominent sites include the Dholavira World Heritage Site, Kanmer, Bagasra, and Kuntasi. With this study, an attempt has been made to provide a framework for the risk assessment of archaeological sites.

Keywords: Earthquake Risk, Indus/Harappan Civilization, Dholavira

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Introduction

Gujarat, a state in western India, is situated near the convergence of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. The Indian plate moves northward and collides with the Eurasian plate, resulting in active faults. This makes Gujarat an active seismic zone. It is divided into four zones: II, III, IV, and V, with zone V being the most active.

The impact of earthquakes on archaeological sites can vary from displacement of delicate stratigraphy to minor surface disturbances to complete structural collapses. Often, this damage is irreversible. Hence, it is crucial to evaluate which sites are vulnerable before a potential disaster.

Materials

In this study, 508 archaeological sites in Gujarat, India, belonging to Indus/Harappan civilization and regional Chalcolithic cultures are considered. The list of sites has been compiled from previous works (Ajithprasad and Sonawane, 2011; Rajesh, 2011) and ground truthing.

Methods

Here, a geospatial approach (using ArcGIS Pro) was used to evaluate the quantitative risk of archaeological sites by applying the formula.

$$Risk = Hazard \times Value \times Vulnerability \qquad \text{(i)}$$

Hazard: Earthquakes with magnitude 5 and above have the potential to cause destruction to any built heritage. Hence, first, a list of earthquakes (Mag≥5) from 1950 was obtained from United States Geological Survey (USGS: https://www.usgs.gov/programs/earthquake-hazards/earthquakes). The hazard was determined by measuring the proximity of archaeological sites to the epicenter and scored from 1 to 3, with 3 being very close (≤30 km) and 1 being very far (≥60 km).

Value: Value was measured using two parameters: physical structure and tourism potential. Sites were categorized into subsurface sites (V=1), sites with structures above the ground (V=2), and sites with structures above the ground that are also tourist places (V=3; high value sites).

Vulnerability: Vulnerability was assessed using the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) method. It defines vulnerability as a function of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity (Parry, 2007).

$$Vulnerability = Exposure\ (E) \times Sensitivity\ (S) \times Adaptive\ capacity\ (AC) \qquad \text{(ii)}$$

Exposure refers to the "presence… at a location where harm is experienced if a hazard occurs" (Sharma and Ravindranath, 2019). Sensitivity refers to the "degree to which a system is affected" and adaptive capacity is the "ability to adjust to the change" (Parry, 2007). Over the years, these parameters have been modified and adapted for cultural heritage sites. Exposure has been defined as the presence of conditions that affect negatively such as physical location or the surroundings of the cultural heritage site. Sensitivity is the inherent

susceptibility of a cultural heritage site arising from its physical features. Adaptive capacity is its ability to cope which comes from management, availability of resources, etc. (Paupério et al., 2012; Yıldırım Esen ans Bilgin Altınöz, 2018; Sesana et al., 2020).

In this study, considering the above–mentioned approaches, exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity are taken as the earthquake zones of Gujarat, physical typology of the sites, and the management categories of the sites (Table 1).

Score	Exposure	Sensitivity	Adaptive Capacity
Value = 1	Zone III	Subsurface sites, mounds	Unprotected sites
Value = 2	Zone IV	Sites exposed to the environment	Excavated sites
Value = 3	Zone V	Sites damaged in the past or located in Croplands	World heritage site, Protected sites

Table 1: The vulnerability assessment

Risk: The final risk was assessed using formula (i).

Results

Earthquakes: Since 1950, there have been 20 earthquakes with a magnitude of 5 or greater. Most of these earthquakes occurred in the Kachchh region. However, two occurred in the Gir National Park in Junagadh and one in Ankleshwar near Bharuch (Figure 1).
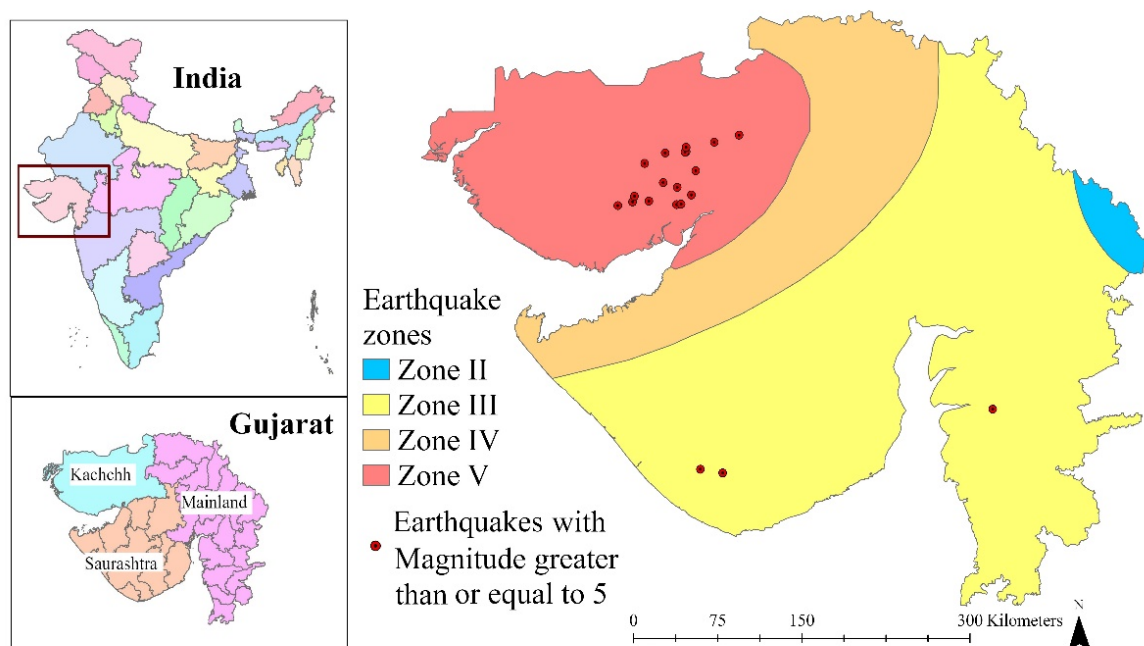
Figure 1: Map showing – Left: The study area – Gujarat; Right: The earthquake zones of Gujarat and earthquakes with magnitude ≥5 since 1950.

Hazard: 51 sites are in high proximity to earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 5, 68 are in medium proximity, and 389 are in low proximity (Figure 2).
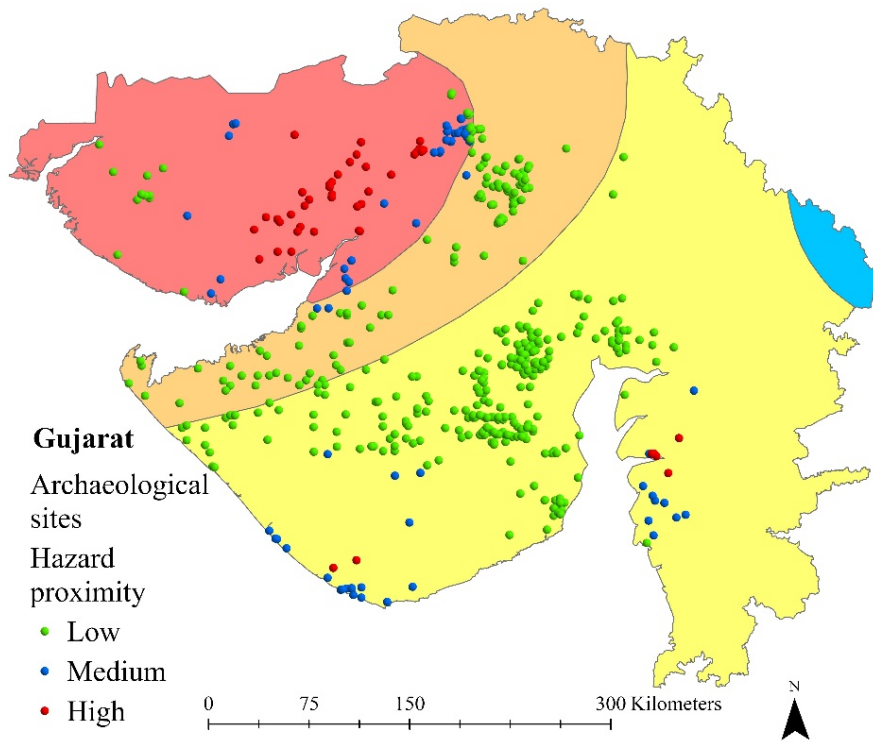
Figure 2: Map showing the earthquake (hazard) proximity of archaeological sites in Gujarat.

Value: Dholavira and Lothal are the most prominent tourist destinations, but there are also 10 more sites with significant archaeological features or visible structures. These sites include Kanmer, Khirsara, Navinal, Juni Kuran, Datrana-I, Bagasara, Kuntasi, Rojdi, Surkotada, and Aai no Dhora. The remaining sites are subsurface (Figure 3).
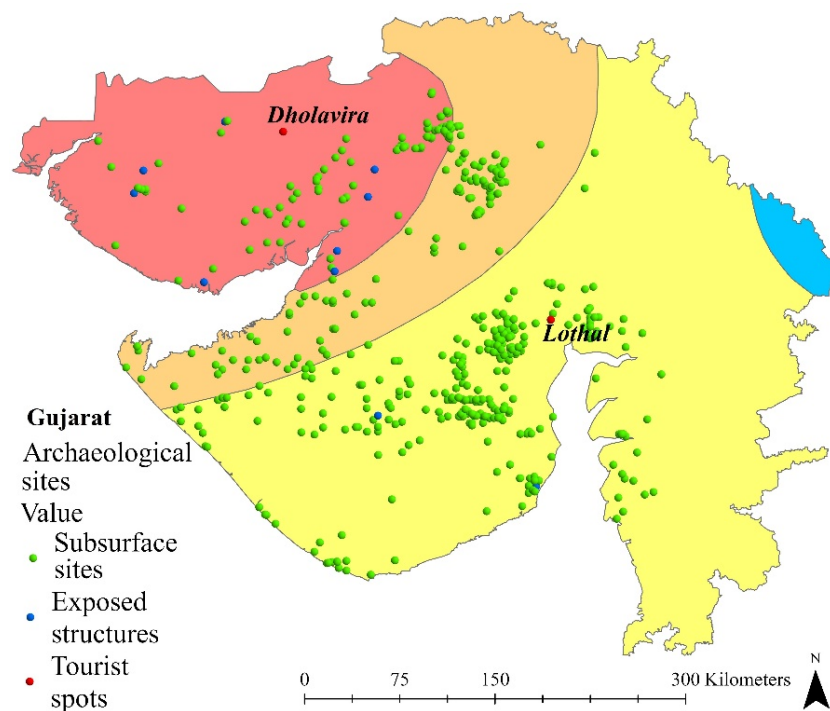
Figure 3: Map showing the division (value) of archaeological sites in Gujarat into subsurface, exposed and tourist spots.

Exposure: 52 are in Zone V, 110 are in Zone IV, and the remaining 346 are in Zone III (Figure 4).
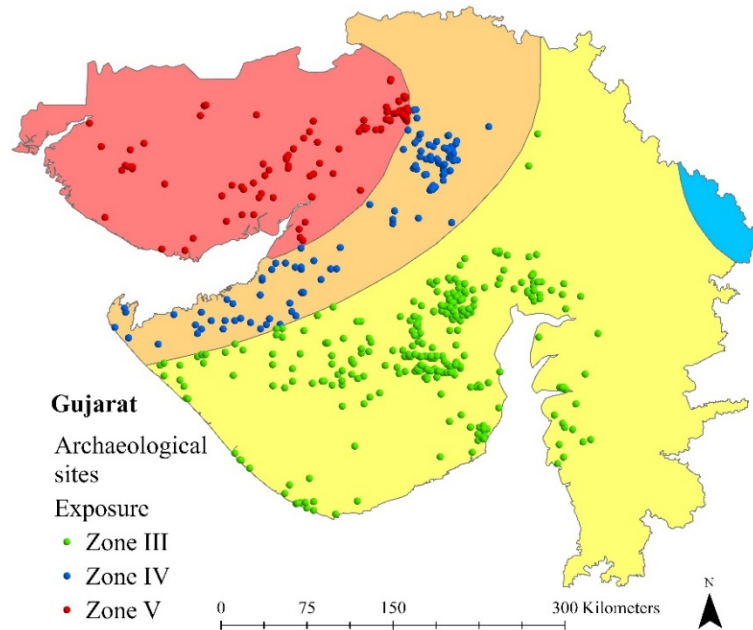
Figure 4: Map showing the location of archaeological sites as per
the earthquake zones (Exposure) of Gujarat.

Adaptive Capacity: The sites were classified based on whether they protected sites, (Dholavira, Juni Kuran, Lothal, Rangpur, Surkotada, Vaniavadar, Valabhipur, Bed, Lakhabawal, Mora, Narmana, and Pabumath), excavated sites (n=56, protected sites are not included here), or unprotected sites (the rest) (Figure 5).
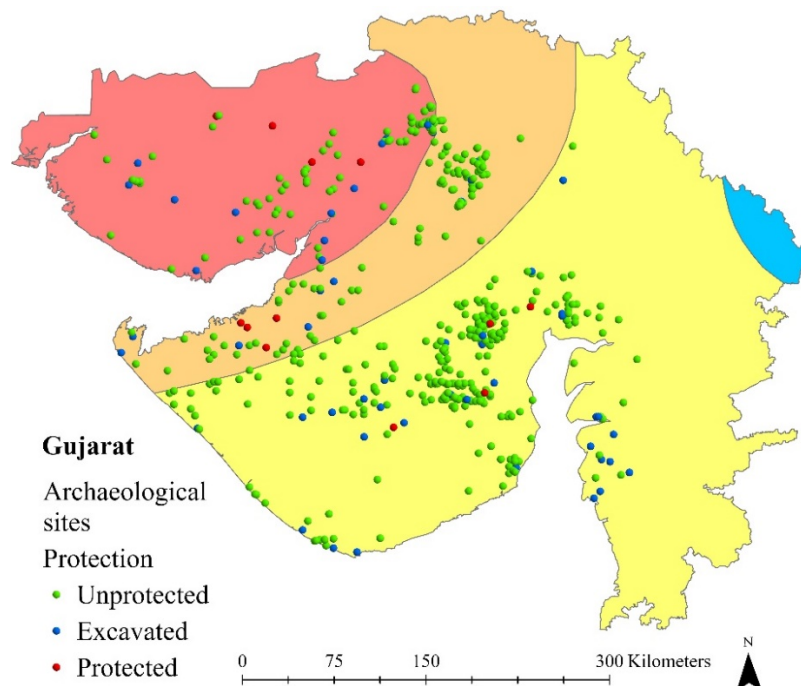
Figure 5: Map showing the management status of archaeological sites in Gujarat
(Adaptive capacity).

Risk: 41 of the 508 sites studied are at high risk of destruction from earthquakes. Prominent sites include the Dholavira World Heritage Site, Kanmer, Bagasra, and Kuntasi (Figure 6).
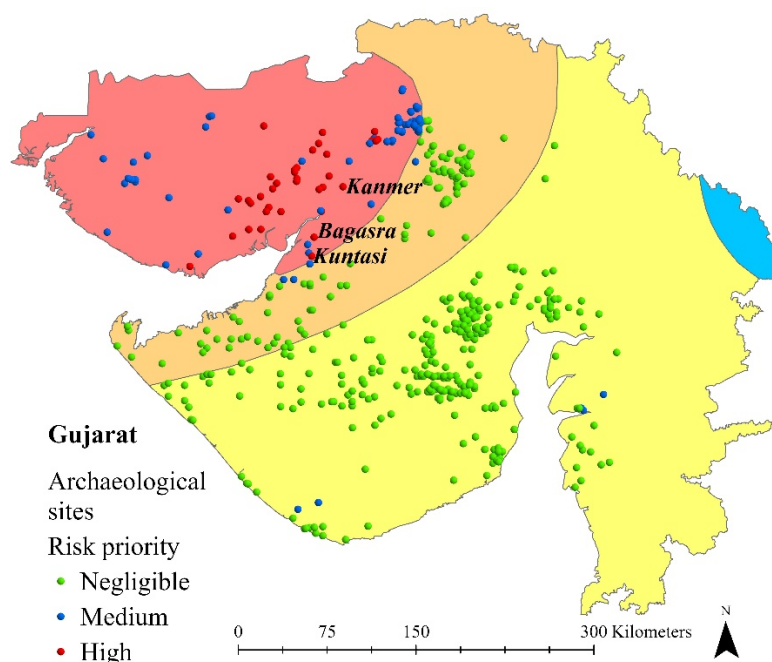
Figure 6: Map showing the earthquake risk priority of archaeological sites in Gujarat.

Discussion

Liquefaction and ground motion are two primary factors of destruction stemming from earthquakes. Ground motion is devastating to fragile archaeological structures. In addition to that, intense ground shaking changes the water-saturated soil to liquid. This change in the state of soil to liquid is called liquefaction which destroys the fragile archaeological stratigraphy.

The archaeological sites at high risk are located in areas with a shallow water table, typically 5 to 40 meters deep, making them susceptible to soil liquefaction. The soils in these areas are predominantly sandy, alluvial, or loamy, which are particularly prone to liquefaction when saturated. These regions also experience high peak ground acceleration (PGA) (Chopra et al. 2013), indicating intense ground shaking that further increases the risk.

Sites	Dholavira	Kanmer	Bagasra	Kuntasi	The rest
PGA (cm/s^2)	800	600	400	300	300–800
Ground water depth (m)	< 10	10 – 40	10 – 40	10 – 40	5 – 40

Table 2: Peak ground acceleration (PGA) and ground water depth of archaeological sites at high risk

Conclusion

In this study, an earthquake risk assessment was done for 508 archaeological sites in Gujarat. Using ArcGIS Pro, the geospatial approach was integrated with the quantitative risk assessment. Risk was taken was the function of hazard, value and vulnerability parameters.

The final calibrations show that in Gujarat, the central part of the Kachchh region is more prone to earthquakes. 41 archaeological sites located there are highly vulnerable to damage from earthquakes. The return period of earthquakes with magnitude 5 and above in this region has been calibrated to be 20 to 29 years (Tripathi, 2006; Yadav et al., 2008). In that case, destruction of archaeological sites is inevitable.

For the Dholavira world heritage site, ground shaking seems to be a major threat. Various previous works have noted significant structural issues such as rotation and tilting of the north gate of the citadel and sinking of the east wall at Dholavira (Dumka et al., 2019). This study recommends seismic retrofitting techniques such as jacketing for these.

The rest of the sites have very few to no structural features above the surface and might not need seismic retrofitting. However, they are prone to liquefaction. Out of 41 only seven sites have been excavated (Datrana III, Datrana IV, Dholavira, Bagasra, Kanmer, Kuntasi, and Navinal). This analysis raises questions about the current existence of unexcavated sites. It is possible that other unexcavated sites have already been destroyed not only by earthquakes but also by other natural hazards such as floods, erosion or modern infrastructure development. Hence, they need to be excavated and recorded.

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Written on the Clouds: Poetic Names in Chanoyu

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Abstract

Object reverence has always been an important part of Japanese culture throughout the centuries. Mono or objects in a traditional Japanese society were viewed in a cosmocenrtic perspective, therefore the world of objects has been mythologized and poeticized. Though inanimate by nature, objects may be treated as if they are alive, even sacred, and they can be given poetic names. The world of tea created the perfect environment for mono providing the stage for the objects to perform. Chanoyu, commonly known as the Japanese tea ceremony, is an interdisciplinary complex, a synthesis of arts, crafts and multiple cultural elements brought together in the ritual of preparing, making and sharing a bowl of tea. Tea epitomizes the Japanese penchant for elevating seemingly ordinary objects to the level of art. Their participation in a tea gathering is of supreme importance as the utensils are communicating with people in a non-verbal way. Often, they are given poetic names and their lineages are documented. These names – "poetic names" – play the central role in crafting of the narrative of a tea gathering – tea performance. They bridge non-verbal and verbal elements and give a voice to otherwise silent objects. Based on the study and the analysis of the official records of the tea gatherings, I will identify the role the poetic names play in the Chanoyu narrative, provide classification of the poetic names, and determine the criteria for the selection of objects based on their names.

Keywords: Chanoyu, Aesthetics, Culture, Mindfulness, Sensory Design, Intercultural Studies

Introduction

Chanoyu, commonly known as the Japanese tea ceremony, is an interdisciplinary complex, a synthesis of traditional Japanese and world arts and crafts combined with multiple cultural elements and brought together in a creative ritual of preparing, making and sharing a bowl of tea. It nurtures unified awareness through the refinement of all six senses in harmony and tranquility. Unlike many other meditative practices, this happens without detachment from but in the real world with its colours, tastes, sounds, fragrances and textures. Contemplative arts in Japan don't just exist in a well-protected environment far away from the real life, they exist, survive, and flourish right in the middle of the busy life of the great cities, often right in the factories and companies. It is not uncommon to see a flower arrangement right at a busy train station, passed by the thousands of people a day. Chanoyu literally means "hot water for tea" and is seemingly centered around preparing making and sharing a bowl of tea. However, tea as a beverage is not central to Tea as a practice. It is the cultural complex that has been created around the beverage that is the base for the contemplative practice. Chanoyu has adapted and encouraged creation of many objects both Japanese and non-Japanese to be used in tea. It provided a context for all these myriads of objects to exist, co-exist and by learning about these objects that often have a poetic name, we access "cultural keys" to the otherwise closed to us doors.

Chaji

At the heart of tea practice lies the form to which all the elements lead and to which they connect. This form is called *chaji* in Japanese and is often translated as a "formal tea gathering". However, cha is tea and ji can be translated as "thing", "reality", possibly, "truth" even; so chaji then can be translated as the "essence of Tea practice". No matter what translation we select, I feel it is better left in Japanese.

Sanmi Sasaki categorizes seven basic forms of *chaji* and mentions fifteen other variations. (Sasaki, 1996) Given that tea can be offered (performed) on any occasion in human life, there virtually is a possibility of tremendous number of variations. However, they are all connected through the fact that they follow the same basic structure or the account that presents connected events.

I suggest that *chaji* can be considered a form of contemplative narrative. The host tells a story to the guests of his/her choice. The story is woven with the help of many different elements – season, time of the day, quality of light; place, space, objects selected and arranged in multiple compositions, as well as human connections. Also, it unfolds with the help and active participation of the guests.

Because contemplative type of narrative relies on such factors as place, space (place where practice occurs), time and people who are invited, it can never be repeated in the same way. Each time is unique and is treasured for that. This "once-ness" of tea is what likens it to an oral tradition of storytelling or to a theatre performance that relies on natural setting with its light, weather and other variables. What sets it aside from a traditional performance is the role of guests and so called "artistic functionality" of its components and objects used. Chaji has a very clear structure and a sequence of elements.

Implements on the Way

There are myriad objects used in Tea. One formal tea gathering uses over four hundred utensils. They are collected carefully throughout one's life of practice, often being passed down from generation to generation. Dōgu, translated as "tea utensils", – Dō being the Way and Gu – implement, utensil, are really messengers. They are selected to be taken on the Way. Personal taste then is just one of several reasons to acquire an object. *Chanoyu* provides a context for these various utensils and sets a "stage" or setting for the objects to tell their stories united by the host's vision. This setting is very different from a museum display. Tea objects are to be used, not simply admired by the participants or left in a glass case to be looked at from a distance. They are used, touched and looked at while being held thus becoming an integral part of the process. Guests don't just look at the art objects and talk about them. People are actually living the art. *Chanoyu* creates a symbiotic relationship between practitioner, artist and spectator.

The creations of a "toriawase", an assemblage of myriad objects for one tea, lies at the heart of chanoyu practice. The word is a combination of two verbs: to pick and to put together. It is a profound skill critical to the accomplishment of the tea person. No objects are selected solely for their beauty; they are chosen as much for their functional suitability as their beauty. Their function is twofold; firstly, to serve perfectly as a utensil and secondly to act as a part of an assemblage which creates the best environment to welcome the guests and reflect the theme chose by the host. Individual and personal, toriawase is also a strict and profound practice whereby one's personal attachments and ambitions are set aside for the sake of others. It is a perfect reflection of what we would call the design process. Concern for others takes central place in the design process of "toriawase". Objects are not just perfectly placed in space next to each other. They are selected according to the form of the human body in terms of shape and placement while acknowledging the occasion and the particular guests. Toriawase is similar to monogatari or narrative, novel, literary work. "Object reverence" has always been an important part of Japanese culture. Mono or object in a traditional Japanese society was viewed in a cosmo centric perspective; therefore, the world of objects has been mythologized and poeticized. Mono are often animate and carry the energy of ancient traditions within. Their participation in a ritual, ceremony or matsuri festival, for example, is of supreme importance as they are communicating with people and with kami gods in a non-verbal way. There is a particular inner connection between a human and an object (even an everyday one) in Japan. Japanese pay quiet attention and are particularly impressed by objects, which result in a necessity to peer closely, to establish a connection with the object. Cleanliness is not only a hygienic quality, but also spiritual. Each object has its place and often its own "palace"- many layered boxes made of a special wood in a particular way. Some will even have a poetic name.

Poetic Names

From a distance a simple black lacquer tea container called "yozakura" ("cherry blossoms at night") looks plain and unadorned but upon close inspection a subtlety faint design of a blossoming cherry tree done in black upon black materializes. Each flower is different and there is only one way to properly close the lid. One is only able to notice it upon careful mindful observation.

The bamboo tea scoop accompanying the container might be given the poetic name. For example, one simple old bamboo scoop has been given a name of *"iezuto"*, "souvenir" and a

homonym to "(I) cannot tell." It refers to a poem about a man who, astonished by the beauty of cherry blossoms, wanted to bring a branch as a souvenir to his lover but on the way all blossoms fell. "I cannot tell" refers to both indescribable beauty and unspeakable sadness. Such relations between the objects built over the course of a chaji gathering are woven into the fabric of a story where poetic names become bridges between the objects and the current of the narrative.

The first objects to receive poetic names were the chatsubo or the tea jars. Tea was a precious commodity and after being picked in May will be carefully packed into a ceramic or pottery jar and taken to the mountains to keep it cool through the heat of summer. Naturally, thick tea containers chaire received the names as well. So did the bowls used for hick tea and the tea scoops often made from bamboo. By giving a name to an object tea people chajin empowered the particular objects recognizing the presence of their soul, their spirit. The name would be given by a grand master of a tea tradition or a so called "person of virtue" such as a priest of a temple. However, we also see a lot of names given by the artists themselves. Made in 1990 a raku bowl by Jikinyū (then Kichizaemon) has a name of 砕動風鬼 (saidōfūki). It translates into English as "Human Heart in Demon's Form" and derives from the treatise by Zeami Motokiyo (1363-1443) describing the various roles in a Noh play. This teabowl looks outrageous in terms of its appearance and isn't strictly speaking suitable for tea but in its outrageousness we see both the loyalty to the spirit of the first raku master and break through to the space of no limits.

A very different shigaraki teabowl has a name 月の影 (tsuki-no kage) and draws on poetic anthology of Hyakuninisshū, poem number seventy nine about the clear and pure moonlight. "Kage" means both shadow and silhouette, even phantom. Knowing the poem, selection of a silhouette translation seems appropriate.

Poetic names, and sometimes "poem-names" (when the whole poem becomes a name), can be seasonal or not seasonal. These days, the names that are not connected to the season, the ones carrying more philosophical meaning are given to the teabowls and tea scoops used to prepare thick tea koicha. Koicha is the central element of chaji, its culmination and its most important part. It is made and partaken in silence except for a short, scripted dialogue that is centered around the poetic names. The name of the teascoop in koicha will be connected to the calligraphy used a couple of hours earlier and is one of the most important pillars of toriawase.

Teascoops used for usucha or thin whisked tea and main okashi (sweets) always have a seasonal poetic name. Tea epitomizes seasonal appreciation, which is so important in Japanese culture. Saijiki or encyclopedia of seasons opens a fascinating world of micro seasons where the seasonal phenomena, foods, sweets, and the poetic names continuously change every two weeks or so. These changes are acutely reflected in toriawase and subsequently in the selection of the utensils according to their poetic names. Surely, nobody can have a perfect toriawase for every two weeks of the year but attending the tea gatherings, as well as the exhibits of chanoyu utensils and even permanent exhibits at the museums is a great learning opportunity. The students of tea practice, usually going to their teacher's house or a place of practice three times a month. When they perform a temae, they are asked to come up with their own "gomei" or poetic names for a teabowl and a teascoop. This becomes a practice of its own and the students are supposed to study the seasons, literary background of the seasonal phenomena etc. to come up with a suitable gomei. While the seasonal names must be always true to the season and even to the micro season, they also are part of an

overall experience in the tearoom and can allude to a particular shared memory between the guest and can certainly create a new one for the future.

Conclusions

Aesthetics and the sense of beauty in Japan occupy a special place and are at the foundation of the Japanese national identity. It doesn't just exist as a faraway ideal but is included in all daily activities of the ordinary people. To study Japanese aesthetics means to better understand Japan and the Japanese people. At the same time, we can transfer these attitudes and approaches to our own lives, cultures and communities. Mara Miller writes: "The value of Japanese aesthetics lies less in the knowledge they give us about the Japanese… than the truths they expose about the human condition…" (Miller, 2011).

Chanoyu, Japanese tea ceremony, is a rich and all encompassing interdisciplinary cultural complex that has penetrated every corner of the Japanese society. Chanoyu elevates everyday activities to the level of art and brings art closer to people and their daily life. By studying tea and about Chanoyu we have an opportunity to examine important cornerstones of Japanese culture and apply the knowledge in a variety of ways.

While every culture has seasonal awareness, in Japan it has been taken to a completely different level, so much so that it can be considered a separate discipline, and this is unique to Japan.

Poetic names in chanoyu are an invaluable and endless resource that opens the doors into history, literature, aesthetics and helps us to better understand Japan, the Japanese, as well as ourselves and the world. The study of gomei also helps to cultivate attention, awareness, and mindfulness.

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Photographing Japan in the Japan-Russo War Period: H. G. Ponting's Expression of Japan

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Abstract

Herbert George Ponting (1870-1935) was born in Britain and became active as a photographer in Britain and the United States. Not only does he take pictures, he writes illustrated articles to magazines. He is famous for his works taken at the Terra Nova Expedition's Antarctic winter camp in 1911 because of his cinematography and the uniqueness of the place. Before he went to the Antarctic, he had traveled Asia including China, Korea, and Japan between 1901 and 1906 and published two photo albums; *Fuji-San* (1905) and *Japanese Studies* (1906). Four years after he returned to Europe, he combined the two albums and added photographs and produced a travelogue *In Lotus-Land Japan* (1910). It is worthy of note that he recorded his journey in many ways; photo albums, individual photographs, cinemagraphs, and travelogues. Pointing expresses the journey differently. For example, he does not explain what he took except for an introduction in Fuji-San, while he described the travel in In Lotus-Land Japan which has almost 400 pages. This variation of record indicates there was a demand for information about Japan, and he provided it from various stances. Therefore, comparing these works would illuminate what readers want to see about Japan and how Ponting met their demands. This paper discusses what object Ponting adopted for his works and how they are explained with words to discuss his strategy to create images of the country at the period during Japan-Rosso war.

Keywords: Herbert George Ponting, Rosso-Japan War, Photography

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Introduction

From the end of the 19th century, Japan started to increase its international influence not only with their trading, but also with their arms. The victory of the Chino-Japan War (1894-1895) gathers attention to the trend of the Japan-Russo War (1904-1905).

Herbert George Ponting (1870-1935) was sent to the Far East, including China, Korea, and Japan in 1901 by the publishers of the American magazine *Leslie's Weekly* and the Universal Photo Art Corporation of Philadelphia, publishers of stereo photography (Arnold, 1971, p. 24). He was subsequently commissioned by the American stereograph publisher Underwood & Underwood and the British publishers of *Country Life* magazine to take photographs and conduct interviews, and visited Japan again in 1903. Stereo-photographs he took at this time were in series by Underwood & Underwood as *Japan through the stereoscope* (1904) (Brown, 2005, p. 24). He visited Japan every year until 1906, which is the period when Japan was fighting the Japan-Russo War. During his visit, he published two photo albums of Japan, *Fuji San* (1905) and *Japanese Studies* (1906) mainly from Japan. In 1910, he produced a travelogue *In Lotus-Land Japan* (1910) from British publisher Macmillan and co. He also turned his pictures into a cinematograph and he showed it to the members of Terra Nova Expedition.

His travelogue has second edition that contains Foreword as below;

> This book is written by a nomad who has worshipped at the shrine of Nature and Art in many lands; who has spent nearly three happy years in one of the most delightful of holiday lands and who served as a Correspondent with the First Japanese Army during the war with Russia. In it will be found no dissertations on politics economics or social problems; and he who seeks information concerning Japan's vast textile manufactures statistics of her progress or of the rapid growth of her military and naval mighty will search its pages in vain. (Ponting, In Lotus-Land Japan, 1922, p. v)

While he mentions that he "served as a Correspondent with the First Japanese Army during the war with Russia", He declares he would not make comment about politics, social problems, or even modernization in Japan.

However, it is almost impossible not to get any influence of the War. The question is how he manage to express his experience in Japan preventing the War, and how he turns stereographs which companies asked him to take into albums that is his own work. I will discuss this by comparing his works.

1. Japan Through the Stereoscope (1904)

Stereograph is a type of photography that became popular in the 19th century. When a card with two similar images is viewed through lenses, an optical illusion is created that makes them appear to be one three-dimensional image.

Ponting's stereograph series *Japan through the stereoscope* is consists of a hundred photos and, according to Terry Bennett, Ponting shoot more than 90 of them (Bennett, 2006, p. 579). He photographed nature, people, and lifestyle in Japan.

On the other hand, there is a stereograph of the War were published in the same year from the same publisher. It was taken in battlefield in China and the series continued to 1905.

Actually, it was difficult to take pictures of the War. According to Arnold, the work of Western battlefield reporters and photographers was not particularly productive, as the Japanese severely restricted the actions of their correspondents, kept their plans top secret. Photographs of the front line from the Russian side were available, but those from the Japanese side were rare (Arnold, 1971, p. 31). There is a series of albums of the war, but pictures were taken by Japanese army. It is therefore highly likely that these photographs were strictly censored and controlled by the Japanese military.

As he was a Correspondent with the First Japanese Army, he did take pictures for magazines, but he did not turn them in pictures in other works, while he turned many pictures in *Japan through the Stereograph* into his photo albums or travelogues. Therefore, were taken by Ponting, it is *Japan through the Stereograph*, not the photographs of the war, that can be called his work, over which he had authority and over which he photographed at will.

2. Fuji San (1905)

Fuji San is a photo book published in 1905, which, as the name suggests, contains 25 photographs of Mt Fuji. The book is in Japanese binding and was published by K, Ogawa (小川一真出版部). It is a publisher owned by Kazumasa Ogawa (小川一真, 1860-1929), a Japanese photographer who plated many works by foreign photographers in Japan such as *Great Earthquake of Japan* (1891) by John Milne (1850-1913) or S*upplement to Landscape Gardening in Japan* (1893) by Josiah Conder (1852-1920).

This album was dedicated to Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935) and W.B. Mason (1853-1923) and describes them as 'Authors of *Murray 's Hand-book to Japan* (Ponting, Fuji San, 1905, p. i)'. 'Murray's Hand-book to Japan' is officially known as *A Handbook for Travellers in Japan* which was kind of standard guidebook on Japan at the time. Here Ponting alludes to the association with the famous guidebook, indicating that it was aimed at travellers who would pick up Murray's guidebook maybe as a souvenir.

Ponting also refers to the authors of the handbook as 'my friends' in *In Lotus-Land Japan*, and states that they gave him advice (Ponting, In Lotus-Land Japan, 1910, p. vi). In the same preface, he describes the impetus for writing the travelogue as "these notes became so voluminous that the suggestion of friends, resident in Japan, that I should embody my experiences in a book, written round some of my photographs (Ponting, In Lotus-Land Japan, 1910, p. v)." There is a possibility that these two people, helped to realise this suggestion, because Ogawa, who collotyped and published Ponting's two albums had also, once helped produce the fourth edition of *Murray's Handbook to Japan* as the publisher responsible for sales. In other words, Ponting's works on Japan were born out of his detailed documentation of his travels and the connection he made during his travels, rather than from the requests of Western companies that asked him to go to Japan.

The idea of publishing a book of photographs of Mount Fuji itself was not new: *The Volcanoes of Japan Part 1, Fuji San* was published by Kelly & Walsh in 1892. Like Ponting's work, this is a collection of photographs of Mt Fuji taken from various angles by William Burton. The Plate is preceded by a commentary by John Milne (1850 -1913), professor of mining and geology at the Imperial College of Engineering, on the site and the decline in the area where the photographs were taken. Ponting's *Fuji San*, on the other hand, contains almost no written information other than the title of each photograph, with the exception of the Introduction. *The Volcanoes of Japan* is superior in terms of the amount of knowledgeable information.

How then did Ponting respond to travellers' receptivity? Masumi Yajima cites similarities between the photographs of Hokusai and Ponting in terms of differences in form, use of the foreground and the fact that the climber represents the steepness of the mountain (矢島, 2013, pp. 119-124). It indicates that the photographer was highly conscious of the artistic quality of his work.

According to *In Lotus-Land Japan*, he repeatedly read Patrick Lafcadio Hearn's (1850 -1904) *Kwaidan*, a collection of mysterious Japanese tales, during his climb up Mt Fuji, and at the summit of the mountain he describes "It was a wondrous, almost preternatural spectacle, like a vision of Dante's dream. I was Dante, and the gaping crater before me was the steaming mouth of the bottomless pit of hell (Ponting, In lotus-land Japan 203)". He felt as if he was in the world of *Divine Comedy*. In this way, he emphasis the exotic mystique of sacred mountain Mt. Fuji and he expressed it not in words but in photographs.

There are more photographs in *Fuji San* than in *Volcanoes of Japan* in which people influence the composition of the images. In fact, Ponting does not include all of his photographs of Mount Fuji in *Fuji san*. His stereograph 'Pilgrims at the End of their Ascent, on Fujiyama' (1904) includes a group climbing Mt Fuji, but it does not appear in his photo book. The fact that the subject's face is facing front may have been a factor in their exclusion from the album. For, all the other people in the photo either have their backs to us or their faces are obscured by shadows. By not showing their faces, it is not possible to identify who is in the photo and their expressions are in the imagination of each viewer. This is one of the way he keeps the mystic of the spiritual mountain that partly distract attention from the War.

The person becomes part of the landscape along with nature and never looks at audience. Therefore, viewer can concentrate on seeing the mysterious sacred mountain. Alternatively, the fact that the characters have their backs to the readers means that they are looking at sceneries, and the readers see the same thing as the characters, so the photographs in which people appear have the effect of giving a stereograph-like sense of realism. Readers who might have traveled Japan would recall their experience of mysterious land vividly, or readers who have not been there would be travellers in the future.

3. Japanese Studies (1906)

Ponting calls himself 'a nomad who has worshiped at the shrine of Nature and Art in many lands (Ponting, In lotus-land Japan v)', and *Japanese Studies* which was published in 1906 is a good example. This work also includes nature outside of Mt Fuji, such as Kegon Falls. It also features traditional Japanese architecture that is popular with travellers, such as Kinkakuji Temple, which were not included in the previous work. Also, while the previous work featured only boatmen and his climbing companions, this work features a wider range of characters of different genders, professions and ages.

The album contains many photographs that artisans making Japanese art. They are working on ivory, painting vases or doing embroidery. Japanese arts or crafts were actively exported to the West in the 19th century. These pictures show process of making objects that was already familiar to Westerners. In the previous album, the people were hide their faces mysteriously, but this time the faces are shown, which has the effect of making the viewer realise that the objects they may have in the West are actually made by human being in Japan.

As they are human, they have their daily life such as reading, cleaning, or greeting. Thus, this collection of photographs focuses more on people living in Japan than its predecessor.

Many of these photographs show women, wearing beautiful kimonos and holding Japanese umbrellas, admiring flowers or animals in their natural surroundings. Many artworks by artist who had influenced by Japanese art have those ladies or items in their works. Therefore, those women could be a symbol to express Japanese beauties.

Shooting Japanese women has another meaning. Although there is no mention of politics in his travelogues, stories of Russian prisoners of war and tragic episodes in Mukden are recounted. The most frequent mention of the war is in Chapter 12, "Concerned Japanese Women". In this chapter he talks about how devoted Japanese women were to supporting Japanese soldiers and how Japanese men respected women. He describes Japanese women during the war as follows.

> The self-control of the Japanese women, when troops were leaving for the Front, was misunderstood by many foreigners. They were called cold, and lacking in sympathy, and indifferent; but this was far, far from the truth, for they are full of such feminine instincts as sympathy and fellow-feeling. On such occasions as a husband going to the war it is a point of almost honour to control oneself, but I have often seen an act of kindness bring tears to Japanese eyes, and I have seen a whole theatre-full of people — women, and children, and men too—sniffling and sobbing audibly as a touching tragedy was being acted with masterly skill. No! the Japanese woman's heart is not hard and cold; it is full of sympathy, and tenderness, and pity. The Japanese smile, too, which is so often belied by the heart, takes long to understand, but when one knows what it often means, the very soul is sometimes wrung to see it. it. (Ponting, In Lotus-Land Japan, 1910, pp. 242-243)

Japanese women are 'full of sympathy, and tenderness, and pity', but they do not show it through self-control. Many foreigners misunderstand this as 'cold, and lacking in sympathy, and indifferent'. He tries to clear up the misunderstanding by saying 'No!' with a strong tone of voice: The Japanese smile also hides its true feelings, stating that 'the very soul is sometimes wrung to see it'.

This suggests that the female form is not just an expression of beauty, but that there is a soul-crushing emotion behind it: the people in *Japanese Studies* are, unlike the mysterious figures of *Fuji San*, human beings with individual feelings that face the reader. The album could be a study of the hidden heart of the Japanese people.

The work has a mechanism for capturing this emotional mapping. One of the characteristics of this work is that there are poems along with each photograph. For example, on the page of a photograph of a woman 'Otsunesan', there is a line 'modestly half turning as afraid the smile just dimpling on her glowing cheek (Ponting, *Japanese Studies* 11)'. This is a passage from James Beattie's (1735-1803) "Ode To Hope (1831)". By adding a verse that describes a world protected by the angels that hope brings, the woman's smile is not a cold, affectionate smile, but a benevolent hope. When the emotions triggered by the poem and the emotions triggered by the photograph overlap, all memories can be linked together and a value that transcends time and place can be found at the bottom.

It is also worth noting whose poems are quoted. Ponting quoted words from many poets. Among these, expressions from poet of Romanticism are most frequently used.

According to J.A. Cuddon, one of the characteristics of Romanticism is a "a shift in sensibility and feeling, particularly in relation to the natural order and Nature (Cuddon, 2000)". The poems and photographs Ponting choose obviously pay attention to nature. His choice of subject that people harmonized with nature fit the philosophy of Romanticism.

To add to the aspects of Romanticism that considering nature, there is another important characteristic which allow Japan to be their motif. Cuddon also points out that Romanticism has an aspect that "an increasing interest in Nature, and in the natural, primitive and uncivilized way of life (Cuddon, 2000)" Ponting shoot only the beauty of nature and traditional way of life in Japan and he carefully avoided the influence of the War. For instance, many pictures of sea or lake contain boat or sampan and equipment people use is only natural materials such as wood or textile. However, if you look closely to the picture "Miyajima", you can see two iron ships that one of them carrying containers in distance. Even though they look small because of distance and look like silhouettes of boat, they are Western style iron ship, It implies that Ponting intentionally choose the wooden little boats to take his picture.

As the result, Japan in his works doesn't have Western civilization and people lives the same style as they did in hundreds years ago, which is "the natural, primitive and uncivilized way of life". He does not directly make a case for or against the war, but by introducing Romantic poetry, he indirectly excludes, or denies, a westernising Japan.

Conclusion

Ponting photographed various aspects of Japan in Stereograph and turn them in various way such as photo books and travelogues. The first album, which emerged from his encounters in Japan, presents a mystical representation of the sacred mountain Fuji, while the second book is more intimate to the life and culture of the people, and tries to get to the heart of it by introducing Romanticist poetry. On the other hand, by venerating nature and connecting his work to the world affirmed by Romanticism, he fixes the image of Japan in the Romantic image of uncivilised nature, thus denying modernisation and war.

He describes his days in Japan as 'happy years in one of the most delightful of holiday lands', even under the War. When he describes his readership as visitors to Japan, for him Japan is a place to be visited by people and full of beautiful nature and culture, rather than a war-torn country. However, this Japan is a Japan calculatedly created by Ponting to be 'seen', as he deifies Japanese nature or touches the heart of the Japanese people, he find his ideal romantic world in Japan and providing his readers with a Japan he a carefully staged.

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Digital Media Literacy: A Teaching Framework to Enhance Intercultural Competence

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Abstract

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to interact and participate in a diverse community which is represented by the fundamental elements of knowledge, attitude, and skills. The need to promote intercultural competence should be visible to produce a global citizen. However, the current phenomenon shows that this competence remains implicit in within higher education curriculum. Therefore, the research aims to integrate the intercultural literary competence and digital media literacy as a framework to develop a series of assessments in a humanities course. The framework would highlight the use of digital media literacy competencies which are access, analyze and evaluate, create, and reflect to strengthen intercultural competence in the areas of attitude, knowledge, and skills as a global citizen.

Keywords: Digital Media Literacy, Intercultural Competence, Global Citizen

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Introduction

Intercultural competence refers to the ability to establish the relationship between or among different cultures. Several theories connect intercultural competence with intercultural communicative competence focusing on communication skills. The main components of intercultural communicative competences are related to attitude, knowledge, and skills for effective communication (Byram, 2021). Those components lie on the affective, cognitive, and behavioral areas where a learner uses his affective domain to be open-minded and affects his behavioral skills to interpret and discover the relationship between other and own's culture once he is able to recognize the values of two different cultures in the cognitive domain (Zhang, 2020). The model is further expanded by Deardorff which highlights external and internal outcomes as the skills to interact in a diverse society as presented in the picture below (Deardorff, 2006, as cited in Deardorff & Jones, 2023).
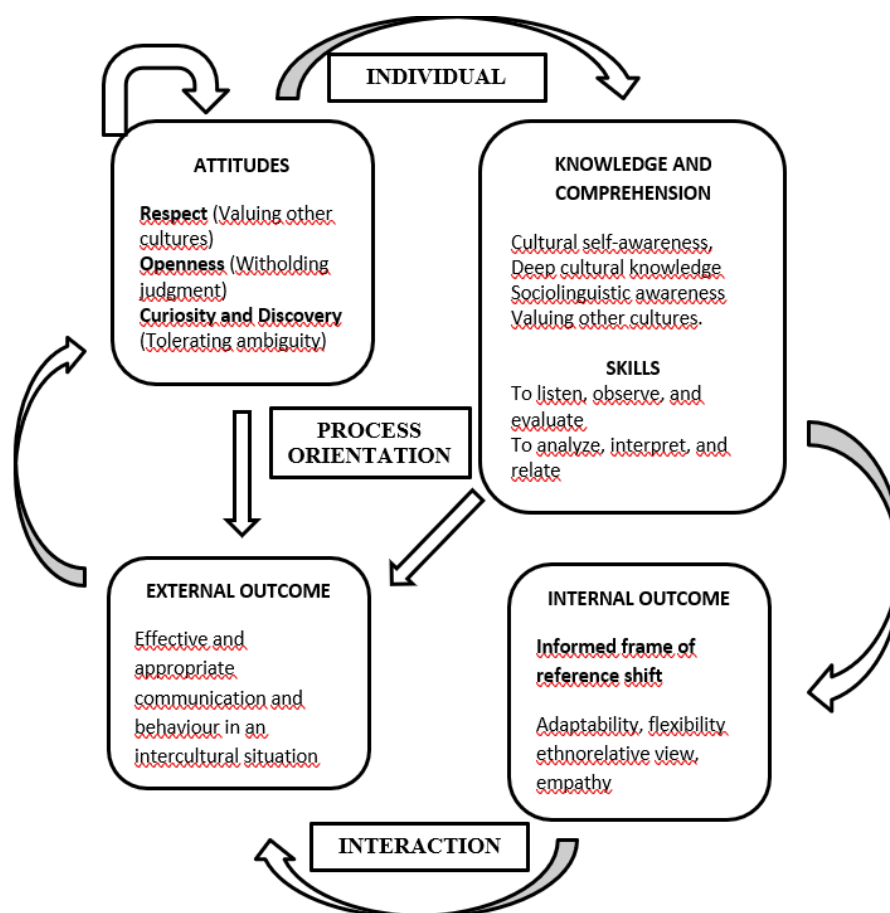
Figure 1: The Process Model of Intercultural Competence

The model demonstrates that the interaction starts from the attitudes which will influence the awareness to recognize the similarities and differences and equip the skills of observation and evaluation in comparing two different documents or artefacts. These knowledge and skills will accommodate the intercultural interaction as internal and external outcomes which are adaptability and effective communication in an intercultural setting. This competence eventually could be the prior experience for the learner to develop a better attitude in a more complex interaction at the higher level. Therefore, at the level of organization or corporation, the intercultural competence aims to establish a professional communication by covering the knowledge of cultural diversity, the comprehension of intercultural vocabulary and linguistic features, and cultural identity representation (Lysiuchenko et al., 2021). In other words, the

practice of intercultural competence combines the cultural sensitivity and the mastery of target language to deliver a message successfully. In addition, intercultural competence will also prepare the society to be global citizens as intercultural communication is one of the global competence facets which is acquiring the ability to use several set skills of communication during the intercultural interaction (Morais & Ogden, 2011). It extends the awareness to select the appropriate communication while overcoming the cultural boundaries which is leading to empathy and respect for cultural diversity (Byker & Ezelle-Thomas, 2021; Idrissi et al., 2020).

As intercultural competence is beneficial in the professional and global setting, it should be integrated especially in the higher education within an internationalized curriculum, virtual collaboration, or literary reading to enhance the intercultural communication skills (Duffy et al., 2022; Halpern et al., n.d.; Mustofa & Hill, 2018; Nemouchi & Bryam, 2019; Porto & Zembylas, 2022; Sierra-Huedo & Nevado-Llopis, 2022; Zhang, 2020). Designing the internationalized curriculum requires measurable learning outcomes including the assessment and the availability of teaching environment that supports the opportunities to practice intercultural competence (Ji, 2020). The learning outcomes should be stated explicitly at the beginning to ensure the students' focus and readiness to achieve the curriculum's main goals are the comprehension of intercultural attitude, knowledge, and skills. The instructor should also consider three dimensions to build the teaching environment by examining the students' communication skills and willingness to interact interculturally; the students' background and their prior experiences; and the quality of contact where students interact naturally or voluntarily with other cultures (Gregersen-Hermans, 2016 as cited in Ji, 2020, p.16). Virtual exchange may support intercultural contact naturally through several collaborative projects with other cultures when students interact in an informal situation and show interest in a familiar topic (O'Dowd, 2020). Furthermore, this virtual collaboration also leads to the students' "cultural awareness and mindfulness" when they are aware of the different power between two cultures which is resulting to the social adjustment (Duffy et al., 2022, p.12).

Literary texts in language learning will comprehend the intercultural knowledge through a dialogical approach between the readers and the text which is labelled as "intercultural literary competence" (Schat et al., 2021, p. 140). It focuses on two major parts which are dialogue with literature and dialogue about literature. Students are expected to show their curiosity in other cultures (*savoir-etre*) and expand their knowledge of other groups while reading literary texts (*savoirs*). At the same time, they use literary text to strengthen the skills of interpreting and relating by comparing the textual element of literary texts with other documents or their experiences (*savoir comprendre*). Those activities will lead to the next phase where students will compare their perspectives with other readers to have a dialogue about literature. Their ability on the skills of discovery and interaction (*savoir apprendre/*faire) will be assessed to create mutual understanding during communication or interaction and sharpen the critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*) among them. The picture below demonstrates the application of intercultural competence in the literary reading context.

Dialogue with literature	**Attitudes** (*savoir-être*): the extent to which the student is willing to approach representations of other cultures and one's own in the foreign language literary text with an open and curious attitude, and to suspend disbelief about other cultures and one's own.
	Knowledge (*savoirs*): the extent to which the student can use the foreign language literary text to expand one's knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in other cultures, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
	Skills of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*): the extent to which the student can recognise textual elements in the foreign language literary text, and the extent to which the student can explain the text and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
Dialogue about literature	**Skills of discovery and interaction** (*savoir apprendre / faire*): the extent to which the student can use the foreign language to acquire new knowledge (of a culture and cultural practices) and to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction about the foreign language literary text.
	Critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*): the extent to which the student can evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures, related to the foreign language literary text.

Figure 2: Intercultural literary competence developed by Schatt et al. (2021)

Those dialogues with and about literature also point out that the learning outcomes of intercultural competence should be visible to measure and to implement especially in the literary reading activities covering the cross-cultural issues. Stories about immigration, gender imbalance, or exile are relevant to practice the sense of empathy and respect (Eide et al., 2023; Nemouchi & Bryam, 2019; Porto & Zembylas, 2022).

Acknowledging the use of digital media in language learning could be another consideration to include in the curriculum since an emerging issue on cultural boundaries in media platform has been rising which should be a concern in the higher education (Cherkasova, 2021). The presence of hate speech, misinformation on socio-cultural issues, and discriminatory virtual language may influence the students' cognitive to compare other cultures (Aguerri et al., 2023; Muhammed T & Mathew, 2022; Relia et al., 2019). Digital media literacy as an additional skill in intercultural competence will simultaneously accommodate students' reasoning to evaluate multiple information, share selected information, and actively participate in the diverse society which is an essential skill in the 21st century (Mrah, 2022; Pradiptha & Narasati, 2021; Suwana, 2021). The digital media literacy competencies consist of essential skills to access; analyze and evaluate; create; reflect; and act in a regional, national, and international setting (Hobbs, 2010). At the level of accessing information, the students are expected to use the technology tools to find and share appropriate content with other readers after the process of information analysis and evaluation is conducted thoroughly. They also need to compose or reproduce the information based on the socio-cultural backgrounds of the targeted readers and reflect the process of gathering information. At the end, the cycle of digital media literacy will lead to their participation and engagement in the intercultural setting through various modes of communication. Digital media utilization in the intercultural communication practice also emphasizes that the process of engagement with the diverse community does not only focus on the intercultural communication barriers but also moves to the social activism especially to tackle the cross-cultural issues as the result of cultural awareness (Ranieri et al., 2019; Vavilina, 2020). Thus, the intercultural competence integration within curriculum should not only cover several areas on the teaching environment and text selection but also the digital media literacy as a media to practice the intercultural competence in a wider context.

As the need of intercultural competence is recommended to be integrated in the higher education curriculum, this study aims to embed the intercultural competence and digital media literacy through a series of assessments. The outcomes will cover the roles of students as consumers and producers of digital media to promote intercultural competence, especially in higher education. Two frameworks are used to design the assessments which are digital media literacy essential competencies (Hobbs, 2010) and intercultural literary competence (Schat et al., 2021) since those assessments are embedded in the humanity course.

Methodology

The classroom assessment design will focus on the three steps of instructional design model which are Analysis, Design, and Development as the first cycle of this research. The concept of instruction design is used to construct the learning or training program by conducting five steps of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (Branch, 2009). The first step of analysis requires the design to examine the gap between the expected outcomes and the learning issues through several investigations and literature review (Li et al., 2023). The gap will be determined from the comparison between the desired performance in the current curriculum and the actual performance taken from the early assessment of literary analysis. The design stage will outline the teaching materials and the learning objectives based on the finding from the need analysis. The development stage will extend the design by scheming the assessment based on the intercultural literary competence.

Discussion

Need Analysis on the Current Curriculum

The current curriculum in a private higher institution has adopted the general education from American Education system consisting of critical thinking, effective communication, ethical reasoning, global learning, information literacy and quantitative literacy as the core competencies provided in communication, humanities, mathematics, social and behavior science, and natural science courses in the first and second year of the study. On one hand, the curriculum has moved into "internationalized curriculum" to prepare the students for being global minded. The importance of general education likewise focuses on the students' engagement in civic participation, art and literary appreciation, critical awareness on social changes, and self-commitment on the ethical norm and paradigm (Jiang, 2019). Intercultural competence is included in the Introduction to Literature. The course outline states global awareness, critical thinking, and information literacy as the desired skills to recognize the historical and cultural issues influencing the literary form and identify the literary elements and the genre movements. In this context, literary text is used to enhance global awareness which simultaneously accommodates the internal competence by emphasizing the cultural identity, multiculturalism, and socio-political issues in the several discussions that will lead to tolerance and empathy (Bermúdez-Martínez & Iñesta-Mena, 2023).

However, one note as the gap is this general education practice implemented in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting indicating English is not the first or second language of the students to adopt American general education. This might show some barriers in the literary appreciation as the English language learning focus in the EFL high school setting is related to grammatical structure, language skills (listening, speaking, reading writing), and language features and generic structure of the text in the Emancipated Curriculum (Muslim & Sumarni, 2023; Wahyuni & Fatimah, 2023). Several courses are provided to address the issues by

designing English for Academic Purpose program to enhance the language skills and vocabulary knowledge through intensive reading, writing, and communication program in the matriculation stage. However, the exposure on the extensive reading or writing program is not fully covered either despite the potential benefits of authentic materials of fictions in extensive reading towards intercultural competence and global awareness (Bernal Pinzón, 2020; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2024; Uemura, 2020).

Thus, an initial assessment was conducted in the Introduction to Literature course to measure the intercultural knowledge due to the absence of extensive reading and writing program in the matriculation stage. The literary analysis instructed the students to examine the historical and cultural issues of two literary texts entitled "The Friends of Heraclitus" by Charles Simic and "Two Friends" by Guy de Maupassant by applying literary criticism. "The Friends of Heraclitus" was written to address positivity despite the war situated setting (Mijuk, 2002). On the other hand, Guy de Maupassant condemned war as a brutal incident by stereotyping the Prussian invaders (Indriyanto, 2019). Those two literary texts were purposely selected to introduce some relevant issues on global awareness and intercultural competence which are international conflicts, power dominance, marginalized groups, and negative stereotypes (Faraj et al., 2024; OECD, 2018). The result showed that some of them did not perform deeper level of intercultural comprehension by performing a superficial level of analysis and only focusing on the literary element identification. Others did not fully extend their understanding of the historical and cultural backgrounds that might influence the literary form as illustrated on the presentation slides below.

Picture 1: Literary analysis on
the character identification
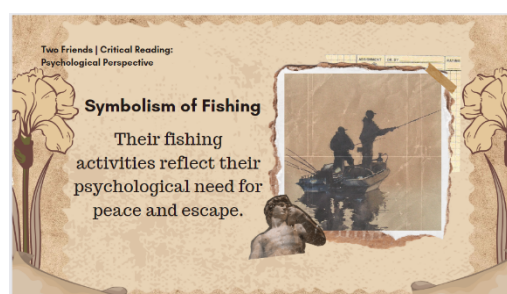
Picture 2: Literary analysis on
the symbolism identification

Picture 3: Literary analysis on
the biographical background
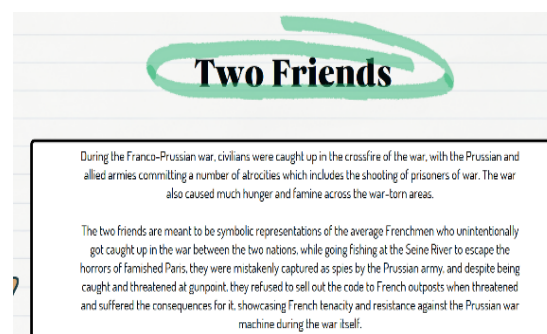
Picture 4: Literary analysis on
the historical background

The gap between the desired and the actual performance above highlights two points as the keys of the material and assessments to develop in the next stages. The first point notes the literary appreciation to reinforce intercultural knowledge needs to be more comprehensive. This could be due the purpose of the previous learning experiences which is intended for grammatical features (Muslim & Sumarni, 2023; Wahyuni & Fatimah, 2023). Another factor could contribute similarly if the prior learning environment is homogenous in some private schools (Al-Sumait et al., 2022). The second point could be based on the unfamiliarity of the war or settlement era contrasting to the the students' experiences. Thus, the distance between the text and the readers could be far to enrich the cultural knowledge (Huang, 2023). As the result, the next step of design and development should highlight two objectives above and broaden intercultural competence on the attitude and skill areas at the same extent.

Material and Assessment Design

As intercultural knowledge needs to be accommodated, the learning objectives adopt the second level parameter of intercultural communication skills (Soboleva & Obdalova, 2015, p. 59):

1. Ability to identify, recognize, analyze, and evaluate the differences of one's own and other cultures
2. Ability to interact with respect and tolerance to other cultures
3. Ability to accept the differences of other cultures without "prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination"

The first learning objective will highlight the comparison between the readers' experiences, cultures, and the values and the cultural phenomenon in the text to stimulate the cultural sensitivity. At the same time, they need to recognize the similarities between two cultures as the bridge to their empathy. The last two parts note their behavior and attitude to encounter the contrasting differences through verbal or non-verbal communication without any negative judgment.

Intercultural literary competence will be the framework to cover those learning objectives. Dialogue with literature which are attitude, knowledge, and skill of interpreting and relating support the first learning objective to compare the differences and the similarities between two cultures through several analysis on the literary elements and the cross-comparison to the readers' cultural background. The first cycle of the dialogue also emphasizes the use of attitude to dismiss prejudice and stereotypes through the willingness of being open-minded and curious. The second cycle of dialogue which are skills of discovery and interaction and critical cultural awareness cover the learning objective on respect, tolerance, and acceptance through a mutual understanding as the result of discussions and interaction about cultural phenomenon with other readers. This cycle stresses the possibility of different perspectives or reactions with other readers due to diverse cultural backgrounds which could be a practice of intercultural communication.

Since the research context is in foreign language teaching, the literary texts should be selected carefully. The less complicated diction, the average length, and the digital accessibility are essential components to provide literary text materials for foreign language learners (Oh et al., 2022). One of literary texts to offer is poems with short stanzas and repetitive diction for foreign language learners in higher education (Amri & Basthomi, 2022). The repetitive diction creates a connection between one line to another to produce a meaning. Several thematic issues on migration, exile, asylum, or gender imbalance in the poems or

other literary texts are important to analyze the intercultural issues deeper (Eide et al., 2023; Nemouchi & Bryam, 2019; Porto & Zembylas, 2022).

Three poems written by Langston Hughes, John Claire, and Sara Teasdale are selected to accommodate the intercultural themes as the reading materials. Langston Hughes' poem "I am too" points out hope and positivity to achieve the equal diversity as this poem reinforce the strength, beauty, and determination of African American (Dualé, 2018). The next poem, "I am" by John Claire, highlights the theme of asylum and self-isolation reflecting the author's experiences for being inclusive (Chatterjee, 2011). The last poem, "I am not yours" by Sara Teasdale, criticizes the role of women which was stigmatized as an object during Victorian Era wRidgley, 2017). Thus, the familiar issues regarding power dominance or marginalized groups could be addressed as they read those poems (Faraj et al., 2024; OECD, 2018). In addition, the use of 'I' in the beginning of the title reduces the distance between the authors and the students as the readers to create a connection between them (Görbert et al., 2021).

Dialogue With Literature to Promote Intercultural Competence as Critical Consumers

1.   Attitudes (Savoir-etre)

At this stage, students are expected to confront their skepticism with an open-minded attitude through the curiosity of other cultures and their own cultures or values (Schat et al., 2021). They might have some assumptions as they start reading the titles of the poems. This stage also activates their cultural background as the base of prior knowledge to identify the cultural markers associated with the author's background and lead more emotional response and curiosity (Cordell & Pennington, 2012). Therefore, the initial assessment could be finding some information about the biographies of the authors which may influence the thematic issues in the poem and address the assumption in the pre-reading process.

Task 1: The autobiography and the cultural readers
Phase 1
Literature is a mirror image of society which enables readers to reflect on the text's social phenomenon. Stories about immigration and exile are commonly found in the literature in prose, fiction, or drama. In this task, you are going to focus on the poems to explore those themes. Thus, read the poems below and find some reliable information about the authors.
1. "I am too" by Langston Hughes
2. "I am" by John Claire
3. "I am not yours" by Sara Teasdale

Notes:
As the poems are classical literary works, you are encouraged to find the information from the following indicators. This is also applied if you use several search engines to search the references.
1. Refer to an autobiography as the primary resource.
2. Use the academic resources that research the authors' lives and their works.
3. Check the availability of editorial board or reviewers to validate the accuracy and the reliability.

During this information research, the use of digital media literacy will be crucial to find more reliable information provided in the search engines. One of the instruments to accommodate is C.R.A.A.P. tool to evaluate the information based on the latest currency, the reliable information, the author credential, the accurate information, and the purpose of the media platform (Muis et al., 2022). Although some contemporary authors may have the personal websites, comparing with other sources which has the editorial board or reviewers will be more beneficial to check the quality of their works and guarantee the information in the public domain (Sirlin et al., 2021).

When students are able to find the accurate information on the biographies, the next part should provide more stimulations to connect the text and the readers and to increase the curiosity. The instruction will be comparing the authors' lives with their experiences whether both may share the similar or different incidents (Mustofa & Hill, 2018). Thus, the barriers or the distance between the authors and the readers could be overcome.

Task 1: The autobiography and the cultural readers
Phase 2
After you find the authors' biographies, choose one of the poems and answer the following questions:
1. What could be the common socio-cultural background between you as the reader and the author? Are there some differences between you and the author?
2. What are several dictions in the poem that represent the author's cultural background?
3. Which part of the poem does attract you to know more about the author's purpose?

At the same time, the assessment above leads to students' empathy especially when the authors explicitly express their voices of the gender, cultural, and marginalized issues in the texts (Chiranjevi, 2023).

2. Knowledge (Savoirs)

The next stage instructs students to extend the interaction with the text through identification and analysis. This activity will comprehend the knowledge of other cultures to enrich the understanding on the differences between the values provided in the literary text and the values or tradition that the students adopt in their current society (Schat et al., 2021). Students need to regard the literary text as the object of their research to explore more elements and devices such as symbolism, figurative languages, rhyme, dictions, and other forms to find the meaning and ideas as the implied message and the purpose of the text (Fulton et al., 2023; Wilson, 2021). Examining the text's historical and social background may eventually contribute to better understanding when the literary text reflects the social issues occurring in a society.

> Task 2: Literary text exploration.
> Instruction:
> As you have chosen the poem among three options before, you will read it deeper. Thus, use the critical questions below to analyze the poem:
>   1. Identify the challenges experienced by the speaker which may represent the minority and the disadvantaged group in the society. Add the social or historical background that lies behind the text.
>   2. Recognize the positive values the speakers uphold to survive as presented in several dictions, rhymes, or figurative language.
>   3. Compare the speaker's values or traditions to the values, principles, or traditions in your society or community. Identify whether the similarities or differences are presented through that comparison.

The use of guided questions above could help foreign language learners to read the text better and initiate their own questions to interact with the text (Fulton et al., 2023). Thus, the guided instruction in the EFL setting will lead to better reading comprehension, especially in the literary reading for the first-year students.

3. Skills of Interpreting and Relating (Savoir Comprendre)

The last stage of dialogue with literature gives a deeper understanding of literary analysis by comparing the textual elements of literary texts with other documents, events, or the readers' experiences (Schat et al., 2021). It allows the students as the readers to see the connection of different eras, genres, and cultures indicating that one text is communicating with other texts (Hoff, 2016). Thus, the literary text provides a space to recognize the global issues related to multiculturalism and diversity in a broader perspective in a current life as the continuation of the story or events in the literary texts. However, awareness on the fabrication of those social phenomenon especially in this 21st century should be trained where each information could be displayed and accessed easily. Some information could be the factual one and another could be fabricated for certain purposes which is blurring the differences between facts and opinions (De Abreu, 2021). Some false information is even could be categorized as misinformation (inaccurate information without manipulation purpose), dis-information (inaccurate information intended for manipulation purpose), and mal-information (genuine information intended to cause turmoil) (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Thus, digital media literacy should be embedded in this stage to evaluate the quality of another event, source, or text as the secondary document as illustrated in the picture below (Hobbs, 2010).
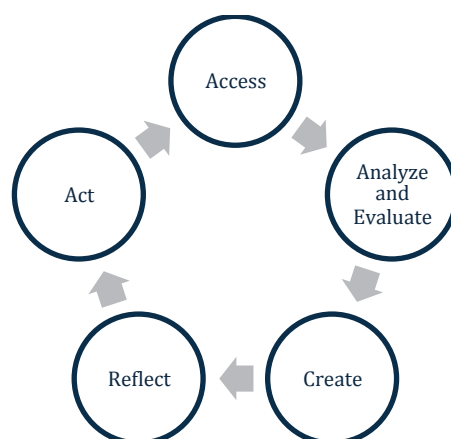
Figure 3: Digital and media literacy competencies

Accessibility becomes the first gateway for the readers to research or find relevant information by using the available technology tools. At the same time, this step also demonstrates the students' ability to use appropriate search engines that will provide necessary information. The next step which is analysis and evaluation requires the students to be more critical through several checklists which are related to the author's intended purpose, the credibility, and the possible impacts towards the other readers (De Abreu, 2021; Hobbs, 2010). The use of C.R.A.A.P. test instrument is possible to evaluate the information deeper. Therefore, the integration of digital media literacy in the skills of relating and interpreting enables the students to check the quality of secondary text which may have the same issue or theme as the prior activity.

Task 3: The text and the society

Phase 1

Instruction:

Find two mass media that may have a similar theme to the poem you chose. The mass media should be published within this year to be more relevant to the current society. Evaluate the quality of information from that mass media using 5 critical questions that have been developed by The Center for Media Literacy:

1. Who created this message?
2. What techniques are used to attract my attention?
3. How might different people understand this message from me?
4. What lifestyles, values, and points of view are represented or omitted from this message?
5. Why was this message sent?
   After you do some evaluation, consider one media that provides more equal diversity and less or no sentiment, hate speech or stereotypes.

As the information quality is already assessed, the comparison between the literary text and another document or the secondary text could focus on the narrative perspectives by comparing and contrasting the "syllepsis, common narrative, self-statement and multiple narratives" (Lu et al., 2020, p. 444). Syllepsis perspective is the author's position as a bystander through the process of observation which may not have personal bias. Common narrative plays the author's role as the secondary character which may include some responses or reactions. Self-statement refers to the author's position as the protagonist that tells the events based on the personal experience and multiple narratives allow some multiple voices or narrators to create a story. The next assessment below compares those two texts based on the authors' roles which are as bystanders, protagonists, or multiple narrators to write the events. Dictions are another point to compare the author's purpose since it aims to move the readers' mental images.

Task 3: The text and the society
Phase 2
Instruction:
As you have analyzed two mass media in the previous phase, you will compare one selected mass media to the poem you have chosen. Answer the following questions to compare those texts.

1. What is the speaker's position in the poem? Is he observing (third point of view) or experiencing the event (first point of view)? Does it have a different or similar position to the author in the mass media?
2. Do those texts (the poem and the mass media) present single or multiple narrators/voices?
3. What are the similar dictions or words between those two texts to represent the same theme or purpose?
4. Do the dictions or words in the mass media represent the logical order of narration to bring the same issue in the poem?
5. Does the mass media contain the indigenous language to represent the voice of minority and disadvantaged group in the poem? What are the words of indigenous languages if they are presented in the mass media.
6. As the poem and the mass media may share the same issue, how is it also correlated with your social experiences as a global citizen?

The use of indigenous or local language could be additional point of discussion to compare whether the secondary text has the same purpose of the literary text to represent the voice of minority or marginalized group (Lema-Blanco & Meda González, 2016; Msughter et al., 2021). The last question refers to the role of student as global citizens which challenges the reaction or the response towards the global issues presented in both texts. Those questions finally direct the reading experiences move forward to analyze, evaluate, and relate the foreign language literary text to the current phenomenon across the period.

Dialogue With Literature to Promote Intercultural Competence as Critical Producers

1. Skills of Discovery and Interaction (Savoire Apprende/Faire)

The first stage of dialogue with literature should generate a media of discussion or conversations with other students or readers to challenge their perspectives after reading the literary text (Schat et al., 2021). This stage initiates their intercultural communication skills as they must know of reactions or responses in the dialogue. Therefore, it is important to note that the discussion should not focus on the right or wrong perspective as each student may have different experiences and processes of reading literary text which covers the cultural issues (Shufflebarger Snell, 2020). Therefore, the goal of the discussion should reach mutual understanding between two or more students to share the positive values that could be universal for all parties (Méndez-García & Cores-Bilbao, 2023).

Task 4: The reader and other readers.

Phase 1

Instruction:

Literature has affected readers in a more personal way through the similar stories between the characters or the speaker and the readers. In this assignment, you will discuss your reading experience and your perspectives about the issue presented in the literary text with your friends of two or three. Note the similar and different perspectives happening in the discussion. Then, identify the mutual understanding that can be concluded.

Another goal that should be the learning outcomes of this discussion is students place their knowledge on cultural diversity to emphasize hope and solidarity and tackle disinformation or mal-information (Garcia et al., 2021; Porto & Zembylas, 2022; Vavilina, 2020). Thus, an extension as the follow-up activity could focus on the next competence of digital media literacy which is creation to reproduce or generate digital content as a response to the literary text. The digital content production should consider three aspects of visual content, visual verbal, and visual design that promote equality and diversity (Kirklies et al., 2024). The visual content should address the sense of belonging for all viewers by providing equal composition of gender, age, and ethnicity. The visual verbal should cover inclusivity without excluding the minority related to gender, and the choice of diction should attribute the neutral pronoun. The visual design should consider the composition of color, contrast, or layout and the use various modes for diverse readers. Through this extended assessment, students play their roles as global citizens to actively participate in a digital society and reproduce the meaning of the literary text from the previous activities which are identification, analysis, comparison, and evaluation process in their reading journey.

Task 4. The reader and other readers.
Phase 2
Instruction:
As you have reached a mutual understanding between you and your friends in the previous discussion, work together with them to create a poster containing one stanza along with the title and design a poster as a response to the literary text. The stanza should be originally made by yourself. The poster will be published in your social media as a civic engagement. Thus, you may need to pay attention to the notes below to create safety digital information.

1. Visual content
The content of the poster should represent equality by covering several groups of people based on ethnicity, gender, age, and social classes. Do not only put one certain group in the poster. If you insert a song as the audio background, it should represent the heterogenous community in the message.

2. Visual verbal
The stanza should avoid any words or diction that may provoke hate speech, stereotyping, and discrimination. Thus, you need to consider the choice of diction that represents positive diversity and invites solidarity and unity from diverse communities. You may also use some dictions from indigenous language that may represent your identity as the author in a positive manner.

3. Visual design
The design of the poster should invite diverse communities to have the sense of belonging by considering the color, tone, or contrast. You may do a small survey or use the available one to gather the data about people's preferences on colors.

Before you post the poster, consult and discuss with the instructor to anticipate possible issues.
You are also encouraged to give some comments to other posters once the posters have been published as a global citizen. Give comments at least to two posters from the other groups.

2. Critical Cultural Awareness (Savoir S'engager)

The last assessment reframes students' understanding on the intercultural issues by reflecting the personal insight to sharpen the critical cultural awareness (Schat et al., 2021). Therefore, the reflection assessment could focus on the students' final perspectives to compare other knowledge products of digital content and create a new concept as the constructive knowledge. As they are able to construct the knowledge, the intercultural competence is reinforced which is not only for intercultural communication purpose but also for advocacy (Felton et al., 2023).

> Task 5: A final reflection
> Instruction:
> Compare your poster with other posters (including the comments on the poster) and reflect how other people or other readers may have similar or different perspectives on the text that you have read. Explore some insights or perspectives that you gain during the process of reading through several assessments that you have accomplished.

The final reflection above highlights the process of critical cultural awareness as the final output of intercultural competence since knowledge and attitude are the foundation to acquire the skills. Furthermore, the use of digital media literacy strengthens the knowledge to critically analyze and evaluate the literary text from the biographical perspectives and cross-comparison of textual elements. At the same time, the use of literary text as the media of intercultural competence material could support the purpose of intercultural competence for successful communication within two diverse cultures.

Conclusion

Integrating digital media literacy and literary text could be an alternate strategy especially in the language or humanities courses. Since the students are more exposed to the massive and digital information, intercultural competence should also consider the importance of media literacy as some information might be intended for harmful purpose that could impact the readers' knowledge to perceive the diverse cultures and causes skepticism during intercultural interaction. Therefore, embedding intercultural competence in higher education will prepare the students especially in the diverse workplace that requires professional communication skills. Thus, the faculty members should find some methods or approaches to incorporate intercultural competence within their courses and consider the teaching media or text materials which could adopt the model of intercultural literacy competence.

Further research as a continuation of this research could assess the practicality of the assessments which have been developed from digital media literacy and intercultural literary competence. This could be a future suggestion to redesign the classroom assessment based on the students' background or the characteristics. Another recommendation could be the design and the development of classroom assignments in other disciplines since the research context is limited in the humanities course.

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Discourse on LGBT in the Gameshow "Who Is Single" in Vietnam's Multi-platform TV Landscape

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Abstract

Communication on sexual issues in Vietnam was still cautious in the past due to the influence of deep social prejudices about homosexual people. However, in recent years, movies and gameshows about LGBT have been represented quite openly in the media. There are number of studies on the LGBT community in Vietnam, but from a media and cultural perspective, there is still a gap. Using the method of case study, indepth-interview and discourse analysis, this article explains the attraction of the dating show "Who is single" on multi-platform television in the journey to overcome social prejudices of the LGBT community in Vietnam. The research results show that constructing discourse by positioning homosexuals as equal to other sexual orientations through a symbolic system and program structure has brought a different view of LGBT in a such society witnessing a lot of stigmas against them as Vietnam.

Keywords: LGBT, Dating Show, Who Is Single, Multi-platform Television, Discourse

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Introduction

It is difficult to determine the exact number of homosexual people (Nguyen Minh Tri, 2022) in any country, especially a country with quite special culture like Vietnam. In 2020, there are about more than 2,900,000 LGBT people (GSO, 2021) in Vietnam (out of more than 97,5 million total population), with about 0,5 percent of transgender people. However, the uncounted number of LGBT people may be even larger than that, which also reveals many implications about the social conception for a minority group. They all go through ups and downs of emotions, experiences of personal expression and life events to come to conclusion about their sexual orientation. However, whether they come out as their true gender after that depends on many factors from themself, context, family, friends, society ... Currently, many people still confuse concepts such as: *biological sex* (gender based on external genitalia), *gender identity* (APA, 2012) (subjective feeling about one's own gender), *sexual orientation* (APA, 2008), *gender expression* (expressing one's gender through clothing, behavior, job choices, personal relationships, and other factors). Among them, *sexual orientation* is an enduring personal pattern of romantic attraction or sexual attraction (or a combination of these) to the opposite sex or gender (heterosexual), the same sex or gender (homosexual), or to both sexes, more than one gender (biosexual), no sexual attraction/desire/need (asexual) (Do Van Tuan, 2020). The modest number of non-heterosexual people has become a minority group in society, abbreviated as LGBT+ (Les, Gay, Biosexual, Transgender and more).

As mentioned above, the number of LGBT people come out as their sexual orientation is few. In 2009, among gay men surveyed, only 2.5% came out completely about their sexual orientation, and 5% almost came out. Meanwhile, 32.5% are completely secret about their sexual orientation and 35% are almost secret. The remaining 25% is "sometimes secret, sometimes public" depending on the environment. Various studies conducted by iSEE from 2009 to 2012 all showed similar results about gay people's reticence in expressing their sexual orientation (Pham Quynh Phuong, 2013), even with their family and closed friends. Coming out is very important for non-homosexual people. Sharing their sexual orientation with others impacts the mental health of LGBT people. There is scientific evidence that the process of recognizing and disclosing sexual orientation is closely related to their psychological changes. The more favorable and positive that process is, the more their mental health and self-esteem will improve. On the contrary, people who try to hide their sexual orientation often experience psychological problems such as negativity, depression or even suicide (Ko et al., 2020).

The root of Vietnamese LGBT 's reluctance to come out is society's attitude. Vietnamese homosexual people still have to face the stigma of monopogy heterosexual ideology (Pham Quynh Phuong, 2013). This is influenced by Chinese culture from the past, with the responsibility towards family and lineage to continue each individual's family line. On 17 May 1990, the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality from the list of mental illnesses. Following this, in 2001, the third edition of the Classification and Diagnostic Criteria of Mental Disorders in China formally deleted homosexuality from the psychosis category. However, two decades later, it is still common to regard people with same-sex orientation as abnormal. An alarming example was a recent publication by Jinan University Press which published a textbook titled Mental Health Education for Chinese University Students in 2016. It classified homosexuality as one of four psychosexual disorders, together with transvestism, fetishism, and voyeurism (Shixuan Fu, 2023). In Vietnam, homosexual people living in rural areas tend to move to big cities, which have a more friendly and open-minded towards LGBT people. When asked about the reason for not disclosing their gender,

the answers were fears: social discrimination, family disapproval, being teased, bullied and losing their jobs (iSEE, 2009). Marrying a heterosexual person is also a choice for many homosexual people, which helps them hide their gender identity on the one hand, and on the other hand, still ensures responsibilities to the family and lineage. This creates tragic marriages for heterosexual people who did not know real sexual orientation of their spouse, in which their children are also victims. Another reason may be religion, when homosexuality is considered as an abomination and a sin like Christianity (Prakoso, Arifianto, & Suseno, 2020).

In that social context, mass media and its content which played a significant role in shaping knowledge in society, including the knowledge about sexuality, now have more opportunities to prove their strengths on various platforms. In the past, the method and content of press coverage created misunderstandings about the LGBT community, portraying one-sided and deviant descriptions of homosexual people. That further highlights the "endless stigma" (Dina and Irene, 2022) in society. That stigma is so scary that it can make LGBT people to stigmatize against themselves. The point is not to internalize self-stigma (Trinh Dinh Minh Viet et al., 2022), but the incredible impact on a person of many stratified discrimination in society. When a transgender person feels different from friends, family, colleagues, teachers, religion, media, and government agencies, it is difficult for them to accept themselves. And they hate that they are LGBTIQ+. And then they live in a complicated loop includes self-stigma with themselves, discomfort with anyone who is non-heterosexual, and at the same time social discrimination collides around them and other LGBTIQ+ people. In Vietnam, according to the research on self-stigma scale by Trinh Dinh Minh Viet mentioned above, three common behaviors of self-stigma LGBTIQ+ people are denying, hiding and changing themselves to feel "normal" to fit in social stereotypes.

Along with the world's general trend of fighting for the rights of LGBT minorities, in recent years, Vietnam has been recognized for its openness and great progress in the rights of homosexual, bisexual and transgender people (Pham Quynh Phuong, 2013). It also shows the positive moving and openness of mainstream media in changing social attitudes towards a group of people who must be recognized to have the same fundamental human rights as others. This paper attempts to explain the influence of the reality show Who is Single in the process of changing the perception of the LGBT community through the discursive system inserted in the program in the context of multi-platform television coverage which is more widespread and accessible than ever. Through in-depth interviews with 10 LGBT people and 10 straight people who have watched the above gameshow combined with discursive analysis, this research will point out the elements that create discourse about LGBT people in the journey to bring about the image of LGBT people to come closed to heterosexual people, which is one of the factors that makes the show attractive.

The Dating Show "*Who Is Single?*" Vietnam

"Who is single?" Vietnam is a reality gameshow jointly produced by Ho Chi Minh City Television and Vie Channel company (part of DatViet VAC Group Holdings). This is a dating show with original copyright from Thailand (Roo Mai Krai Sod – **รู้ไหมใครโสด**, English name: *Who is Single?*). The first episode was broadcasted on HTV2 - Vie Channel, Vie ENTERTAINMENT - VTVCab 1 on November 2nd 2018. The show has aired 5 seasons with 12 to 16 episodes each on different platforms.

In each episode, a beautiful and single girl finds the right guy to fall in love with. She must eliminate those who are married or in a romantic relationship, LGBT people and find out who is single and suitable for her. Each episode has an advisory board to help players choose the right guy from 5 guys that the show provided.

In round 1, each candidate will appear and introduce themselves through a short clip. The advisory board and the audiences in the studio will make their predictions about each person's gender and marital status to advise the girl. With those analysis and observations, the girl will decide to eliminate a guy, and that person will reveal his gender and marital status through a scene. In round 2, the remaining 4 guys will overcome a simple challenge with support from the advisory board, in which they are forced to reveal themselves more. Similar to round 1, the girl will continue to eliminate an unsuitable guy. The remaining three candidates will enter round 3 with their own hashtag. For each hashtag that each guy provides, the advisory board and players will have time to ask and answer that person on the topic corresponding to the hashtag. Only at this point in the round can each person answer the question posed by the advisory panel. At the end of the Q&A sessions with the characters, the advisory board will advise the main character so that she can choose the right single guy. The girl will decide to give the bouquet to the last person she chooses, and each guy in turn will appear with a pre-prepared performance. The lights in the stage will also change based on the person's final identity, specifically the lights will change to:
  - green, if the guy is single;
  - red, if that person already has an "owner" (wife/husband/lover);
  - purple, if that person is LGBT.

Who is single? Vietnam caught the attention of the audiences from the first episode. Beside always on high rating in many years (according to indepth-interview with the leader of HTV2), the show affirms its enduring appeal with the Top One trending YouTube in season 5. On Internet television service of Vie Channel it is the hot show and there are some episodes reached 17 million views on Youtube. In 2019 and 2021, *Who is single?* nominated in WeChoice Awards for *The show of the year*. After each episode, online newspapers and social networks report on successful or failed pairings, and on emotional stories in the show. When conducting in-depth interviews with both LGBT and straight people who have watched the show, despite their different assessments, they all said that one of the factors that makes the show resound is its humanity. For some LGBT people, the image of the "purple" community is not only reflected, but also constructed through the program, contributing to changing society's view of minority sexual orientation. Therefore, a number of the program's audiences are people from the LGBT+ community.

In the context of multi-platform television spreading but not taking root like today, hot TV shows easily become viral videos on social networks. New technologies allow viewers to watch TV content anytime, anywhere, on a variety of devices, no longer depending on the fixed broadcast times of broadcasters. Social media platforms give audiences the ability to easily interact with each other, engage, and share content with strangers, which is a new and exciting experience compared to watching traditional television. In addition, new TV channels provide audiences with more diverse, richer content and topics, and are easily searchable to suit their interests and needs. This, on the one hand, helps diffuse the popularity of the show in the social television ecosystem as a new monetization model, and on the other hand, disperses and even divides audience into groups. Therefore, audience researchs play a crucial role in producing, distributing television products and customer accessing. In Vietnam, media companies that produce soap operas and reality shows and sell them to

television stations are increasingly popular. Hence, understanding the audiences will be even more meaningful when they have become customers with the power to choose the products they want to see and buy from many television service providers.

"Reality TV is a catch-all category that includes a wide range of entertainment programmes about real people. Sometimes called popular factual television, reality TV is located in border territories, between information and entertainment, documentary and drama. Originally used as a category for law and order popular factual programmes containing 'on-scene' footage of cops on the job, reality TV has become the success story of television in the 1990s and 2000s" (Annette Hill, 2005).

Discourse on LGBT in the Show

The discourse theory is strongly influenced by Michel Foucault with explanation on the distribution of power and knowledge. Where there is an imbalance of power, a type of dependent knowledge is produced. Discourse is different from speech, writing or ordinary language in its dynamism, which closely connects the elements: speaker, target audience, and context of existence (Nguyen Hong Tra 2022: 7). According to Foucault, every statement or text that has effect or contains meaning is considered discourse (Sara Mills 2004: 6), a group of individualized statements, or a normative activity that creates a set of statements. Besides creating meaning, discourse also intervenes in reality. The influence of discourse on reality and the influence of reality on discourse are two parallel processes. Discourse is not created randomly, but is created and authorized by institutions of power (Vu Hoang Long 2022 : 26). Discourse analysis therefore includes analysis of social practices focusing on the relationship between power and ideology where texts are produced and received. With reality shows, discourses can be inserted in the program format, symbols, stories, guests and interactions between program participants. But in a long-running show with many seasons and episodes, maintaining the content of discourse requires certain strategies and censorship.

By indepth-interviews with 10 LGBT and 10 heteroseaxual people both in person and via Internet chatting, they all stated that *Who is single* contributed to change the concept on LGBT people, especially homosexual around them in real life. With interesting format inserting symbols and authentic stories, how has the show conquered the public when the LGBT people participate in?

Celebrity Involvement As Symbolic Representatives

One of the elements that made the show successful was the host Tran Thanh and the mentor throughout the first 3 seasons of Huong Giang Idol. Originally a contestant in Vietnam Idol 2012, Huong Giang came out as a transgender-woman under the spotlight of the eliminating round as an inevitable choice. Born in a Northern family (which is considered a less opened-minded area than the South), Huong Giang (real name Nguyen Ngoc Hieu) is the only son of the family with an older sister. Hieu secretly went to Thailand to have surgery for trans-gender before going to the competition, and until she appeared in Vietnam Idol as a woman that her father really knew about it. In response to the judge's question whether she had competed in the previous season under a different name, she came out in front of millions of television audiences. She said that the transformation helped her to live as herself and to stand on the stage. She reached the top 4 of Vietnam Idol that year thanks to audience votes.

In 2018, Huong Giang was crowned as Miss International Queen in Pattaya, Thailand, which honored her as the queen of the LGBT community in Vietnam (as she mentioned several times in *Who is single*). It was an event that promoted a more opened view of society towards the LGBT community. After that, she has continued to perform as a singer but became better known to the public through several reality TV shows.

The fact that Huong Giang became a mentor in the show *Who is Single* is one of the crucial elements that make the program attractive. The evidence is when the show changed the role to model Minh Tu from season 4, many viewers have responded expressing their regret that Huong Giang is no longer a mentor throughout the show. They commented via social network platforms that she was a representative of "purple" in the show, understanding the issues of homosexual people and inspiring people through their stories, with sensitivity, intelligence, humor that creates laughter and the attractiveness of the program.

Besides, appearance in several episodes of celebrities who have come out such as BB Tran, Lam Khanh Chi, Vu Cat Tuong has also created positive effects for the show. They are all living examples of overcoming social prejudices, living with their true self, contributing to art and being accepted by the public.

Equal Role of LGBT People in the Diverse-Sexual-Orientation Show

Who is single is not the first show with LGBT participation. Those who has ever lived in a Vietnamese village knows about the "Loto" shows of mobile LGBT performance groups in many provinces throughout the country. The documentary film "Madam Phung's last journey" has resonated and opened new perspectives on homosexual people in Vietnam. Recently, some reality shows about LGBT are also produced and broadcasted on Internet platforms such as: The Tiffanys Viet Nam, Just Love, Come out… but they have not attracted much attention from the audience amid the flourishing social television landscape. Those are programs that only have the participation of LGBT people with their own stories in their own world. That format seems not to be friendly with heterosexual (most of the audience), marginalizing, even isolating the people and stories in a "subculture" that has suffered many social stigmas.

In that context, *Who is single* became the first reality show for LGBT people broadcasted on television. What is worth mentioning here is that they appear in every broadcasting episode, with completely equal roles with heterosexual people in the competitions. This itself is an implicit statement about the position of homosexual people in society. Besides, the way the advisory board (including LGBT celebrities) in the show discusses signs of "purple" guys in behavior, lifestyle, and attitude in normal and free words similar to that for heterosexual people further confirms that. In some episodes, the leading woman mistakenly chose the homosexual guy as final one (the winner to date with). Through many challenges of the program and the advisory board, their true sexual orientation was not revealed. It is further evidence to the fact that they are completely "normal" people.

Moreovers, the show uses a color-coded system to categorize participants: green for single, red for taken, and purple for LGBT individuals. This visual representation helps normalize the presence of LGBT participants by integrating them into the show's format seamlessly. It subtly reinforces the idea that LGBT individuals are just as normal and valid as anyone else, challenging viewers to see beyond traditional norms.

Generally, the show actively includes participants from different segments of the LGBT community, such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. This diversity ensures that a wide range of experiences and identities are showcased, helping to dispel the notion that LGBT identities are monolithic. For example, participants have included transgender women and gay men who share their unique stories and perspectives, thereby educating viewers on the diversity within the LGBT community. By showcasing LGBT individuals as complex and multifaceted people rather than stereotypes, the show challenges existing prejudices and misconceptions. This helps in normalizing LGBT identities and relationships in a society where traditional norms have often overshadowed inclusivity.

High-Profile of LGBT Contestants in the Show Challenge Stereotypes

Like the other contestants in the show, the "purple" guys and girls are all good-looking people, with their own careers and certain positions in society. The show's format allows high-profile LGBT contestants to confront and challenge stereotypes directly. By showcasing their successes, talents, and authentic selves, these contestants counteract negative perceptions and highlight the diversity within the LGBT community. The "come out" performances of successful homosexual couples such as designer Huy Phan – CEO Quach Thai Cong in season 3 or Anh Thư - Minh Minh in season 4 created more attraction for the show. This representation is crucial in a society where traditional gender roles and norms are deeply entrenched.

High-profile contestants often use their platform to advocate for LGBT rights and representation. Their participation in *Who is single* goes beyond entertainment; it serves as a form of activism. These contestants advocate for equal treatment and respect, influencing public discourse and policy indirectly. Hương Giang, for instance, has been vocal about the need for greater acceptance and has used her influence to promote understanding and inclusivity.

Personal Narratives and Empathy Building

Open and meaningful dialogue is a key component of the show. Hosts and guests engage in conversations with LGBT participants about their experiences, struggles, and aspirations. These discussions help demystify LGBT identities and foster empathy among viewers. The unfinished love stories of gay couples in the show also caused a lot of emotion, such as the story of Trung Son's boyfriend in season 5 being swept away by the ocean wave or biosexual Nhat Hoang's boyfriend passing away from COVID-19.

The personal stories of high-profile LGBT contestants resonate deeply with audiences. These narratives often involve overcoming significant challenges, such as societal rejection, family issues, and personal struggles with identity, which opens up space for understanding and reduces prejudice by creating a sense of empathy among viewers. This humanizing approach helps to break down barriers and reduce stigma associated with LGBT identities, as George and Richard wrote "Personal stories are not merely a way of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned". There are stories about wonderful mothers and sisters who have supported their homosexual children since they revealed their true sexual orientation. They have been a source of encouragement and motivation for their children to overcome prejudices and stigma to develop themselves and become useful people for society. "Your happiness is your choice" or "I am very honored to have given birth to you" are the sayings of inspirational mothers on the show stage.

Similarly, in one episode, Hương Giang shared her journey of self-acceptance and the difficulties she faced before becoming a celebrated figure with the help of her mother and sister. This story not only highlights her resilience but also encourages viewers to empathize with similar experiences faced by many LGBT individuals.

Besides, the show is careful to portray LGBT participants in a positive and respectful light. This is achieved through the language used by the hosts, the supportive environment created on set, and the respectful treatment of participants' stories. For instance, hosts like Tran Thanh are known for their empathetic and supportive demeanor, which helps create a safe space for LGBT individuals to share their experiences openly.

Discussion and Conclusions

In recent years, concepts about LGBT have been viewed more openly in Vietnam. On the one hand, that makes this topic easier to exploit in the media, on the other hand, communication about gender issues also contributes to shape public opinion and ideas. However, it does not mean that the stigma for a minority group who suffered from many prejudices from an exclusively heterosexual society was erased.

The discourse on LGBT issues in the Vietnamese reality show *Who is single* has made notable contributions to the visibility and acceptance of LGBT individuals in the country in multi-platform landscape. By featuring high-profile LGBT contestants, the show has leveraged their prominence to challenge societal stereotypes and promote a broader understanding of sexual and gender diversity.

The visibility of high-profile contestants normalizes LGBT identities in a culture where traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained. Their participation on the show helps to challenge and redefine societal norms by presenting LGBT individuals as relatable and respected figures. This visibility is crucial for fostering acceptance and inclusivity in a society where LGBT issues have often been marginalized.

Plus, the personal narratives shared by these contestants are instrumental in humanizing the LGBT community. Stories of overcoming personal and societal challenges, achieving professional success, and finding self-acceptance resonate deeply with audiences. By sharing these experiences, the show builds empathy among viewers, encouraging them to see LGBT individuals as multifaceted people rather than stereotypes. This approach is essential for reducing stigma and fostering a more inclusive society.

High-profile contestants also use their platforms for advocacy, promoting LGBT rights and representation. Their vocal support for acceptance and equality influences public discourse, helping to shift societal attitudes, contributing to the broader fight for LGBT rights in Vietnam. This advocacy is crucial for driving social change and promoting a more inclusive society.

The show's format allows LGBT contestants to directly challenge stereotypes, showcasing their authentic selves and highlighting the diversity within the LGBT community. This portrayal broadens societal understanding of gender and sexual diversity, countering negative perceptions and promoting a more nuanced view of the LGBT community.

In short, *Who is single* has played a significant role in advancing the discourse on LGBT issues in Vietnam. By providing a platform for high-profile LGBT contestants to share their stories and advocate for acceptance, the show has helped to reshape societal attitudes towards the LGBT community. The continued positive representation of LGBT individuals in popular media is essential for sustaining this progress and fostering a more inclusive and understanding society. This impact underscores the power of media in driving social change and promoting inclusivity.

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Examining "Fact-Checking" Reporting on War Events From a Witnessing Perspective: Using the Bucha Event as an Example

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Abstract

In the digital age, verifying the authenticity of war news on social media is challenging due to anonymity, lack of professionalism, and subjectivity in user-generated content. Esteemed media outlets like BBC and CNN respond with fact-checking reports, using scientific methods to ensure content authenticity and provide 'objective' explanations. This study examines BBC Chinese's 'Reality Check' reports on the Bucha event from a witnessing viewpoint, employing multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA). The findings highlight four key points: fact-checking news as a distinct reporting form, the advantage of machine witnessing, CSI-like news presentation methods, and the active engagement of online readers as witnesses. However, it's crucial to note that BBC's use of fact-checking conceals subjective choices and viewpoints on war events, potentially masking underlying Western hegemony.

Keywords: Fact-Checking, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Witnessing

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Introduction

In the past, war reporting involved journalists collecting eyewitness accounts, with some even ventured into conflict zones to provide first-hand reporting. With the advent of satellites, television news adopted live broadcasting, allowing reporters to deliver real-time updates from the field. However, contemporary war coverage is not solely produced by journalists. Citizens, including both civilians and military personnel, can use smartphones to capture various encounters in conflict zones and upload videos to platforms such as YouTube (Sumiala, 2019). Consequently, news media now relies on user-generated content (UGC), public witnessing and shared reporting to supplement coverage of current conflicts.

In citizen-witnessed reports, individuals play multiple roles: they are not only witnesses at the scene, but also recorders of evidence and distributors of footage. Their testimonies may lack structure, and their footage may be shaky and unfocused, yet they serve as "flesh witnessing," undertaken at the risk of their lives (Chouliaraki & Al-Ghazzi, 2022). Their presence becomes a potent form of support, but due to diverse perspectives, testimonies on social media platforms often become conflated and conflicting (Koliska & Roberts, 2015).

Moreover, the anonymity afforded by social platforms enables individuals with malicious intent to masquerade as citizens and partake in various forms of "dark participation" (Quandt, 2018). For instance, Russia frequently employs troll factories to disseminate misinformation or propaganda extensively, manipulate online forums, or fabricate information (Kiriya, 2021; Magallón-Rosa et al., 2023). While social platforms facilitate the amplification of diverse voices, they also contribute to the fragmentation and ambiguity of truth.

Facing the challenge of distinguishing between true and false information in war reporting, renowned international news media such as BBC and CNN attempt to curb the spread of misinformation, errors, and misleading messages through fact-checking reports (Graves & Cherubini, 2016). These reports have been widely reproduced and disseminated by global media, portals, and third-party fact-checking mechanisms, and Taiwan is no exception. This study takes BBC Chinese's "Reality Check" reports as an example, aiming to examine how BBC, as an international media, presents authenticity through fact-checking from a witnessing perspective, and continually strengthens its hegemonic position in "truth-telling."

Bucha was originally a small town on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, but overnight, on April 2, 2022, it became a global media event under intense scrutiny. On that day, three Agence France-Presse (AFP) journalists entered the town to investigate rumors circulating on social media about widespread corpses in Bucha. Seizing the opportunity as Russian forces withdrew, they documented various atrocities through images, including burnt tanks, bundled corpses, and piles of mass graves, revealing the horrors of war. These images quickly became headlines in media outlets worldwide, prompting other journalists to flock to Bucha in an attempt to uncover more stories of suffering.

News media and social platforms continue to disseminate various reports and information about horrific deaths. "Bucha" is no longer just a local town; it has transformed into a human hell, labeled as a "massacre" and "genocide" by Western media. This has sparked international condemnation against Russia, leading governments worldwide to take various actions, including recalling Russian ambassadors and imposing sanctions. Concurrently, Russia has employed social media to spread messages such as "fake deaths" and "living corpses," vehemently asserting that these are fabricated images, part of "another staged

performance by the Kyiv regime for the Western media" (Reuters, 20220403). The move was aimed at refuting accusations from Western media.

With the world watching, "Bucha" finds itself in a labyrinth where both sides hold onto their own versions of the truth. As information becomes increasingly confusing, international media outlets turn to fact-checking reporting. Their goal is to use scientific forensic methods to review the veracity and uncertainty of content and provide explanations that are deemed "objective" and "reasonable."

Reports by international media fact-checking teams have become widely relied upon tools for debunking rumors. However, how do these seemingly accurate and reliable news sources reflect their "authenticity?" How do they use witnessing technology to consolidate their hegemonic position in an era of "witnessing fever," especially in the battleground where the ubiquity of eyewitness images poses a threat? What news strategies do international media employ to enhance the authority of their news reports? To address these questions, this study takes BBC Chinese's "Reality Check" reports on Bucha as a case study, aiming to explore the impact of witnessing technology on war reporting.

Journalistic Witnessing and War Reporting

The concept of "witnessing" was originally utilized in the realms of law and theology. However, following the investigation into the Holocaust atrocities post-World War II, it found widespread application in diverse fields such as psychology, literature, and media studies. Nevertheless, "witnessing" is a complex communicative practice, and the concept itself carries multiple semantic layers. As Peters (2001, p. 709) highlighted: "The witness (person) of the witness (speech act) is witnessed (by the audience)." This implies that "witness" can denote the testifier, the act of testifying, the testimony (statement/text), or even the audience witnessing the testimony.

Furthermore, the focus of research on witnessing varies across fields. In journalism studies, witnessing is a critical means to maintain journalistic professionalism. It involves obtaining facts and reflecting the truth through the "first-hand experience" of witnesses. Given journalism's emphasis on "objectivity," the construction of reality requires verification, and "seeing is believing" serves as a guarantee of news credibility. Therefore, in the field of journalism, the terms "eyewitness" and "eyewitnessing" are often used (Allan, 2013; Mortensen, 2011; Zelizer, 2007).

Tait (2011) pointed out that previous research on media witnessing or journalistic witnessing often conflated witnessing and bearing witness, but the two are actually different. Witnessing occurs when the witness happens to be at the scene (passively) and sees (seeing); bearing witness involves actively speaking out about what was seen (saying). It entails translating sensory experiences into discourse (Peters, 2001; Tait, 2011). The former adheres to the legal requirement of "being present" and seeing "objective facts" with one's own eyes, while the latter carries religious implications, striving to convey and reconstruct the facts to others (Pantti, 2019, p. 9). From this perspective, journalistic witnessing encompasses the translation of eyewitnesses' ocular experiences, particularly instances of suffering, into news texts. These texts are subsequently presented to audiences for (re)witnessing, cultivating moral awareness and a sense of responsibility. Throughout this process, the media functions as a witnessing institution, shaping audiences into (secondary) witnesses (Chouliaraki, 2006; Ellis, 2000).

Journalistic witnessing has long been closely linked with advancements in witnessing technology. The media's role as a witness has been strengthened by the evolution of witnessing technology, rendering news texts serving as testimonies more genuine and trustworthy. Despite the hurdles posed by the widespread adoption of digital technologies, news media persist in their efforts to solidify their authoritative position through the utilization of witnessing technology and the introduction of novel forms of witnessing reporting.

News Industry and Fact-Checking

In the post-truth era, fact-checking is increasingly valued. Not only private non-profit organizations have established fact-checking mechanisms, but many news media have also begun to take advantage of professional editing and setting up fact-checking departments. For example, in 2015, the BBC established Reality Check (Graves & Cherubini, 2016). Additionally, various digital fact-checking technologies have been developed, such as geolocation and satellite imaging (Chouliaraki & Al-Ghazzi, 2022).

Fact-checking is widely regarded as an extension of professional journalism. While journalists are typically tasked with actively conducting interviews and verifying the accuracy of content prior to publication, fact-checkers adopt a more passive approach, responding to already published information to uncover the extent of its inaccuracies (Singer, 2021). Presently, Western media have employed verification and witnessing technologies to ascertain the authenticity of content.

Nevertheless, within the framework of objectivity and impartiality, fact-checking, while serving as a method to combat digital manipulation and prevent the spread of misinformation (Cover, Haw, & Thompson, 2023; Singer, 2023), entails inherent choices and framing. It prompts questions regarding the criteria for selecting information for fact-checking, the methods used to evaluate truth, and the delineation of the boundary between truth and falsehood (Farlas & Schou, 2018; Uscinski & Butler, 2013). These considerations are intertwined with issues of values and ideologies, extending beyond the technical aspects of fact-checking.

Method

In today's era of rampant misinformation, "fact-checking" reporting has evolved into a new form of journalistic genre. Bearing the name "fact-checking," this type of reporting presents and verifies various pieces of evidence. Not only does it assist audiences in discerning the authenticity of news, but it also serves to bolster the credibility of media reporting. This genre is now widely utilized by international media outlets such as CNN, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and others.

This study utilizes the fact-checking report on the Bucha incident from the BBC Chinese website as a case study. Its reporting is notably comprehensive, integrating various witnessing technologies and referencing joint investigation findings from other reputable media sources, thus presenting the factual consistency in an intertextual format. Consequently, it serves as an illustrative example of the witnessing technologies and journalistic strategies employed in comparable fact-checking reports during times of armed conflict.

Since the fact-check reports on the BBC Chinese website employ a variety of semiotic features such as text, images, videos, and hyperlinks, this study adopts multimodal critical discourse analysis (MCDA). MCDA emphasizes that meaning is jointly constructed through multiple semiotic resources and communication modes. Therefore, textual analysis should consider how all symbols, genres, codes, etc., are selected and reconstructed (Ledin & Machin, 2018; 2019), contributing to the "naturalization" of particular values, beliefs, and power relations (Breazu, 2022; Catalano and Gatti, 2017). This approach will enable us to explain how witnessing technologies and techniques influence fact-checking reports and the values and ideologies they convey.

Analysis

The BBC Chinese website's fact-checking report on the Bucha incident primarily focuses on scrutinizing the assertion of "staging" made by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The headline of this report, highlighted in bold, reads, "BBC Fact-Check: Satellite Images Reveal More Details of a Large Number of Bodies in Bucha Town," (https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/world-60994954) explicitly indicating its genre as a "fact-checking" report. Immediately following, the official website design showcases a thematic photo--a satellite image--with bodies on the streets marked by red squares. This aligns with the headline, signifying that readers will encounter visuals provided by witnessing technologies, such as satellite positioning images, photos, video screenshots, etc. These visuals are complemented by textual explanations, expert opinions, and fact-checking evidence from other international media to debunk Russia's three claims. The fact-checking report on this incident employed four main techniques:

1. Employing Defense Attorney Rebuttal Strategies

Fact-checking news has become a new genre of reporting. While traditional journalism often presents the perspectives of both parties in controversial events, fact-checking news directly challenges problematic information, akin to the role of a defense attorney in a courtroom.

In response to Russia's three claims, including the fabrication of corpses, the lack of stiffness in corpses, and the absence of violence against residents, the report employs scientific forensic methods to present a rebuttal. This involves cross-referencing the positions of bodies using satellite positioning images, street photos, and videos. Additionally, forensic experts and pathologists are consulted to provide professional explanations for the concept of "dead but not stiff." The report also incorporates firsthand accounts from residents. The combination of all these elements helps debunk Russia's claims and allows the audience to become witnesses, witnessing how the falsehoods are exposed. This innovative reporting approach underscores its commitment to scientific rigor and evidence-based practices.

2. Machine Witnessing Versus Flesh Witnessing

The fact-checking report relies on various visual technologies for witnessing, such as satellite imagery and photographs. These are considered "unbiased" and "unmediated" testimony, more reliable than flesh witnessing because they are less prone to errors or falsehoods. Satellite images, in particular, capture and record everything from above, providing a surveillance-backed account. Serving as testimony, satellite images capture details in specific time and space, overcoming the subjectivity, emotion, or fallibility of human senses. Through satellite witnessing, its mechanical nature and aerial position (above human life) make its

image testimony more impeccable, echoing the title "Satellite Images Reveal More Details." This also implies that (Russian) lies can be easily exposed.

Visual technologies, while capable of recording and storing unexpected moments across multiple temporal and spatial dimensions, do not speak for themselves. Additionally, with advancements in digital image processing techniques, there are instances where machine testimony may be clouded by concerns of fabrication. Nevertheless, fact-checking has developed various tools, such as frame-by-frame image comparison, freezing frames, zooming, or reversing, to detect whether images are manipulated or misinterpreted. In its reporting, the BBC conducted a detailed frame-by-frame analysis of the videos presented by the Russian side, accompanied by a comparison with high-resolution photos provided by AFP, to refute Russia's claim of "walking dead." This implies that machines, despite continuously replaying recorded content, may be assigned different meanings by various users, including the media, when interpreting the same video.

3. *A News Report With a CSI Style*

The fact-checking report adopts evidence-gathering and investigative techniques similar to CSI programs, such as scientific reasoning or visually reconstructing events, ultimately bringing the details of the case to light. In the report, the BBC simultaneously asserts in writing, "...claims about the Bucha incident lacking any basis, we have verified this through evidence," and utilizes machine testimony to attempt the reconstruction of the moment when the incident occurred. As mentioned previously or As mentioned earlier, the possibility of misusing visual evidence exists; therefore, a cautious scientific approach is required to meticulously reconstruct the crime scene. This involves cross-referencing the time and location of vehicles and bodies on the street, using color markers like yellow or red to highlight, thereby debunking the falsity of Russian testimony.

In this report, most of the text descriptions are neutral, such as "We have seen similar effects in videos posted on other websites," "It is unclear why Russia raised this point," "It may not be evident from the pictures alone," and "There are contradictions with the accounts of eyewitnesses." These efforts aim to evoke a sense of scientific fact-checking. The fact-checking report integrates visual images, expert explanations, firsthand accounts from witnesses, and verification results from other media. It enables the audience to witness the falsehood of the Russian testimony from a scientific perspective, reminiscent of a courtroom proceeding. Audiences, who adhere to the principles of justice, also form their own moral judgments while witnessing the event.

4. *Active Witnessing by Users*

As a digital news platform, BBC Chinese highlights a form of witnessing that diverges from traditional passive reception. It emphasizes that the audience must actively engage, relying on manual interactions and visual perception to genuinely witness the news content. On the official website, viewers are required to actively participate manually by sliding their fingers to view the content, clicking on relevant links, or watching eyewitness video reports on YouTube. This active involvement enables a more comprehensive understanding of controversial issues.

Due to the global connectivity of social media platforms, BBC's coverage extends beyond its official website and is widely shared and forwarded by Taiwanese online media, third-party

fact-checking centers, and users. Furthermore, individuals can experience this emphasis on hands-on collaboration in news witnessing without the need to subscribe to BBC. They can effortlessly leverage search engines or participate in content sharing to personally encounter this form of news witnessing, emphasizing the synergy between manual and visual engagement.

Ibrahim (2021) points out that digital platforms have deeply integrated into our daily lives, allowing audiences to freely upload and share their observations, thereby altering our ability to witness trauma and testify. This, in turn, reshapes audiences into virtual witnesses. When confronted with various complex and chaotic content on the internet, audiences may not know what they are witnessing. Fact-checking efforts aim to guide audiences into becoming witnesses capable of discerning the truth, emphasizing the synergy between manual and visual participation.

Conclusion

BBC utilizes witnessing technologies, forensic scientific methods, and social media platforms to present fact-checking news in a more authoritative and trustworthy reporting genre. Nevertheless, behind the facade of seemingly objective testimonies, there is a series of events, choices of sources, and interpretative frameworks at play. Taking the case of "Bucha" as an illustration, selecting it as the subject of fact-checking, with primary testimonies sourced from Western media and the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense, further reinforces the Western stance of justice against Russia from humanitarian and scientific perspectives. In reality, BBC's fact-checking reports provide audiences with a specific witnessing perspective, encouraging them to interpret the Bucha incident from a Western viewpoint.

As Ashuri & Pinchevski (2009) argue, witnessing should be seen as a specific field of power and knowledge competition, where all participants have their own interests, goals, and positions. Therefore, witnessing analysis becomes a political struggle. When receiving fact-checking reports, one should not naively assume that they represent the entire truth; their perspectives are often partial and limited. Hence, audiences should maintain critical thinking when consuming such news, particularly being vigilant about potential biases in information selection and interpretation. In the binary framework of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, fact-checking reports are susceptible to becoming tools for ideological manipulation.

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Consideration Focused on the Polish-Up and Authenticity of Regional Culture Tourism Resources Triggered by the TV Drama: A Case of Tourism to Experience the Wedding and Life Culture in Kaga/Noto Tradition

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Abstract

This study is to conduct a consideration of cultural-tourism focused authenticity of regional tourism resources triggered by the TV drama. Cultural-tourism aimed at deepening understanding of the culture through experiences and other activities related to cultural resources. The case study of this study is a support project for reconstruction by the Japan Tourism Agency in 2021. The Noto Peninsula Tourism Association in Ishikawa Prefecture applied for the project and was selected as the main organization. The reason for applying was due to the presence of the traditional Noto culture of "Hanayome-noren". It has also been made into a TV drama. The method adopted in the project was that they created promotional movies collaborating a location of a TV drama, and tourists visit the spot can enjoy to the movies. The reshoot was done by the team that produced the drama and same location. According to Wang (1999), the complicated natures of authenticity in tourism can be classified into objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. It was used as a framework for the analysis. Then, interviews with relevant stakeholders and considered based on the questionnaire survey of participants in the monitor tour. As a result, it was revealed that positive feelings were created and good effects were brought about even among those who didn't watch the drama by their visiting and seeing firsthand the scenes where the drama was shot. This study revealed that the presence of drama footage and photographs is more effective for cultural-tourism.

Keywords: Authenticity, Regional Culture Tourism, TV Drama

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1. Introduction

This study aims to verify how much the value of regional culture tourism resources can be improved by using promotional movies of TV drama scenes. I focus on authenticity and consider it through Wang's theory. "Cultural tourism" refers to the one aimed to observe "tangible/intangible cultural properties and other resources related to their cultures", which I call them cultural resources later on, and to deepen understanding of the culture through experiences and other activities related to cultural resources" [The Cultural Tourism Promotion Law, 2021]. Urry (2003) discusses that "places are chosen as the objects of" being gazed" and cites TV and movies as "variety of non-touristic practices that create gaze. For example, "Spanish Steps" where the main actress of the movie "Roman Holiday" (1953), Audrey Hepburn had gelato, and "Mouth of Truth" where she had a pleasant exchange of words with Gregory Peck are famous tourist spots even for those who haven't seen the movie. On the other hand, when we actually go to a certain location of a TV drama broadcasted in the past, some of the local people say "The images and films of the drama scenes that we expect would be used for publication were not actually used even though we cooperated with drama shootings by letting the crew use our local places." For sure, in a location, we rarely see images and films of a broadcasted drama scene as they are. However, I wonder if the existence of films and images of a drama scene is more effective in improving the value of cultural tourism. Is it also effective for tourists who haven't seen a certain drama? From the background, I decided to do exploratory research, set a hypothesis, and conduct demonstrative verification based on the hearing survey of the local people, the producer of the tourist promotion movie and its crew members on the project adopted for the support project by Japan Tourist Agency.

2. Research Literature

2.1 Contents Tourism

Many studies on contents tourism in which people make a location tour of a "TV drama" can be seen. According to the Academy of Contents Tourism [2011], Contents Tourism refers to "adding a story or theme as a region-specific image created through contents to the region, and utilizing the story as a tourist resource". Although traditional "film-location tours" (Kaneko et al. 2022; Dai et al. 2015) as well as "anime pilgrimage" (Masubuchi, 2010) are included in the contents tourism, those fans mainly make self-motivated actions. On the contrary, contents tourism includes meanings of attracting tourism. Yazawa (2019) does research on "the roles of movie museums in the revitalization of the city" and also Research Literature on contents tourism as well as museums and galleries. In the study, he points out that the movie "has intrinsic value in the movie works" and "movie museums are only the materials that support the contents." Although I did Research Literature exploratorily, as far as I can see, I was not able to find research verifying how much the value of regional culture tourism resources improves by the use of original films with scenes of broadcasted TV dramas, which is the purpose of this study.

In addition, there are some reasons why the case study was adopted for the support project by the Japan Tourist Agency. According to the staff of the agency, "One of the reasons is the matter of copyright and the people living near the location cannot use the movies of the drama as it is. That should be solved." Therefore, in the adopted project, the broadcasted drama was used as it is. Another reason is that the number of case studies themselves is small.

2.2 Resources

Shikida (2011) discusses eco-tourism management and says resources are something that can be used or consumed in given ways. He also says that they are "things that shouldn't be dealt with as resources from the beginning", but "the process to turn something into resources is needed". "Turning something into resources" means "the process to work on". "In addition, we saw more cases in which tours were planned and formulated by combining materials collected by tourist agencies through the process of mechanization so far, but nowadays, there are more cases in which a community side plans and formulates tours called community-based tourism" (Shikida 2011). This study case is also community-based tourism.

2.3 Authenticity

Culture becomes a product when it links to various inputs (Goto et al 2013). According to Throsby (2002), cultural capitals are properties that materialize, accumulate and provide cultural values in addition to economic values that the capitals have. Cultural values include autistic value, mental value, social value, historical value, symbolic value and true value (authenticity) (Throsby, 2002).

As for "authenticity", one of the cultural values, many previous studies can be seen. In the context of tourism area, Shikida (2021) says "I'm seeing the cases in which experts reevaluate and give meanings to a landscape which was put a value on by non-experts of tourists through SNS, etc" "even in a tourist spot where its values have been recognized objectively by experts who can evaluate value based on authenticity such as tangible cultural assets".

Hashimoto (2018) conducts a logical explanation of "regionality" and "regional culture" considering the relation between the discussion of "authenticity", and refers to regional cultural tourism as the transmission of a regional culture where people try hard to nurture things that seemingly looked "fake" but that discovered, newly created by local people, or in some cases, borrowed from another area into things authentic".

Gon (2016) "analyses tourism-objectification of popular culture from the viewpoint of cultural building", and says authentic culture as an object is needed for tourism to be established".

Contemporary tourism has been creating authentic culture and authenticity has ever been established through social interaction (Gon, 2012).

Zukin (2010) says "Authenticity has two notions; one is that all generations are "original" as they are always there and the other idea is that the new generation creates on their own". He also says, "Where it comes from has almost nothing to do with in recent years and it starts to take on the meaning of style" and "the way of thinking of authenticity is shifting from the quality of people to the quality of a thing, and furthermore in recent years, to the quality of experience".

According to Wang (1999), the complicated natures of authenticity in tourism can be classified into objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is generated by the recognition that the object to be seen is authentic. Constructive authenticity refers to the one projected to the tourist subject by tourists and

tourist agents from their viewpoints of the images, expectations, preferences, beliefs and powers, which means the authenticity of tourist objects is actually a symbolic one. Existential authenticity includes personal feelings and indirect/direct feelings that are stimulated by tourist activities. It is also subjective, and one's own authenticity but has nothing to do with tourist objects.

As for what I learned from the Research Literature above, local culture is something that is nurtured and authentic culture as an objective is needed for tourism to be established. Authentic culture has been always constructed through social interaction and is given "meanings" at times.

Zukin (2010) recently discusses, on this "meaning", that it is shifting to "the quality of experiences". This is equivalent to "existential authenticity" in the discussion of Wang (1999). If there are tourists joining the monitor tour haven't known or seen drama, the existence of drama movies and pictures of the place they visited would create an authentic culture of "the quality of experiences" and bring about better values of regional culture tourism resources.

From the above, the research questions of this study are as follows.

1. The way an authentic culture is given meanings is different between local people and non-local people who are TV drama producers through the process of making tourist products.
2. Those who join the monitor tour create authenticity by simulating not only real-life cultural experiences but also TV drama images.
3. Those who join the monitor tour feel some kind of authenticity and experience regional culture tourism.

3. Demonstration Research

3.1 Case Description

The project proposed to the Japan Tourism Agency was "Life-culture tourism, a cultural experience of Kaga and Noto's tradition. Wedding tourism learned from Hanayome-Noren". The Agency publicly sought for it until July 8th, 2021, and the project continued from after the selection to March 4th (Fri), 2022. The result of the selection was notified to the project leaders in the middle of September 2021. In addition, I, the author of the paper, was involved with the project as a person concerned and joined it as a volunteer on the condition that I would do research at my school after gaining permission that participant observation would be conducted and the activities would be reported from the organizer, participants and those who were concerned.

In addition to my participant observation, I conducted a hearing survey of tourists who joined the adopted demonstration project, local people who planned and created tourist products and the producer who created movies for tourism promotion and considered based on the questionnaire survey of monitor participants. Incidentally, the detailed information on my participant observation and hearing survey were omitted for convenience.

3.2 Outline of the Proposed Project

"Customs", "practices", "traditional arts", "Shinto rituals and festivals", "unique fishing methods" etc. including "Hanayome Noren", or a traditional wedding custom, have been breathing in the area of Kaga and Noto Peninsula. This demonstration project is conducted under the concept of "Wedding Tourism" and aims to introduce the regional life culture by playing the TV drama "Hanayome-Noren" scenes and images of the regional life shot in the drama by the use of QR code while the copyright for the drama, which was made and broadcasted in the area of Noto Peninsula before is used for free. Hanayome-Noren (Figure 1) is one of the wedding customs that originated in the former Kaga-state areas of Noto, Kaga and Ecchu, and has been hung in the bride' husband' house's Japanese-style room where a Buddhist altar is placed and she crawls through the Noren curtain. Landladies in the Ipponsugi Shopping Street in Nanao changed "Hanayome-Noren which had no chance to be used after a wedding and left behind in the closet" into tourist resources in 2004 and hosted "Hanayome Noren Exhibition". About 10 thousand people visited the event in the first year and the number of visitors there exceeded 100,000 in 2011 and exists to this day. The title of the TV drama is named after the customs.

The monitor tour for two nights and three days was conducted from December 9th (Thu.) to 11th (Sat.), 2021. The eligible participants were a trio or a pair of 20-year-old or older females who were family members or friends of each other from the viewpoints of preventive measures of infectious diseases, and they applied for it on the webpages of Noto Peninsula Wide Area Tourism Association (above-mentioned). After all, 15 applicants actually joined the event as planned. Applicants are from various areas in Japan, such as Tokyo, Saitama, Kanagawa, Mie, Nagoya and Ishikawa. The tour was enjoyable so that the participants actually dressed in bridal costumes and went under "Hanayome Noren", while they experienced life and food culture broadcasted in the TV drama (gold-leafing, fish handling, unloading, Wajima lacquerware, landladies, soy-sauce squeezing and wedding cuisine and other experiences). In addition, QR codes to which the movies linked the drama can be seen when read are placed at 30 drama locations in the area. The QR code (Figure 2) is an actual example of "Torii Soy Sauce Shop". The participants met up and dismissed at Kanazawa Station and the fees were all free in the whole schedule.

Figure 1: Hanayome-noren

Figure 2: QR-code sample
Torii Soy Sauce Shop

3.3 The Tour Schedule

1st day: December 9th (Thu), 2021
10:30; gathering and departure at Kanazawa Station = chartered bus = 10:45; Stroll in Kanazawa Castle Park = 11:40; Lunch around Higashiyama area = Film location tour (Higashi-Chaya District/ Kazue-machi Umeno-hashi bridge etc.) = 14:00; Kanazawa Bikazari-Asano (Gold leafing experience) = 16:30; Minsyuku(inn) Notojimaso (Fish-handling experience/fisherman, wedding cuisine/ life/cultural learning.

2nd day: December 10th (Fri)
5:30; Notojimaso・・Enome Fishing Port (viewing of fish-landing~breakfast) = 9:45; Wajima Morning Market = 10:45; Wajima Nuritaro (Wajima lacquering experience) ・・ 11:50; Viewing of the house of lacquering master ・・12:35; Lunch = 14:20; Shiroyone Senmaida (rice terraces) (The world agricultural heritage) = 16:30; Accommodation Kagaya (wedding cuisine).

3rd day: December 11th (Sat)
7:00; Breakfast ・・ Seirjinji temple (Instagrammable)・・ 9:30; Landlady experience from "Hanayome Noren" the TV drama supported by Kagaya = 12:00; Lunch at Hanayome Noren Hall・・ Talk Event/ Hanayome Noren experience・・ 14:30; Torii Soy Sauce Shop (Soy Sauce Squeezing experience) ・・ Stroll along Ipponsugi Shopping Street = 16:05 Wakura Onsen St. = 17:54 Leaving off at Kanazawa Station.

3.4 Questionnaire Survey

3.4.1 Purposes

This survey aims to measure the level of satisfaction of participants on the monitor tour and implementation of QR code movies. As for the questions, I referred to six indices of the causal models of the Japanese Customer Satisfaction Index (JCSI); customer expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, recommendation intention and loyalty. JCSI was developed in a national project under the support of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to strengthen the competitiveness of the service industry, and was open to the public in 2009. It is now trusted and proven on the indices. Customer satisfaction means some kind of satisfaction that can be felt through goods and services when customers purchase products or receive a certain service.

3.4.2 Survey Subjects

Twelve out of fifteen participants joining the monitor tour answered. Among them, those who have seen the "TV drama" is 7; those who haven't seen it is 5.

3.4.3 Validity of the Number of Questionnaires Answered

As for the sampling method, I adopted judgment sampling. It is the method of choosing a certain factor intentionally at a researcher's own discretion. It's often used in test marketing and others and we can judge one in a market whose property is close to the one of the whole market we have chosen (Onzo, 2011).

The monitor tour was solicited publicly and the applicants visited the webpage of the Noto Peninsula Wide Area Tourism Association to apply for it. The fee for the tour was free. The eligible participants were a trio or a pair of 20-year-old or older females who were family members or friends of each other from the viewpoints of preventive measures of infectious diseases or were interested in the life culture of Noto Peninsula. Public relations were done through public media such as newspapers, TV, SNS, etc. As a result, the total number of applicants was 15, and all of them were qualified. The 15 applicants are from various areas in Japan: 7 from the Kanto area; 2 from the Hokuriku area; 3 from the Tokai area and 3 are unknown.

At this moment, the tour itself is not merchandized and is a test case. The applicant is an early adopter, to put it differently. Whether this tourism product will become widely used or not, I will leave it to the business judgment in the future. However, the opinions of the participants who joined the monitor tour voluntarily are precious and I judged that the validity of the number of questionnaires answered was secured to some extent.

3.4.4 Survey Method

Questions on how they thought about the monitor tour online. The method is checking type and open questions.

3.4.5 Survey Items

1. What is the place or thing you like or you don't like most? (Checkbox on the site of the itinerary/ multiple answers allowed）
2. What should be improved in the entire monitor tour? (Likert method/ 5 scales)
3. How much were you satisfied with the tour? (open question)
4. How much were you satisfied with the individual items? It's for 5 items of "accommodation", "life cultural experience", "wedding culture experience", and "life culture learning" (Likert method/ 5 scales)
5. What do you think about experiencing QR code movies? (Open question)
6. How much were you satisfied with the efforts of QR code movies?
7. How meaningful are the monitor tour and QR code? (Choose between the two)
8. What impression did you have about the whole sightseeing in Kaga and Noto and the entire monitor tour? (Open question)

Rank	Extracted word	Frequency
1	think	18
2	experience	10
3	join	7
4	culture	7
5	Thank you	5
6	tour	5
7	wedding	5
8	time	5
9	Noto	5
10	attraction	5

Table 1: Feedback for the whole tour
(from the list of extracted word of KH-coder)

3.4.6 Questionnaire Survey Result

All participants were females, and 42% were 40 years old or older; 25% in their 20s, 33% in their 30s, and 42% hadn't seen the TV drama. Also, 33% were the ones who came to Ishikawa prefecture for the first time. As for the most popular tourist destination in this monitor tour, Kagaya (an accommodation) was ranked 1st with 92%, and Higashi-chaya (restaurant and accommodation) was ranked 2nd with 58%. Conversely, the least popular one is Kanazawa Castle Park with 42%. Many answered that too many things were crammed into the tour, which should be reviewed in the future. However, all participants were satisfied with the tour contents and 83% of them answered that the recognition of wedding tourism changed as a result.

As for the demonstration experiment of QR codes, 75% said "meaningful", and even those who said "meaningless" had certain reasons such as "the poor internet connections" and "insufficient PR of the QR codes". Therefore, all were satisfied with the movies' content. There were various comments such as "just like experiencing the drama scenes!", "I had fun instantly jumping into the drama scenes and the location-related information." Even those who hadn't seen the drama enjoyed "simulated experiences" of the drama scenes.

As for the feedback of the whole tour this time, the words "experience", "Noto", "culture" and "attraction" were extracted in many cases, and many participants said in the comments that "I enjoyed the good experience", "Those experiences were fun!", "I'd like to enjoy the local's unique festival", "I felt that everybody loved their local places very much and was touched by their hospitality", "It is full of attractions to see, experience and eat so I want to come back again".

4. Consideration

The research question 1 is considered from the participant's observation of the process of making tourist products. At the time of the shooting of the QR codes of "Torii Soy Sauce Shop", the director said that "We will shoot the scenes that would be good publicity for your store". Then, the shop manager said "I don't know that is good publicity for the shop. The building is old and the machines have been handed down from the predecessors. We live here and that is our daily life. Just shoot the films as you like." Also, as for soy-sauce squeezing, "It's for our life, so I'm worried if participants can really enjoy this experience", he said. Conversely, the shooting staff said, "The tour participants had precious experience since they have never squeezed soy sauce." Like this, the meaning of authentic culture is different between local people and non-local people who are TV drama makers. As for the recognition of the objects of the movie shooting, it was objective for local people, and constructive authenticity was for the filmmakers. However, the tour participants were all satisfied with the movies' content as a result, therefore, it seemed important to produce products from various discussions for creating tourist products.

As for research questions 2 and 3, from the result of the questionnaire survey by the tour participants, tourist objects were projected just like the participants enjoy simulated-experience TV drama movies as well in addition to the original life-culture experience in point 2, while they do "feeling experience" such as "a joy", which is "the authenticity of experience" according to Wang (1999) categorized in existential authenticity. Cultural tourist products in the region associated with the drama scenes broadcasted in the past were invented as the products of community-based tourism and verified by conducting the monitor tour.

From such a result, it can be said that the efforts had some effects. And thus, it let those who hadn't seen the drama enjoy the event. As for my new discovery, even those who hadn't watched the drama generated a positive feeling and brought about a good effect by watching the drama scenes that were shot in the local area. Meanwhile, the participants enjoyed the life-culture experience, one of the local culture tourism. Those who haven't watched the drama are categorized in not only constructive authenticity but also existential authenticity, according to the classification of Wang (1999).

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop tourist products from the scenes of TV dramas broadcasted in the past, conduct a monitor tour and reveal the effects. I set the research questions based on the Research Literature on "cultural tourism" and "authenticity". As mentioned in the consideration for question 1, the real life of local people and the images that people from other areas envision are different. However, all participants in the tour are satisfied with it and it is important to create products from the ideas of various participants for creating tourist products. Then, as a result of questionnaire surveys, question 2 was "constructive authenticity" according to Wang (1999) while Tourist cultural experiences of question 3 were the experience of feeling such as "joy" and both turned out to be effective. In addition, as a new discovery, even those who had never seen a TV drama could generate positive feelings by watching the drama scenes shot in the location, which brought about a good effect in addition to the cultural tourist experiences in the region. What kind of authenticity is it? According to Wang (1999), it is "experience-type authenticity which is categorized as existential authenticity. It is also revealed that, according to the categorization of authenticity by Wang (1999), it cannot be clearly divided, and are related to each other and maybe overlapped. It suggests that the re-categorization should be done.

From now on, as there will be a discussion of "authentication" by Chen (2012) and others as well, authenticity should be further discussed. "Authentication" is the process of verifying what "original" "authentic" and "reliable" are.

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Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand how adding ASEAN culture and arts to multicultural education affected a large class of 124 students in the teacher education program. I chose participants using purposive sampling. I asked specific questions during interviews to get information. I used thematic analysis to find patterns and insights in the data. The findings show that ASEAN culture and arts positively affect students. They help increase understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among people with different backgrounds. The interviews captured how cultural elements and the educational environment interact, showing the richness of ASEAN's culture. This research highlights the potential to blend ASEAN culture and arts into educational frameworks, creating classroom harmony. The study affirms that adding diverse cultural elements improves the academic experience, promoting unity and inclusivity. The interdisciplinary pedagogical approach emerges as a critical aspect, emphasizing the need for a holistic integration of culture and arts in education. The transformative power of ASEAN culture and arts extends beyond theory, becoming evident in observable changes in student behaviors, attitudes, and academic performance. The study shows improvements in critical thinking, creativity, cultural sensitivity, and increased engagement with coursework. Detailed case studies illustrate how students apply insights from ASEAN Arts in practical contexts, demonstrating real-world impact. Valuable strategies for reinforcing intercultural awareness in educational settings are integrated, including recommendations for curriculum adjustments, incorporating diverse perspectives in teaching materials, and implementing experiential learning opportunities alongside ASEAN Arts.

Keywords: Intercultural Awareness, Interdisciplinary Pedagogical Approach, Transformative Power

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Introduction

In recent years, incorporating cultural diversity and arts into educational frameworks has gained significant attention in fostering inclusivity, understanding, and appreciation among students from diverse backgrounds. Within this context, integrating ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) culture and arts into multicultural education has emerged as a promising approach to enriching the learning experience and promoting intercultural competence. While existing research has highlighted the positive impacts of such integration on students' understanding, tolerance, and appreciation, there remains a notable research gap concerning the long-term effects and sustainability of these benefits. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the enduring impact of integrating ASEAN culture and arts into multicultural education within teacher education programs. By examining the potential challenges, limitations, and variations in student responses over time, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the holistic integration of cultural elements into educational frameworks, thereby contributing to the enhancement of classroom harmony and intercultural awareness.

The concept of harmonizing classrooms through multicultural education can be vividly explored by examining the integration of ASEAN culture and the study of a program designed to enhance diversity knowledge and promote equality and equity in classroom participation. Both approaches emphasize the richness of cultural heritage and the importance of inclusive educational environments.

In the context of the ASEAN culture integration, thematic analysis revealed key themes, such as enhanced understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among students. This was achieved through exposure to ASEAN culture and arts, facilitating meaningful interactions and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, the interplay between cultural elements and the educational environment showcased ASEAN's cultural richness, deepening students' connection to course content and heightening cultural sensitivity. The integration also positively impacted students' academic performance, critical thinking skills, creativity, and overall engagement with coursework.

Similarly, the program implemented in a 4th-grade class in Geneva, Switzerland, focused on enhancing diversity knowledge and promoting equality and equity in classroom participation, particularly in high sociolinguistic diversity settings. The program, which integrated students' heritage languages into cooperative activities, followed four stages: fostering openness to others, highlighting linguistic diversity, celebrating cultural diversity, and conducting cooperative tasks involving heritage languages and personal family stories. These stages aimed to ensure students felt accepted and comfortable in multilingual cooperative activities. Feedback from the teacher, students, and parents indicated the program's successful integration into the regular curriculum and its positive reception. The program also improved students' sense of belonging and feelings of relatedness within the class (Buchs & Maradan, 2021).

Both approaches underscore the value of integrating cultural elements into educational settings to foster inclusivity, enhance academic and personal development, and promote a sense of belonging among students. The rich tapestry of ASEAN culture and the structured program in Geneva demonstrate effective strategies for harmonizing classrooms through multicultural education.

The concept of harmonizing classrooms through multicultural education is vividly explored by integrating ASEAN culture and arts, alongside addressing the growing linguistic and cultural diversity in European schools. Both studies underscore the importance of leveraging cultural diversity to foster positive attitudes toward inclusion and interculturality in broader society.

In the context of ASEAN culture integration, thematic analysis revealed key themes such as enhanced understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among students. Exposure to ASEAN culture and arts facilitated meaningful interactions and fostered a more inclusive learning environment. This integration positively impacted students' academic performance, critical thinking skills, creativity, and overall engagement with coursework.

Similarly, the study on European schools examined whether the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity could be used constructively to build positive attitudes toward diversity in society. Interviews with student primary school teachers in a two-year initial teacher education program in France revealed their readiness to address the multicultural classroom. The research analyzed their attitudes toward cultural and linguistic diversity and their capacity to go beyond merely managing these situations. The findings suggested that without significant changes in teacher education, school administration, and within schools, the potential to cultivate positive attitudes toward inclusion and interculturality through the presence of plurilingual students would remain untapped (Stunell, 2020).

Both approaches highlight the value of integrating cultural elements into educational settings to foster inclusivity, enhance academic and personal development, and promote a sense of belonging among students. The rich tapestry of ASEAN culture and the structured program in Geneva, alongside the challenges and opportunities presented by linguistic and cultural diversity in European schools, demonstrate effective strategies for harmonizing classrooms through multicultural education.

The concept of harmonizing classrooms through multicultural education, as illustrated in the integration of ASEAN culture and arts, aligns closely with the study's findings emphasizing teachers' pivotal responsibilities during the shift towards multicultural education. Yılmaz and Boylan (2016) highlight that teachers play a central role in creating inclusive educational environments where diverse identities and cultural attributes are respected and embraced. This responsibility becomes particularly crucial as schools increasingly reflect the cultural diversity of their communities.

The study underscores the importance of teacher education in preparing educators to effectively navigate and leverage cultural diversity in classrooms. Teachers' positive attitudes toward multicultural education are identified as essential in fostering coexistence, peace, and mutual respect among students from varied backgrounds. By promoting an environment where cultural differences are celebrated rather than feared, teachers can help mitigate societal divisions based on ethnicity or nationality.

In the context of integrating ASEAN culture and arts, the study suggests that exposure to diverse cultural perspectives enriches students' educational experiences and promotes deeper understanding and empathy. It emphasizes the role of curriculum adaptations and experiential learning opportunities that highlight cultural diversity and encourage intercultural dialogue.

Overall, the discussion supports the idea that effective multicultural education requires proactive engagement from teachers who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary to nurture inclusive classrooms. By embracing multiculturalism in education, educators not only enhance academic learning but also contribute to building a more cohesive and harmonious society where all individuals feel valued and respected for their cultural heritage.

The emergence of multiculturalism in Asia, influenced by globalization through factors like immigration, cultural hybridity, and norms from multilateral and bilateral organizations, poses significant challenges for Asian economies, cultural policies, and higher education institutions. This societal shift mirrors experiences in the United States and Europe, where multiculturalism has long been integrated, contributing to models of cosmopolitan democracies and global citizenship education.

In parallel, studies such as Torres and Tarozzi (2019) delve into the theoretical underpinnings and debates surrounding multiculturalism, drawing lessons from the European Union (EU) and the United States. They explore cross-border learning experiences highlighted in international comparative education studies and examine potential crises within multiculturalism within these regions.

Conversely, the study on Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts exemplifies practical applications of multicultural education. It illustrates how integrating ASEAN culture and arts enriches educational experiences, fosters understanding, and promotes inclusivity in diverse classroom settings.

Together, these perspectives underscore the importance of adapting educational frameworks to embrace multiculturalism's complexities and opportunities. By learning from global experiences and applying culturally inclusive practices, Asian economies and cultures can navigate the challenges of multiculturalism effectively, contributing to a more cohesive global community.

The discussion on the concentration of equity-related skills development in standalone "multicultural" courses within teacher education programs across Canada and the United States, which often emphasize appreciation of diversity or cultural competence rather than critical engagement with inequities, connects with the study of Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts.

In both contexts, there is a recognition of the need for a critical orientation in multicultural education. The study by Gorski and Parekh (2020), based on a survey of instructors in Canada and the US, highlights that educators who take a more critical approach in their multicultural and intercultural education courses perceive less institutional support for their values. This challenges the educational systems to better align institutional support with the critical preparation of teachers to address inequities effectively.

Similarly, in the exploration of ASEAN culture and arts integration into multicultural education, there is an emphasis on fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. This approach not only enriches educational experiences but also prepares students and educators to engage critically with issues of equity and inclusion in diverse classroom settings.

Thus, both studies underscore the importance of moving beyond a superficial appreciation of diversity towards a critical examination of inequities, supported by institutional frameworks that value and reinforce these critical perspectives in education. This alignment is crucial for advancing inclusive educational practices that effectively prepare educators and students to navigate and contribute to multicultural societies.

The discussion on educational policies and pedagogical approaches—transcultural education, multicultural education, or intercultural education—reflects on contemporary societal challenges such as globalization and interdependence. It begins with a clarification of terminology and semantics, drawing on historical developments in the US and Europe to address global terminological confusion and emphasize the importance of a unified vocabulary.

In this context, the study Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts exemplifies practical applications of multicultural education. It illustrates how integrating ASEAN culture and arts enriches educational experiences, fosters understanding, and promotes inclusivity in diverse classroom settings.

Portera (2020) proposes using 'multicultural' to describe societies and advocates for multicultural education as a strategy to enhance understanding and respect for ethnic and cultural diversities. Conversely, 'intercultural' is recommended for intervention activities involving interaction, such as encounters, dialogue, and conflict management. The author argues that contemporary intercultural education should encompass challenges like neoliberalism, climate change, power dynamics, and addressing special needs.

By aligning educational practices with these nuanced definitions, educators can effectively navigate and respond to diverse global challenges, promoting inclusive and respectful learning environments that celebrate cultural diversity and prepare students for a complex, interconnected world.

The discussion on multiculturalism, as argued in the paper, challenges its perception solely as an ideology or a binary social program ('for' or 'against'). Instead, it advocates for understanding multiculturalism as addressing a complex spectrum of issues related to cultural and religious diversity within society. This comprehensive view encompasses the management of both challenges and opportunities arising from such diversity.

In the study of Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts, practical applications of multicultural education underscore the importance of embracing cultural diversity in educational settings. By integrating ASEAN culture and arts, the study illustrates how educational environments can foster understanding, respect, and inclusivity among students from diverse backgrounds.

Nye (2007) argues that multiculturalism is not an optional feature but a factual reality for societies with open borders, necessitating appropriate societal and political responses to effectively manage cultural and religious diversity stemming from global migrations. This perspective aligns with the contextual understanding of multiculturalism as a dynamic process, highlighting the crucial role of state management in facilitating the positive development of diversity.

Together, these perspectives emphasize the need for educational frameworks that not only acknowledge but actively engage with cultural diversity, preparing students to navigate and contribute to multicultural societies in meaningful ways.

The connection between the findings on culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (CRTSE) among preservice teachers and the study of Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts is profound in its implications for teacher preparation and classroom practice.

In the study by Chahar Mahali & Sevigny (2022), it was found that higher levels of CRTSE among preservice teachers were linked with lower levels of Emotional Exhaustion, a significant aspect of burnout syndrome. Additionally, these teachers reported more frequent cross-cultural experiences during their childhood and adolescence. This highlights the critical role of early exposure to diverse cultural contexts in shaping educators' abilities to effectively manage and embrace cultural diversity in their teaching practices.

Relating this to the exploration of ASEAN culture and arts in multicultural education, integrating such cultural elements into teacher training programs can enhance CRTSE. By familiarizing preservice teachers with diverse cultural perspectives and practices, they are better equipped to create inclusive classroom environments that celebrate and respect students' cultural identities. This approach not only improves educators' confidence and effectiveness but also contributes to fostering positive attitudes toward cultural diversity among students.

Moreover, the implications for preservice teacher training underscore the importance of curriculum development that incorporates multicultural perspectives and provides opportunities for hands-on experiences with diverse cultures. This prepares future educators to navigate the complexities of multicultural classrooms, promoting educational equity and fostering intercultural understanding among students.

In summary, both studies emphasize the transformative impact of CRTSE and multicultural education on enhancing teacher preparedness and promoting inclusive educational practices that embrace cultural diversity. This integration is essential for preparing educators to meet the diverse needs of students in today's multicultural societies.

The study of Harmonizing Classrooms: Exploring Multicultural Education Through the Rich Tapestry of ASEAN Culture and Arts aligns closely with the modern educational emphasis on enhancing teacher self-efficacy in multicultural classrooms (TSMC) through professional development in multicultural education (PDME). As educational landscapes become more diverse globally, countries are increasingly investing in PDME to equip educators with the skills needed to effectively teach diverse student populations.

Using data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey 2018, Choi and Lee (2020) examined how participation in PDME impacts TSMC and whether TSMC mediates the relationship between PDME and teachers' perceptions of school climate in secondary schools in the United States and South Korea. Their findings reveal a significant positive correlation between PDME and TSMC, with TSMC playing a pivotal role in enhancing the overall school climate. This underscores that PDME not only enhances teachers' abilities to manage multicultural classrooms but also contributes to fostering a positive and inclusive school environment.

Integrating multicultural education practices, such as those explored in the study of ASEAN culture and arts, into PDME can further enrich teachers' cultural competence and their ability to integrate diverse perspectives into classroom instruction. This holistic approach not only prepares educators to navigate multicultural settings effectively but also promotes educational equity and enhances students' learning experiences by celebrating cultural diversity. Therefore, the synergy between research on multicultural education and empirical studies on PDME highlights the transformative potential of culturally responsive teaching practices in fostering inclusive educational environments worldwide.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the impact of integrating ASEAN culture and arts into multicultural education within a teacher education program. A sample of 124 students was selected using purposive sampling, ensuring representation from diverse backgrounds within the program. Data collection involved conducting semi-structured interviews with participants, allowing for in-depth exploration of their experiences and perspectives regarding the integration of ASEAN culture and arts.

Thematic Analysis was utilized to analyze the interview data, aiming to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights regarding the impact of ASEAN cultural integration on students' understanding, tolerance, academic performance, and real-world application. This analytical approach facilitated a systematic examination of the qualitative data, enabling the extraction of meaningful findings and implications.

Results and Discussions

Theme	Description
Enhanced Understanding, Tolerance, and Appreciation	Increased understanding, tolerance, and appreciation for diverse cultures through exposure to ASEAN culture and arts.
Interplay of Cultural Elements and Educational Environment	Dynamic interaction between ASEAN cultural elements and the educational environment showcases the richness of ASEAN's cultural heritage.
Academic Improvement and Behavioral Changes	Positive impact on academic performance, critical thinking skills, and creativity, with observable changes in student behaviors and attitudes.
Real-World Application and Impact	Application of ASEAN cultural insights in practical contexts, demonstrating real-world impact and reinforcing intercultural awareness.

Thematic Analysis revealed several key themes regarding the impact of integrating ASEAN culture and arts into multicultural education within the teacher education program. One significant theme was the enhanced understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among students. They reported an increased understanding and appreciation for diverse cultures through exposure to ASEAN culture and arts. The inclusion of cultural elements facilitated meaningful interactions and discussions, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

Thematic Analysis also highlighted the interplay of cultural elements and the educational environment. Interviews revealed a dynamic interaction between ASEAN cultural elements and the educational setting, showcasing the richness of ASEAN's cultural heritage. Students expressed a deeper connection to course content and demonstrated heightened cultural sensitivity in their interactions.

The integration of ASEAN culture and arts positively impacted students' academic performance, critical thinking skills, and creativity, leading to significant academic improvement and behavioral changes. Observable changes in student behaviors and attitudes reflected a greater engagement with coursework and a broader perspective on learning.

Detailed case studies illustrated how students applied insights from ASEAN arts in practical contexts, showcasing real-world impact beyond theoretical understanding. Strategies for reinforcing intercultural awareness, such as curriculum adjustments and experiential learning opportunities, were identified as valuable additions to educational settings.

The findings of this study underscore the significant positive effects of integrating ASEAN culture and arts into multicultural education within teacher education programs. By enhancing understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among students from diverse backgrounds, this integration promotes inclusivity and unity in the classroom. The dynamic interplay between cultural elements and the educational environment highlights the importance of a holistic approach to cultural integration in education.

Moreover, the observed improvements in critical thinking, creativity, and cultural sensitivity suggest that ASEAN culture and arts serve as catalysts for academic and personal growth. These findings align with the growing recognition of the transformative power of cultural education in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors.

The real-world application of ASEAN cultural insights further emphasizes the practical relevance of integrating cultural elements into educational frameworks. By providing students with opportunities to apply their learning in practical contexts, educators can facilitate deeper engagement and a more profound understanding of cultural diversity.

Overall, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on the integration of culture and arts into education, highlighting its potential to enrich the learning experience, promote intercultural understanding, and foster meaningful connections among students. The identified strategies for reinforcing intercultural awareness offer practical guidance for educators seeking to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the significant positive effects of integrating ASEAN culture and arts into multicultural education within teacher education programs. Thematic Analysis revealed key themes indicating enhanced understanding, tolerance, and appreciation among students, as well as improvements in academic performance and real-world application of cultural insights.

The findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to cultural integration in education, highlighting the dynamic interplay between cultural elements and the educational environment. By fostering inclusivity and unity in the classroom, this integration aligns with

the goals of multicultural education, preparing students for diverse and globalized environments.

Moreover, the observed improvements in critical thinking, creativity, and cultural sensitivity suggest that ASEAN culture and arts catalyze academic and personal growth. The real-world application of cultural insights further emphasizes their practical relevance in preparing students for the complexities of today's world.

This study contributes valuable insights to the discourse on cultural integration in education, emphasizing its potential to enrich the learning experience, promote intercultural understanding, and foster meaningful connections among students. The identified strategies for reinforcing intercultural awareness provide practical guidance for educators seeking to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments, ultimately contributing to the cultivation of well-rounded and globally competent individuals.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

As authors, we acknowledge using generative AI and AI-assisted technologies in creating this work. These tools have enhanced the writing process, aiding in drafting, editing, and refining content. While the insights and narrative are my own, AI has contributed to the work's efficiency and breadth. This declaration is made for transparency and to acknowledge technology's evolving role in the creative process.

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Non-English Major Undergraduate Student's Perception of How Speaking Anxiety Interacts With Socio-Cultural Factors

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Abstract

Speaking is a crucial component of human language. Language learning and acquisition allow individuals to engage, share knowledge, and communicate with one another. Until now, using English as a second or foreign language every day might be difficult. Uneasy feelings, nervousness, or a sense of fear caused by a person's perception of learning or using a second language is known as language anxiety. A few anxiety students have indicated certain sociocultural factors, among other factors, could be responsible for students' foreign language speaking anxiety. This study aims to investigate the social-cultural factors causing English-speaking anxiety in non-English major undergraduate students. This study used a single case study qualitative approach. In-depth semi-structured interviews were utilized as a data collection tool. The data was collected from a non-English major undergraduate student in East Java. The data revealed several social-cultural related sources of speaking anxiety including students' geographic background, communicative apprehension, social and cultural environment, social status and self-identity, gender, and dialect. The results of this research are expected to offer helpful recommendations to enable English teachers or lecturers to react to their students' speaking anxiety and to assist teachers of lecturers in arranging their classes in a way that may reduce their students' speaking anxiety and promote students' speaking skills.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Speaking Anxiety, Socio-Cultural Factors

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Introduction

English language is considered one of the leading International Languages in the 21st Century, the number of its local speakers is less than the number of its users as a second or foreign language (Mckay, 2002). Speaking is a crucial component of human language. Language learning and acquisition allow individuals to engage, share knowledge, and communicate with one another. Until now, using English as a second or foreign language every day might be difficult. Due to the lack of effective communication and speaking abilities, many professionals and individuals globally suffer speaking anxiety when using a foreign language despite being qualified in their fields. Due to the essential role that English plays, many people believe that proficiency in the English language is required for monetary advancement on both a national and global scale.

Uneasy feelings, nervousness, or a sense of fear caused by a person's perception of learning or using a second language is known as language anxiety. Language anxiety experienced by EFL learners is a phenomenon that mostly comes from the immature foreign language communicative abilities (Horwitz, 2001). The role of anxiety as one of the most anxiety-provoking in speaking performance has been investigated by some researchers. Many of them conclude that anxiety interferes with EFL learners' performance in speaking. In learning a foreign language, most of the time the language learners are facing some kinds of problems such as anxiety (von Worde, 1998; Marwan, 2007; Hussein, 2010). Future research should clearly focus on the socio-cultural aspects associated with language acquisition, as Yan & Horwitz's (1998) study found that socio-cultural factors may cause students' speaking anxiety. According to Lo (2017), students' speaking anxiety may be triggered by a range of sociocultural factors in addition to other aspects. As a consequence, he proposed examining these factors in connection to anxiety. According to a thorough review of anxiety research, the majority of these studies have connected anxiety to language, classroom, teacher, and student-related aspects. In this subject, very little thought has been given to evaluating anxiety based on such socio-social aspects.

Due to the differences in the social context and cultural environment in which the second or foreign language learning takes place, students who learn English as an international language frequently express a feeling of stress, nervousness, or anxiety while learning to speak English. They also claim to have a mental block against learning English (Hasmeni, 2011). A careful review of language anxiety research reveals that most studies in this area have attributed language anxiety to factors such as linguistic-related, classroom-related, teacher-related, and student-related. So far, only limited attention has been placed on students' socio-cultural context. In particular, there is a lack of research in Indonesia examining these factors related to speaking anxiety, especially in English.

From the phenomenon above, the purpose of this qualitative research is to investigate the social-cultural factors causing English-speaking anxiety in a non-English major undergraduate student in one of the universities in Indonesia. The present study attempts to fill the gap by investigating socio-cultural factors responsible for non-English major undergraduate students' speaking anxiety.

Literature Review

Foreign Language Anxiety

In general, anxiety is defined as a feeling of apprehension, a nebulous fear that is only indirectly related with an object (Hilgard et al, 1971). Anxiety may be conveyed in various types of learning, but when it involves language education, it is referred to as second or foreign language anxiety. According to Suleimenova (2013), anxiety is defined as mental distress or uneasiness caused by a fear of danger or misfortune. Foreign Language Anxiety is one of the feelings that have a negative effect on students' perceptions of foreign language learning. Furthermore, foreign language anxiety is associated with feelings of fear, disorder, and concern about the situations where the language is acquired, such as English as a foreign language lesson. Foreign Language Anxiety, which is recognized as an affective factor in a foreign language and normally discussed alongside other individual learner differences, is still regarded as a relatively new and developing area within the field of foreign language research (Gardner & Maclntyre, 1992, 1994).

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a situation-specific form of anxiety that is related to language learning context (Horwitz, 2001). Gardener (1985) had also acknowledged that second or foreign language anxiety was situation-specific. Since its introduction in 1986, the theory of FLA developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope has been extensively utilized in language anxiety research. According to their argument, construct ambiguity, ambiguous definitions of anxiety, and the absence of an appropriate anxiety measure were the root causes of the conflicting findings in anxiety research up until that point. Horwitz et al., (1986) defined FLA as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. Young (1990) on the other hand, characterizes FLA as an intricate psychological phenomenon particular to language learning.

Speaking Anxiety

Speaking anxiety is one of the most significant emotional factors that affects foreign language acquisition, and it frequently has a negative impact on students' spoken English performance (Melouah 2013). Speaking anxiety can be mild nervousness to extreme fear. The most typical symptoms of speaking anxiety are hand shaking, shivering, sweating, fear, forgetfulness, blankness, butterflies in the stomach, dry mouth and throat, fast heartbeat, and a squeaky voice.Anxiety about speaking a foreign language has been a major concern in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). It has been established that speaking a foreign language with anxiety is one of the most significant influences on students' learning processes. Since the 1970s, a significant number of studies on this topic have been carried out (Abrar et al., 2016). Tanveer (2007) states that the sense that EFL students frequently express uneasiness, anxiety, as well as stress while figuring out how to convey using English. He likewise expressed that most EFL students have a mental block against learning English. This phenomenon happens because the feelings of anxiety in foreign language speaking cause a sense of failure if the EFL learners cannot speak in the classroom.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), EFL students have considerable foreign language speaking anxiety in testing situations. Being criticized in public is an uncomfortable condition for the majority of students. EFL students report that the most stressful situation to them is when their knowledge and performance in a foreign language fall under evaluation by

other people around them. Horwitz et al., (1986) identified three situation-specific performance anxieties: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is described as the fear of communicating with others, which includes both production and reception apprehension. aAaCommunicative apprehension can be determined as the fear and anxious feeling about oral communication while communicating with the public (Horwitz et al., 1986). Communication apprehension happens because of the personality traits of individuals, such as shyness, quietness, and hesitation. McCroskey (1997) also mentioned that communication apprehension is the individual's feelings of anxiety or fear that is related to communicating with the public or with a person. McCroskey & Andersen (1976) explained that apprehension of communication has a harmful impact on the learners' performance in communication-based classrooms and a reducing effect on language learners.

Test anxiety derives from the fear of failing to perform in a foreign language. This source of foreign language anxiety refers to the feelings of worry about how others perceive the speaker, either the teacher or the learners' peers. This happens when the EFL learners think that they are being evaluated or judged by either the other students or the teacher (Price, 1991). This could be seen that the students are worried and afraid that they could be judged negatively by others (Horwitz et al., 1986). Thus, the feeling of being observed by others will increase their fear, insecurities, and make them unable to perform well in the classroom. When foreign language learners consider they are unable to impress others with their language ability, they experience fear of negative evaluation.This sourceis defined as the fear of tests, quizzes, examinations, and other tests or tasks used to evaluate the performance of the learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). EFL learners who experience test anxiety frequently think that it is a failure to achieve less than a perfect score on their tests. According to Calvo & Carreiras (1993), test anxiety is the tendency to worry about one's own performance and aptitude under test conditions. Moreover, Meijer (2001) described that, in testing situations, test anxiety might represent a bias that covers up a student's true potential. Although Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety has always been interpreted to be constructed by three components of anxiety namely communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, language anxiety should be explained through more than these three constructs (Hortwitz, 2017).

Socio-Cultural Factors Causing Speaking Anxiety

Understudies' tension was significantly influenced by individual factors (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). They also talked about two important sociocultural factors and said that students' immediate sociocultural contexts might also produce speaking anxiety for them: parental impact and understudies' territorial distinctions. Anxiety was also influenced by gender, the arrangement of classes, language proficiency, and the characteristics of teachers. It is essential that Yan & Horwitz (2008) focus on only two socio-social factors: understudies' provincial distinctions and parental impact, as anxiety-provoking factors. Tseng (2012) summarizes psychological and socio-cultural factors associated with anxiety, anxiety; namely low self-esteem, social environment, cultural differences, social status and self-identity, gender, strict and formal classroom, presentation, and fear of making mistakes.

According to Alcala (2007), self-esteem is a psychological and social phenomenon in which a person evaluates their own self in terms of values. This can lead to a variety of emotional states, and can become developmentally stable, but is still susceptible to variation based on personal circumstances. When learning a second or foreign language, many students

experience low self-esteem. The social environment is important factor in the contexts of second language acquisition because it interacts with other people around them, such as classmates, instructors, and society. A study by Rochecouste et al. (2012) found that social learning strategies such as social study support groups assisted in the development of participants' English, implying that it is critical to provide opportunities for social interaction and an environment that encourages students to take a risk and engage in social activities. Language anxiety can be caused by cultural differences. According to Toyama & Yamazaki (2002), a common cause of speaking anxiety in relation to cultural differences is a divergence in culturally accepted beliefs. According to Tseng (2012), as the cultural background of the speaker and the cultural background of the target language can be very different, such as the use of vocabulary, students may experience more anxiety when learning the target language if they are less familiar with it. Due to differences in students' cultural backgrounds and target language vocabulary, misinterpretations of the speaker's messages will not be well received.

Anxiety among students is directly connected to their social status. According to Giles et al. (1975), the social status or social distance among interlocutors (between foreign students and persons from the host country) may have a significant impact on how they communicate. In a study conducted in Canada by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), the perspectives of French and English speakers regarding the English and French cultures and languages were contrasted. They discovered that French speakers had a greater impact on English than French speakers of English. This was because English as a first language environment was seen as a threat to French culture. As a result, studying English has become more difficult in terms of attitude and motivation. Gender has repeatedly been associated with emotional aspects and performance. According to Yashima et al. (2009)'s study, anxiety was discovered partially across people, with female participants in public speaking experiencing higher anxiety than males. Cheng & Erben (2012) stated that language anxiety and gender exist for cultural reasons.

The formal educational environment contributes to language anxiety. Quiet classrooms will cause language anxiety since someone will attract a lot of attention from all of the students because they will raise their voice, leading to a loss of confidence (Effiong, 2016). Pressures that occur in highly evaluative environments, notably in the foreign language classroom where performance is continually monitored by both the teacher and other students, offer more stress in learning the second language. Many students struggle with expressing themselves in front of others since preparations such as practicing English in terms of content delivery and intelligibility must be done beforehand. Throughout this process, some students become worried and lose confidence. Young (1990) found that students prefer not to be called forward to speak. According to Young (1991), activities requiring oral communication, such as reading activities, oral tests, and random oral reports, generate anxiety. These findings imply that oral performances like presentations and being summoned in front of the class lead to anxiety. Fear of making mistakes stems from apprehension of being judged negatively. Tseng (2012) says that learners are terrified and panic because they are afraid of seeming uncomfortable, foolish, or incompetent in the opinions of their fellow students or others. Speaking and learning a language will become a significant concern in this circumstance. Moreover, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) assert that learners' fear of making mistakes has been found to be closely associated with their anxiety to preserve their positive image or impression in the views of their teachers and fellow students.

This study investigated students' perceptions of how speaking anxiety interacts with socio-cultural factors. Specifically, this study addressed one research question: What socio-cultural

factors do students believe contribute to English speaking anxiety in non-English major undergraduate students?

Methodology

This research used a qualitative case study approach. A case study refers to a single instance of some bound system, ranging from one individual to a class, a school, or an entire community (McKay, 2006). In-depth semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection tool. The data were collected from one final-year student majoring in non-English at a university in East Java. The selection of interviewed participants was non-English undergraduate students who were available and willing to be interviewed. The participant took part in an in-depth semi-structured interview regarding his speaking anxiety. The interviews were conducted when the participants had free time and the place was determined based on the convenience of the participants. The interviews have been conducted using the Indonesian language to make the participants feel comfortable in the interview process and facilitate communication. The interview session lasted for approximately 30-40 minutes. A high quality digital voice-recorder was used to record all the interviews for accuracy and transcription purposes. After conducting the interviews, the data were transcribed by listening to the video recording to be coded into several themes afterward.

The data analysis followed Strauss and Corbin's (1999) open coding approach to examine participants' statements regarding socio-cultural factors affecting English speaking anxiety. The researcher carefully coded each transcript, engaging in iterative categorization refinement based on themes that appeared across the transcripts. Subsequently, the researcher re-evaluated and refined the codes and categories to accurately describe the socio-cultural factors causing speaking anxiety. The patterns in the participant data were then looked for, with codes cross-checked against the category names and each other to ensure alignment with existing categories and consistency with each other.

Findings and Discussion

Student's Geographic Background

There is evidence in the data that students' place of origin may influence his English language and speaking ability. The participant is from a small city in Central Kalimantan. He did not have the opportunity to seek better English training and speaking skills. Therefore, he is worried about his success in speaking English now. In contrast to rural areas, urban areas and cities have excellent English-medium schools, universities, and English language centers that provide a variety of programs for students' language proficiency.

> "When I go to university in East Java, I feel a very big difference between my senior high school in Central Kalimantan and university. Because at senior high school, the teaching method was very monotonous, so I didn't feel interested and enjoyed/comfortable when learning English in class. We also spoke English rarely. Because of it, I also don't speak English fluently and do not have enough competence. Compared to my university friends who come from big cities, I feel highly incompetent because they have high English competence and speak English fluently."

This finding is consistent with Yan & Horwitz's (2008) study that suggests that regional differences in the English language education system affect students' speaking proficiency

and can promote students to worry about their performance in their university class. Different geographical background conditions between rural areas and urban areas can influence students' attitudes in learning English (Hossain, 2016). According to Cheung (2021), the main reason is that cities have significant resources in education while rural areas are highly inconsistent with people's learning needs.

Communicative Apprehension

The participant doubts his ability to communicate well in the classroom. This can build up his speaking anxiety, as well as make him reluctant to communicate. The participant prefers to be silent rather than speaking English in an effort so that others do not judge him that his ability is still lacking. Communication apprehension (CA) generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced before or during interaction with other people.

> "I'm not really confident to speak English, because I know my skills are very minimal. I often make fun of myself for this. Since I barely speak English, I also worry that the other person won't understand what I'm saying."

Communication apprehension generally refers to a type of anxiety experienced before or during interaction with other people. Communicative apprehension is one of the primary sources of speaking anxiety (Horwitz, 2010; Kim, 2009; Trang et al., 2013; Sadighi & Dastpak, 2017; Toubot & Seng, 2018). It may be experienced due to many factors, for instance when students cannot speak effectively because of poor speaking skills (Tóth, 2011) and when they perceive themselves as unable to communicate in the foreign language (Arnold, 2007). It could be argued that if students doubt their ability to communicate successfully in the class this may escalate their SA, as well as discourage them from communication. According to Young (1990), communicative increases when students have to perform in front of the whole class. According to Horwitz et al. (1986) the higher status of the teacher may also contribute to students' communicative apprehension.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

The feeling of being negatively evaluated by peers, friends, and being observed as incompetent student by others was also identified as an anxiety provoking factor in speaking in a second or foreign language. From the interview, the participant confessed that he was always afraid of making mistakes. He did not want to get negative comments from his lecturer and classmates.

> "Because I appear to speak English in front of the class with the skill I lack, I feel like I am the center of attention. I'm anxious and worried that my intonation and pronunciation will be off. My classmates' expressions, such as frowning, laughing, and reflexively looking at each other, also appear to make fun of me. In addition, my lecturers provide only criticism rather than any input, making me even more insecure, depressed, and afraid."

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as an apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986). Fear of negative evaluation is also considered to be one of the major contributors to students' speaking anxiety (Horwitz, 2013; Alghothani, 2010; Naudhani at al., 2018; Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019). Price (1991) conducted interviews with

highly anxious students and found that several students preferred to sit silently in the class due to the fear "of being laughed at by others, of making a fool of themselves in public". It means they might avoid participating in oral tasks which would improve their speaking. Likewise, Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) conclude that the majority of their subjects experienced speaking anxiety due to the fear that their peers and the teacher would judge them negatively and make fun of them. Moreover, teachers' use of humiliation, fear, and intimidation can cause students to develop habits of disorders, shyness, withdrawal, and anxiety (Yunus et al., 2011).

Social and Cultural Environment

The social environment is an important factor in the context of second language acquisition because it interacts with other people around them, such as classmates, instructors, and society. To the participant, the social environment problem is his challenge. He lives in a place that does not use English in daily life. The environment has an important role in the contexts of learning a second language as students interact everyday with other people around them including their own peers, teachers, and society (neighbors) where they live. Therefore, the environment where he lives prefers to use Indonesian and local languages in his daily activities rather than using English. This condition does not support the academic life of the participant.

> "My local friends' and the people around me influence me to believe that learning English is not necessary. These people think that if we only speak Indonesian and local languages, studying English is useless. They say it's better to learn the local language deeper and preserve it, English is not cool. I've only recently realized that I need to work hard to catch up in order to improve my quality of life by learning English."

Spada & Lightbown's (2010) argues that language acquisition may not be successful if language learners or users do not have access to social relationships in situations where they are considered valued partners in communication. As language practices involve social practices, learners who practice the target language inside the classroom but not outside will find it difficult to speak which enhances anxiety. A study by Rochecouste et al. (2012) found that social learning strategies such as social study support groups assisted in the development of participants' English, implying that it is critical to provide opportunities for social interaction and an environment that encourages students to take a risk and engage in social activities. It is dissimilar from the anxiety of EFL students who studied English in the context where English is a first language and where they could benefit from the surrounding community who use English in daily life for acquisition. Clements et al. (2001) assert that frequent positive contacts with L2 users and society result in more linguistic confidence and a positive image of learners.

Social Status and Self-Identity

Anxiety among students is directly connected to their social status. In this study, the self-identity and social status are framed within participant-lecturers' and participant-his friends' relationships. Through interviews, the participant shared social status as students in relation to teachers and friends, reflecting that this relationship is a manifestation of how they explain their identity branching out in the depiction of social status. The participant is afraid to speak

English to people he thinks are better at it, like the lecturers and friends from big cities who already speak English well.

> "I was afraid of making mistakes while speaking in English with my lecturer. I was also more afraid to speak English with my lecturer than I speak with my friend. When I was speaking English with my friends, I enjoyed it more and felt more relaxed. Meanwhile, When I was face-to-face with my lecturer, especially when we were alone and without my friends, I frequently felt unable to think clearly. My tongue was too stiff to say the sentences or words I already created in my head, so I frequently struggled to say them."

Hasmeni (2011) asserts that a speaker's sense of inferiority complex while talking to someone higher in status may cause stress or anxiety which might lead to the loss of one's positive self-image or self-identity. According to Hussain & Ali (2019), linguistic ability differences between mother-tongue and second-language speakers create intercultural communication anxiety, and speaking in a higher-ranked language can make speakers feel anxiety. Anxiety among students is directly connected to their social status. According to Giles et al. (1975), the social status or social distance among interlocutors may have a significant impact on how they communicate.

Gender

Gender has often been observed in relation to factors that cause fear of speaking and inhibit speaking performance. In the interview, the participant admitted that his female friends were more open and easy to talk to than his male friends. He feels more comfortable learning to speak English with his female friends because they can give him subtle evaluations and suggestions so he can improve his speaking skills. However, the participant felt that he was not suitable for learning and speaking in English with his male friends because they seemed to give criticism in an uncomfortable way.

> "I enjoy it more when I speak English with my female friends. Because my female friends understand and correct me more gently when I make mistakes in speaking English. On the other hand, when I speak English with male friends, the atmosphere appears to be more serious and tough."

Zakiya et al. (2022) study found that the participants acknowledged their female friends were easier to talk to than their male friends. In addition, Tseng (2012) explains that gender-related anxiety might appear because of the different experiences of feeling anxious or comfortable while talking to the opposite sex, which is culturally-laden. Furthermore, the study of Yashima et al. (2009) found that anxiety appeared partially among people, as female participants in public speaking have higher anxiety than male. According to Cheng & Erben (2012), language anxiety and gender exist because of cultural reasons.

Formal Educational Environment

The formal classroom environment was also found to contribute to the participant. Formal classroom environment is a classroom situation of which generally, it has a quiet, serious, and tense atmosphere. The participant couldn't think straight and study well due to the pressure created in the classroom. Therefore, it would be better if the lecturer in the class could

provide a method that could create a fun and enjoyable classroom atmosphere to prevent pressure in the class so that student learning goals could be achieved.

> "The situation that made me feel pressured was when I was talking with the lecturer (formal situation) because I was confused about arranging and choosing the right vocabulary. I also feel nervous to speak English in class because of the tense atmosphere. However, when talking to friends outside of class, I don't feel too much pressure because my friends can understand if I'm wrong."

Research on speaking anxiety revealed that the rigid, tense classrooms where interactions among peers and between teacher-students are frequent cases, anxiety increases (Effiong, 2016). Hasmeni (2011) asserts that the more friendly and informal the language classroom environment, the less it is likely to be anxiety provoking. Padmadewi (1998), in her study, confirmed that students would feel anxious in speaking class because of the pressure from speaking tasks which required them to present spontaneously within a limited time. Additionally, Young (1986) found that most students were particularly anxious when they had to speak a foreign language in front of their class. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher plays an important role because he or she is the most inspired person in the classroom, and students mostly pay attention to their teacher. Brown (2007) mentions that in the course of teaching, teachers can take on a variety of roles, which may help students learn. The rapport that they establish with their students and, of course, their own level of knowledge and skills will have a significant impact on their capacity to effectively carry out these tasks. Most of the discipline problems in the classroom are caused by such factors as boredom, not understanding the relevance of the information, and incorrect modalities for learning (Tileston, 2004).

Accent

An accent is also one of the factors that cause participants to experience fear of speaking English. The participant has a strong accents due to Dayak-Javanese descent. The participant often accidentally brings out his regional accent when speaking English which causes him to often be made fun of by his friends because they find it funny and unique. Although there is nothing wrong with that, it makes the participant feels anxious and embarrassed.

> "I speak with a thick mixed accent because I'm Dayaknese-Javanese. I am used to speaking in a dialect when I speak local languages and Indonesian. Then, sometimes I often unconsciously bring out my dialect when I speak English. It made my friends at college laugh when they heard me speak English. However, now they regard it as something unique."

Njeru (2013) study said that most people from the rural areas face accent problems in speaking English because they grow up in the villages where only one language is used, therefore face difficulties in acquiring the second or third language. Accent concerns about the different ways of producing speech (Derwing & Munro, 2009). In contrast, Moyer (2013) states that adults tend to consider their L1 accent as an integral part of their the idea of self, and therefore may resist acquiring a new accent in the L2 as it ultimately means losing a part of their established concept of self. However, she claims that children are more likely to be less inhibited and speak with a more-native sounding accent. However, other studies have questioned the extent to which learners feel they must retain their L1 accent to preserve their identity. Derwing (2003) looked to examine this connection and explore whether students felt

that they would lose aspects of their own identities if they aimed to speak with a native-like accent. The majority of the participants reported that they did not feel like they were losing their identity when speaking their L2, because they associated identity more strongly with their L1.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The aim of this study was to investigate the social-cultural factors causing English-speaking anxiety in non-English major undergraduate student. The study reveals eight socio-cultural factors that may contribute to speaking anxiety and that it is a pervasive phenomenon in English language classrooms. There are students' geographic background, communicative apprehension, social and cultural environment, fear of negative evaluation, social status and self-identity, gender, and accent. The participant in this study considered the factors that may seriously influence his speaking performance in class. Therefore, it needs targeted attention and an active response from English teachers or lecturers in order to address it. According to the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that English teachers and lecturers give more attention to classroom management in order to successfully minimize their students' speaking anxiety and enhance their English speaking abilities.

Acknowledgements

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Gender-Differences in the Use of Communication Strategies in Romantic Relationships

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Abstract

This research explores gender differences in communication within romantic relationships, focusing on university students due to a literature gap in this demographic. The study investigates how they endorsed communication strategies for conflict resolution and expressions forgiveness. Online questionnaires were distributed over three months, with 200 Taiwanese university students participating in this survey. Using independent-samples t-tests, the results suggested that females tended to adopt indirect fighting strategies during conflicts, while men favored the 'Minimization Strategy' for showing forgiveness. The study emphasizes recognizing and accepting gendered differences in communication strategies to enhance mutual satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Keywords: Forgiveness, Conflicts, Communication Strategies, Romantic Relationships

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1. Introduction

1.1 Communication in Love and the Importance

Romantic relationships play a pivotal role in our lives, providing us with companionship, support, and opportunities for personal growth. However, in order to maintain a healthy and fulfilling romantic relationship, it is crucial to know how to communicate appropriately or strategically in order to cope with the challenges faced in love.

Communication holds an indispensable position within the realm of romantic relationships as it profoundly influences how our partners comprehend our messages, and connect with us verbally and nonverbally so that they know how to navigate the nature of the involved social interactions (Meeks, et al., 1998). Through effective communication in love, we could successfully convey our thoughts, emotions, and needs to our partners. It is also believed that communication serves as a fundamental determinant of relationship satisfaction (Halbert, 1961; Hull, 2012). It also fosters understanding between romantic partners, facilitates conflict resolution, builds trust, and enhances overall connection and intimacy (Katz, et al., 2020). The significance of effective communication in romantic relationships is hence highlighted in this study. More importantly, this project aims to identify potential gendered differences in communication choices made in romantic relationships.

1.2 A Briefing on Gendered Differences in Communication Styles in Love

It has been revealed that there are certain distinctions between men and women in terms of their communication in romantic relationships (Metts, 2006).

As discussed in Zhao's study (2022), men and women seem to exhibit divergent approaches to communication in love. For instance, when expressing affection, men tend to use explicit verbal statements such as "I like you", while women often rely on nonverbal cues and body language to convey their liking. In the face of conflict, women tend to confront it directly and display more negative emotions, while men typically opt for conflict resolution and avoidance (Zhao, 2022). When seeking to repair a relationship, men seem to prioritize the offer of timely apologies to signal their desire to reconcile in conflicts. When ending a relationship, women tend to employ sexual innuendos as a means to indicate their reluctance (Zhao, 2022). Moreover, research has shown that women are more likely to cite reasons related to autonomy, openness, and equity when discussing break-ups (Baxter, 1986). More elaboration on the use of communication strategies to deal with the various communication scenarios in love will be provided later in the section of literature review.

1.3 Research Purposes

In sum, by acknowledging and comprehending the distinctions of communication behaviours in love between the two genders, we can learn how to accommodate our communication styles for our partners of the other gender in order to enhance the quality of romantic relationships by means of the use of appropriate communication strategies (Savicki & Kelley, 2000). In the process of language socialization, we probably don't have sufficient awareness as to how our communication behaviours and choices can vary by our gender. Given that experiencing a romantic relationship is something that college students would like to prioritize among all in their lives, this project hence aimed to elicit college students' views as to how they choose to communicate strategically when encountering two particular scenarios

in love, namely, conflict resolutions and expressing forgiveness. To make this project a sociolinguistic one, we focus on exploring how the variation in communication choices appear to be associated with gender identities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Communicating Conflicts in Romantic Relationships

Conflicts in intimate relationships are inevitable, and the way people manage them can either strengthen or weaken the relationship (Guerrero, Andersen, & Afifi, 2020). Researchers have found that conflict styles can be classified based on two dimensions: cooperation and directness (Rahim, 1986; Sillars et al., 2004). These two dimensions create six conflict communication styles: 1. competitive fighting, 2. compromising, 3. collaborating, 4. indirect fighting, 5. avoiding, and 6. yielding.

Competitive Fighting Strategy
According to Blake and Mouton (1964), competitive fighting is a conflict strategy that involves direct and uncooperative behavior. The competitive goals associated with this strategy tend to result in closed-minded interaction (Tjosvold et al., 2016). Individuals who adopt this strategy are more likely to prioritize winning the conflict over finding a mutually beneficial solution.

Compromising Strategy
Compromise is a conflict management strategy that involves seeking a fair, intermediate position that satisfies some of both partners' needs. This strategy involves pursuing a part-win-part-lose situation, where each partner gives up a little to achieve mutual goals. According to Gross and Guerrero (2000), the compromising style is perceived as moderately appropriate and effective. However, excessive use of this style can lead to negative outcomes such as anxiety and depression, as it may create a perception that problems have never been fully resolved.

Collaborating Strategy
Collaborating involves active participation, open communication, and the sharing of ideas and resources (Rahim, 1986; Sillars et al., 2004). This conflict style is frequently utilized in team-based settings, where individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and expertise come together to solve complex problems or complete tasks requiring collective effort. According to Tjosvold et al. (2001), cooperative conflict contributes to effective teamwork and leadership. Successful collaboration necessitates trust, respect, and willingness to compromise and work towards a mutually beneficial solution.

Indirect Fighting Strategy
Indirect fighting is a conflict management style where individuals adopt an indirect and uncooperative approach when dealing with disagreements. As noted by Sillars et al. (2004), this style involves behaviors such as ignoring the partner, refusing to address the problems in a respectful manner, or walking away in frustration. Indirect aggression serves as an alternative to direct aggression, as highlighted by Archer and Coyne (2005). However, the limitation of this approach is that it often leads to avoidance of the problem rather than addressing it. This avoidance can be more detrimental to the relationship than adopting a competitive style since it prevents the parties involved from confronting the issue head-on.

Avoiding Strategy

The avoiding strategy involves deliberately keeping oneself away from certain people or situations to avoid conflict, tension, or discomfort. This strategy is used for various reasons, such as a fear of confrontation, a desire to maintain peace or neutrality, or a lack of interest or motivation. Huang (黃囇莉, 2006) suggests that using the avoiding strategy has several advantages over the competitive approach, such as reducing confrontation and demonstrating an implicit yielding approach. Unlike those who adopt a yielding strategy and are willing to make sacrifices, those who use an avoiding strategy may not appear to be doing something great, but it is usually harmless to everyone involved. However, Huang (黃囇莉, 2006) also notes that avoiding conflict may sometimes lead to positive outcomes, but it can also cause resentment to build up over time and further exacerbate the relationship.

Yielding Strategy

The yielding strategy, as a coping mechanism, refers to the act of reaching a compromise with the opposing party that is lower than the original goal. (Klein & Johnson, 1997; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Sillars, 2010). Yielding can be viewed as an act of surrender, submission, or acquiescence under pressure, force, or influence, often motivated by respect for authority or a desire to maintain peace or avoid conflict. However, in some instances, this behavior can be perceived as a weakness or a lack of confidence. Despite this, the yielding strategy may also serve as an effective means of conflict resolution, particularly in situations where the parties involved have different levels of power or authority. It is important to note that the yielding strategy should be used judiciously, as over-reliance on this strategy may lead to a loss of credibility or a failure to achieve one's goals. (Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993).

2.2 Communicating Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships

Forgiveness is crucial when it comes to repairing a relationship and increasing intimacy after a negative event (Emmers & Canary, 1996). However, there are various methods of demonstrating or communicating forgiveness. In Waldron and Kelley's (2005) study, forgiving communication was categorized into five forms, which were labeled as explicit statements (e.g., telling your partner "I forgive you."), conditional (e.g., offering forgiveness with specific conditions), minimizing strategy (e.g., telling 'It's not a serious problem.'), nonverbal display (e.g., hugs or smiles), and discussion (e.g., more in-depth discussion of the incident).

Sheldon and Honeycutt's (2011) investigation of 147 married couples found that men had a tendency to state that the transgression is not a significant issue. When it comes to transgressions, they used minimizing strategy more frequently than women, no matter how strong their religiosity level was. However, no obvious gender differences were observed in other strategies.

In a more recent study, Antony and Sheldon (2019) revealed that, in the process of restoring friendship, females were prone to more verbal strategies, such as discussion, conditional, and explicit forgiveness. In contrast, males were inclined to use minimization and nonverbal display. In terms of forgiving behaviors, nonchalant comments or conciliatory gestures were likely to be employed by men, such as buying a drink for the offending friend. The severity of a transgression was found to be related to the use of forgiveness strategy. Lesser offenses are positively associated with minimization and negatively associated with discussion and conditional forgiveness in friendships.

Previous studies on the usage of forgiveness-granting strategies have focused on dating and married couples and friendships. However, hardly any of them examine the gender difference of college dating students. Therefore, we pose the following research question:

To verify how communication strategies for conflict and forgiveness as revealed in existing literature can be realized among Taiwanese college students, the following two research questions were proposed:

RQ 1: Are there any gendered differences in conflict communication among Taiwanese college students in romantic relationships?

RQ 2: Are there any gendered differences in forgiveness communication among Taiwanese college students in romantic relationships?

3. Methodology

3.1 Survey Participants

To recruit participants for this study, we posted online questionnaires on three social media platforms: Line groups, Instagram, and D-card, with a focus on Taiwanese university students. The survey was available for completion from July 2023 to October 2023. As a result, a total of 200 Taiwanese university students participated in this survey. Those who haven't been in a romantic relationship were asked to imagine themselves in that relationship when they answered the questions in the survey. In terms of the gender distribution, over half of them (N=108, 54%) were females, and approximately two-quarters (N=92, 46%) were males.

3.2 Survey Items

The communication strategies as reviewed in section 2 were employed as the survey items to examine how male and female Taiwanese college students concurred with them. The survey participants were asked to assess the provided communication strategy statements using a 5-point Likert scale to express their agreement levels. The scale included the following values: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (no comment), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

3.3 Analyses

The gendered differences in the extent to which the 200 participants agreed with the given communication strategies were identified by using independent t-tests, using SPSS. As to the extent to which each strategy was endorsed by the participants, the Mean values were observed.

4. Results

4.1 Gendered Differences in Conflict Communication Strategies

Table 1 and Table 2 showed the relative gendered differences in the extents to which college students endorsed the various conflict communication strategies. Independent sample t tests suggested that significant gendered differences could be found.

Those significantly more favored by male students include: "When conflicts arise, I am proactive in sharing my perspective and am willing to actively understand my partner's point of view", $t(198)=2.144$, $p<.05$; "When conflicts arise, I might agree with what my partner is

saying just to avoid an argument, even if I don't actually agree with him/her.", t(198)=2.928, "When conflicts arise, I would yield to my partner out of respect for his/her opinions.", t(198)=2.44, p<.05.

As to those significantly preferred by female students included: "After conflicts, I might deliberately distance myself from my partner.", t(198)=-5.028, p=.000; p<.01; "I do not tolerate conflicts when they arise.", t(198)= -2.276, p<.05).

Table 1: Conflict communication by gender: Mean values

Conflict communication strategies	Gender	N	Mean
當衝突發生時，我會主動分享自己的看法也願意積極了解對方的想法。	M	92	4.33
When conflicts arise, I am proactive in sharing my perspective and am willing to actively understand my partner's point of view.	F	108	4.11
當衝突發生時，我會想要跟伴侶一起合作來解決問題。	M	92	4.32
When conflicts arise, I want to collaborate with my partner to solve the problems.	F	108	4.31
當衝突發生時，我願意主動與對方用開放的態度討論問題。	M	92	4.36
When conflicts arise, I am willing to engage in open discussions with my partner with a positive attitude.	F	108	4.15
當衝突發生時，我會不爽的離開現場。	M	92	2.41
When conflicts arise, I tend to leave the scene because of my feeling upset.	F	108	2.69
當衝突發生時，我會故意對對方說難聽的話。	M	92	2.23
When conflicts arise, I may intentionally say hurtful things to my partner.	F	108	2.3
當衝突發生後，我會刻意疏遠對方。	M	92	2.52
After conflicts, I might deliberately distance myself from my partner.	F	108	3.3
當我和伴侶發生衝突時，我習慣轉移我們的話題。	M	92	2.91
When my partner and I have conflicts, I have a tendency to change the topic of our conversation.	F	108	2.63
當衝突發生時，我會因為不想吵架，而裝作沒聽到對方說話。	M	92	2.55
When conflicts arise, I may pretend not to hear what my partner says because I don't want to argue with him/her.	F	108	2.47
當衝突發生時，我會為了不想吵架，而去附和對方說的話，儘管我並不同意他/她。	M	92	2.91
When conflicts arise, I might agree with what my partner is saying just to avoid an argument, even if I don't actually agree with him/her.	F	108	2.41

當發生競爭衝突時，我會優先考慮贏得衝突而不是討論共同的問題。	M	92	2.37
In competitive conflicts, I prioritize winning the conflict over discussing the issues causing our arguments.	F	108	2.17
當發生競爭衝突時，我不會容忍衝突。	M	92	2.72
I do not tolerate conflicts when they arise.	F	108	3.05
當發生衝突時，我願意讓步，以解決衝突。	M	92	3.77
When conflicts occur, I am willing to compromise to resolve them.	F	108	3.53
當發生衝突時，我願意找到能滿足雙方可以接受的解決方法。	M	92	4.23
When conflicts arise, I am willing to find solutions that both my partner and I can accept.	F	108	4.21
當發生衝突時，我會因尊重對方的意見，而屈服於他。	M	92	3.36
When conflicts arise, I would yield to my partner out of respect for his/her opinions.	F	108	2.98

Table 2: Conflict communication strategies by gender: independent samples t tests

Conflict communication strategies	t	df	Sig.
當衝突發生時，我會主動分享自己的看法也願意積極了解對方的想法。 When conflicts arise, I am proactive in sharing my perspective and am willing to actively understand my partner's point of view.	2.144	198	0.033
當衝突發生時，我會想要跟伴侶一起合作來解決問題。 When conflicts arise, I want to collaborate with my partner to solve the problems.	0.092	198	0.927
當衝突發生時，我願意主動與對方用開放的態度討論問題。 When conflicts arise, I am willing to engage in open discussions with my partner with a positive attitude.	1.966	198	0.051
當衝突發生時，我會不爽的離開現場。 When conflicts arise, I tend to leave the scene because of my feeling upset.	-1.95	198	0.053
當衝突發生時，我會故意對對方說難聽的話。 When conflicts arise, I may intentionally say hurtful things to my partner.	-0.428	198	0.669
當衝突發生後，我會刻意疏遠對方。 After conflicts, I might deliberately distance myself from my partner.	-5.028	198	0

當我和伴侶發生衝突時，我習慣轉移我們的話題。 When my partner and I have conflicts, I have a tendency to change the topic of our conversation.	1.79	198	0.075
當衝突發生時，我會因為不想吵架，而裝作沒聽到對方說話。 When conflicts arise, I may pretend not to hear what my partner says because I don't want to argue with him/her.	0.487	199	0.627
當衝突發生時，我會為了不想吵架，而去附和對方說的話，儘管我並不同意他/她。 When conflicts arise, I might agree with what my partner is saying just to avoid an argument, even if I don't actually agree with him/her.	2.928	198	0.004
當發生競爭衝突時，我會優先考慮贏得衝突而不是討論共同的問題。 In competitive conflicts, I prioritize winning the conflict over discussing the issues causing our arguments.	1.37	167	0.172
當發生競爭衝突時，我不會容忍衝突。 I do not tolerate conflicts when they arise.	-2.276	198	0.024
當發生衝突時，我願意讓步，以解決衝突。 When conflicts occur, I am willing to compromise to resolve them.	1.918	198	0.057
當發生衝突時，我願意找到能滿足雙方可以接受的解決方法。 When conflicts arise, I am willing to find solutions that both my partner and I can accept.	0.139	198	0.889
當發生衝突時，我會因尊重對方的意見，而屈服於他。 When conflicts arise, I would yield to my partner out of respect for his/her opinions.	2.44	198	0.016

4.2 Forgiveness Communication Strategies

As revealed in Table 3 and Table 4, it was evident that "Nonverbal communication strategies were considerably favored: for instance, "When I want to forgive my partner, I express forgiveness through facial expressions, hugs, or kind gestures." was the most commonly used by both males (Mean=4.28) and females (Mean=4.25).

Additionally, men (Mean=3.98) also showed a greater concordance of the minimization strategy, such as, "When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her, "It's not a big deal. Don't worry", while women (Mean=4.05) exhibited a stronger preference for discussion, for example, "When I want to forgive my partner, I actively discuss the conflict in-depth with him/her."

What's more, the results of the independent-samples t-test showed that men reported significantly higher agreement on three communication strategies as compared to women: namely realizing explicit communication in the strategy of "When I want to forgive my partner, I directly tell him/her that I have forgiven him/her." (Mean for men=3.88, Mean for

women=3.40, t(197.27)= 3.464, p=0.001); to minimize negative impacts by means of the following two strategies: "When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her, It's not a big deal. Don't worry." (Mean for men=3.98, Mean for women=3.52, t(198)=3.529, p=0.001); and "When I want to forgive my partner, I have a casual conversation with him/her and avoid discussing the mistakes causing conflicts." (Mean for men=3.83, Mean for women=3.34, t(198)=3.251, p=0.001).

Table 3: Forgiveness communication strategies by gender: Mean values

Forgiveness communication strategies	Gender	N	Mean
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會直接跟伴侶說我已經原諒他了。	Male	92	3.88
When I want to forgive my partner, I directly tell him/her that I have forgiven him/her.	Female	108	3.4
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會跟對方說「沒什麼大不了的，不用擔心」。	Male	92	3.98
When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her, "It's not a big deal. Don't worry."	Female	108	3.52
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會透過表情、擁抱或示好的行為表達原諒。	Male	92	4.28
When I want to forgive my partner, I express forgiveness through facial expressions, hugs, or kind gestures.	Female	108	4.25
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會告訴對方如果這次的過錯不再發生，我才會原諒他。	Male	92	3.11
When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her that I will forgive him/her if the same mistake doesn't happen again.	Female	108	3.26
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會主動跟對方深入討論這次的衝突。	Male	92	3.86
When I want to forgive my partner, I actively discuss the conflict in-depth with him/her.	Female	108	4.05
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會以輕鬆的口吻與他閒聊，並避開談論對方的過錯。	Male	92	3.83
When I want to forgive my partner, I have a casual conversation with him/her and avoid discussing the mistakes causing conflicts.	Female	108	3.34

Table 4: Forgiveness communication strategies by gender: independent samples t tests

Forgiveness communication strategies	t	df	Sig.
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會直接跟伴侶說我已經原諒他了。 When I want to forgive my partner, I directly tell him/her that I have forgiven him/her.	3.464	197.27	0.001
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會跟對方說「沒什麼大不了的，不用擔心」。 When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her, "It's not a big deal. Don't worry."	3.529	198	0.001
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會透過表情、擁抱或示好的行為表達原諒。 When I want to forgive my partner, I express forgiveness through facial expressions, hugs, or kind gestures.	0.316	198	0.753
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會告訴對方如果這次的過錯不再發生，我才會原諒他。 When I want to forgive my partner, I tell him/her that I will forgive him/her if the same mistake doesn't happen again.	-1.003	198	0.317
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會主動跟對方深入討論這次的衝突。 When I want to forgive my partner, I actively discuss the conflict in-depth with him/her.	-1.357	198	0.176
當我想原諒伴侶時，我會以輕鬆的口吻與他閒聊，並避開談論對方的過錯。 When I want to forgive my partner, I have a casual conversation with him/her and avoid discussing the mistakes causing conflicts.	3.251	198	0.001

5. Discussions and Conclusion

The study presented in the paper examines gender differences in the endorsement of conflict communication strategies among college students. Through the analysis of data presented in Table 1 and Table 2, the researchers identified notable variations in the extent to which male and female students favored certain strategies.

Male students were found to be significantly more inclined towards proactive engagement in conflict resolution, as indicated by their higher endorsement of strategies such as actively sharing perspectives and understanding their partner's point of view, even when conflicts arise. Additionally, male students tended to agree with their partners to avoid arguments and yield to their partner's opinions out of respect.

On the other hand, female students exhibited a preference for strategies involving post-conflict behaviors. They were more likely to deliberately distance themselves from their partners after conflicts and expressed lower tolerance for conflicts when they arose.

The findings suggest that gender plays a significant role in shaping conflict communication strategies among college students. These differences highlight potential areas for targeted interventions or communication skill development programs tailored to address the specific

needs and preferences of each gender. Further research could delve into the underlying reasons for these gendered differences and explore their implications for interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution dynamics.

The findings presented in Tables 3 and 4 shed light on the prevalence and gender differences in the use of various conflict communication strategies, particularly in the context of forgiveness. The most commonly employed strategy among both male and female participants was nonverbal communication, such as expressing forgiveness through facial expressions, hugs, or kind gestures. This indicates a shared reliance on nonverbal cues to convey forgiveness within relationships.

Furthermore, men were observed to exhibit a greater tendency towards minimizing conflicts when expressing forgiveness, often reassuring their partners that the issue is not significant. Conversely, women showed a preference for engaging in discussions to settle the conflict and its resolution. This suggests divergent approaches to forgiveness, with men leaning towards downplaying the conflict's importance and women opting for more open dialogue and exploration of underlying issues.

The results of independent samples t-tests revealed significant gender disparities in the endorsement of specific communication strategies related to forgiveness. Men reported higher agreement levels on three strategies compared to women: explicit communication, minimization, and casual talk. This indicates that men are more inclined to directly express forgiveness, reassure their partners about the insignificance of the conflict, and engage in casual conversations to facilitate forgiveness without delving into fault-finding discussions.

These findings underscore the nuanced nature of forgiveness and its communication within intimate relationships, highlighting gender-specific patterns in strategy preference. Understanding these differences can inform relationship interventions and communication skills training programs tailored to address the distinct needs and preferences of men and women in navigating conflicts and fostering forgiveness within relationships. Further research could explore the underlying mechanisms driving these gender differences and their implications for relationship satisfaction and conflict resolution dynamics.

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Emily's Rose: Symbol of Her Transcendence to Traditional South

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Abstract

The title of William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily", particularly the symbolic meaning of the rose has been discussed for years. Four major ideas towards the rose are summarized as love, lament, secrecy and an ambiguous ghostly feature. Based on the previous studies, this paper is aimed at discovering a most related meaning towards the protagonist Emily and the theme of the story. Emily is a Southern woman who afflicts from a patriarchal father and Puritan moral code of virginity. The rose for her, therefore, should be an opportunity to transcend the traditional South. The love story between Emily and Homer is her first try. And the rebellion converts to be a secret through Emily's maintenance of Homer's dead body. The symbolic rose, thus being a presence-absence, lives forever in the narration of "we" and memorizes by the readers. The high-profile love affair with Homer Barron is her first attempt to resist the pain she suffers from her dominant father and the Southern womanhood. Her rebellious action transforms to be in secret when she faces with the prevention from her relatives and other Southerners. Her brave kill of her lover, which is revealed at the end of the story, successfully remains her transcendence. In other words, the presence-absence "rose" safely conceals in Emily's pretense to be traditional. And Faulkner succeeds in "A Rose for Emily" as well, by representing his humane concern towards Southern ladies like Emily.

Keywords: Emily, Rose, Symbol, Presence-Absence

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Introduction

William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" depicts the life and death of a Southern lady. It is acknowledged as "Faulkner's most famous, most popular, and most anthologized short story" (Roberts, 13), and is "by no means Faulkner's best story" (Skei, 46). To understand the story, its title, especially the "rose" has to be paid much attention. The literal rose as a type of flower is non-present in the story; that is to say, the rose is allegorically functioned in the life of Miss Emily. Homer Barron, the intruder, changes Emily's life. His coming indicates Emily's rebellion towards the patriarchal South and Southern Womanhood. And similar to the absent flower, her transcendence is the presence-absence, hidden in her monumental image on behalf of the tradition.

Four Symbolic Meanings Related to Emily's Rose

The symbolic meaning of the rose has a relation to, and even beyond the flower rose. In C.S. Peirce's semiology, three signs are defined: icon, index and symbol. Their function is similar, that is, to represent the relation between a signifying item and the signified. Unlike icon and index, the relation between the two revealed by a symbol, is "not a natural one, but entirely a matter of social convention" (Abrams and Harpham, 358). And in literature, "the term 'symbol' is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or suggests a range of reference, beyond itself" (Abrams and Harpham, 393-4). In the case of the rose in "A Rose for Emily", it is in the first place a word. The word rose signifies an object, that is, a flower with a sweet smell, and the objective rose becomes a signifying item, indicating a meaning related to the literal rose, or a meaning beyond it.

Basically, critics hold four different ideas towards Emily's symbolic rose: three determined meanings are love, lament, and secrecy; the last opinion refuses an absolute meaning of the rose and welcomes the possibility of uncertainty. Love is the commonly acknowledged meaning for a literary rose. Robert Burn's poem "A Red Red Rose" and a medieval dreamer's narrative *The Romance of the Rose* are both examples. Influenced by the literary tradition, critics such as Harry Fenson, Hildreth Kritzer, Mary Lousie Weaks and Kong Fanting deem that the rose represents the love story between Emily and Homer, especially "the tragic love beyond death and space-time" (Kong, 388).

Represented by James L. Roberts and Joseph M. Garrison, others point out that the rose is given to Emily after her death, in order to commemorate her. Both Faulkner the writer and his readers lament the tragic end of the poor Southern lady with the narrator as the executor, "presenting her with a 'rose' by sympathetically and compassionately telling her bizarre and macabre story" (Roberts, 21).

Laura Getty, however, proposes another stance that the rose represents secrecy. In the Greek legend, the god of Silence—Harpocrates was bribed by Cupid with a rose, for Cupid demanded Harpocrates to keep in silence about a love affair between Venus and a young man. Since then, another signified meaning of the rose generated in the Western culture. That is, "strict confidence", "complete secrecy" or "absolute privacy". Based on this mythical story, Getty takes a clear notice of the concealed information beneath the story, particularly Emily's kill of her lover. In her view, the rose for Emily represents the secrecy of her murder. Considering the narrative of this story, only Emily and the author know this message, but neither of the two confess it to others (townspeople or the readers) until the death of Emily. In

this sense, the rose anticipates "the confidential relationship between the author and his character, with all of the privileged information withheld" (Getty, 232).

The fourth opinion resists a certain connotation and emphasizes on the ghostly feature of the rose. Concerning the gloomy and horrible atmosphere, and the uncanny images of a corpse, a murder, a disappearing servant and the protagonist's psychological tendency of necrophilia, "'A Rose for Emily' evokes the terms Southern gothic and grotesque" (Roberts, 12). In He Qingji and Lv Fengyi's article, they analyze the specter element in the story. As for the rose, they find it "a real absent presence, another ghost in the novel" (He and Lv, 134). By pointing out the ghostly characteristic of the rose, they believe that "looking for the symbolic meaning of the rose is doomed to be unsolved; the only thing that is certain is that Emily received her roses after she died—after she no longer needed it" (He and Lv, 134).

To some extent, four ideas towards the symbolic meaning of the rose are reasonable. And though the last opinion finds a certain meaning unacceptable, its analysis of a ghostly flower as absent presence is also meaningful. They all provide "something" that the rose signifies and establish a clear and valid relation between the rose and its meaning. What they neglect, however, is the significance and exclusiveness of the rose for the story, especially for Emily the protagonist. For example, love is indeed a symbolic meaning of the rose. But, the importance of love for Emily hasn't been explained in details.

To interpret the rose, the item itself is by no means inescapable, but the prepositional objective phrase "for Emily" and the whole story plot is as well important. According to M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham's definition, a literary symbol also "suggests a range of reference" (394) and the meaning can surpass the word itself. Therefore, love, lament, secrecy and even a ghostly characteristic are all participants to generate a sole meaning. The meaning, as the signified's signified, is most adjacent to Emily and Faulkner's writing intention of the title. That is, Emily's transcendence towards the traditional South. Her love affair with Homer Barron gives her a chance to fight against the yoke of tradition; the lament on account of her tragic ending also memorizes her courageous behavior; and the secret and ghostly rebellion is really underneath her acknowledged image of a Southern lady. Emily is never alive, but the dead body of Homer as evidence for her resistance still lives in the narration presented by "we".

Overt Rebellion Towards the Traditional South: Emily's Love Affair

According to Richard H. King's analysis, the traditional South depicted in Faulkner's works refers to the Southern family romance. It is composed of the idealization of the plantation, resolute patriarchy with heroic Southern Cavalier, the celebration of the feminine, the lip service paid to the family as well as the justification of slavery (King, 27-29). Females (young ladies and mothers) are both symbols of Southern grace and neglected figures under the pressure of patriarchal society, who are denied to preserve sexuality or erotic appeal, and "in extreme form she was stripped of any emotional, nurturing attributes at all" (King, 35). As for Emily, a White aristocratic woman, the traditional South directly points to a patriarchal father and the Virgin-like womanhood. Emily "was distinctly subordinate in the romance to the powerful and heroic father" (King, 34).

When her father is still alive, Emily's situation is depicted as such:

> We had long thought of them as a tableau, Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the back-ground, her father a spraddled silhouette in the fore-ground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of them framed by the back-flung front door. So when she got to be thirty and was still single, we were not pleased exactly, but vindicated; even with insanity in the family she wouldn't have turned down all of her chances if they had really materialized. (Faulkner, 53-54)

The strong comparison between Emily and her father is narrated by "we". Considering their shape and posture, Emily is slender while her father is much stronger. And as for their standing position, Emily is the "background" of her father. Metaphorically, the scene implies an arbitrary and dominant father image. Though Emily's attitude towards her father hasn't been described, the narrator's unpleasure towards her situation sheds light on the protagonist's pain. The family's "insanity" commented by the narrator "we" thus both refers to the father's unaccountable patriarchy and Emily's worrisome psychological statement caused by her father. Another traditional demand for a Southern lady can also be seen in the above depiction. That is, "to preserve the 'honor' of a white woman" (Hamblin and Peek, 136), especially her "quasi-Virgin Mary role" (King, 35). Even for a woman in thirties, she is still controlled by her family and not to be in love or in a marriage. Instead of having her own life, Emily should remain in purity and fulfil "a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (Faulkner, 50) —as a symbolic honor of the South.

Even after the death of her father, Emily is still considered as a symbolic figure of Southern family romance and Southern femininity. In the second episode, the narrator elucidates the event that four men sneak in Emily's house to find out the reason of the bad smell. They accidently bump into Miss Emily, and "Miss Emily sat in it, the light behind her, and her upright torso motionless as that of an idol" (Faulkner, 53). From the descriptions of "light behind her" and "as that of an idol", it implies a female image similar to the Goddess in the Greek legend with a suspended, ghostly aura hung over her. In other Southerners' eyes, Miss Emily still can't get rid of her Mary-like identity attributes. Even as she grows older and the glory of the Old South is long gone, Emily is still a living emblem of the Old South.

Hence, the contradiction "within a society that simultaneously viewed women as inferior human beings and the standard bearers for all that is moral and good" (Hamblin and Peek, 136) leads to woman's rejection towards the tradition. Emily starts to realize that "the tradition was a 'tradition' was to be alienated from it" (King, 56). Her opportunity comes when her father is dead and Homer Barron the outsider intrudes into her life.

The advent of Homer, especially his identity as a black Northerner, offers Emily a pleasant path to rebel the traditional South. The symbolic rose, masked by the name of love, begins to blossom. "Homer Barron, a Yankee—a big, dark, ready man, with a big voice and eyes lighter than his face" (Faulkner, 55), who always "would be in the center of the group" (Faulkner, 55). According to John B. Cullen and Floyd C. Watkins, Faulkner is adept to capture the folk-tales in the daily life, and Homer Barron is one of the examples. They point out that the archetype of Homer is Caption Jack Hume, "a Yankee from New England, worked for the W. G. Lassiter Paving Company" (Cullen and Watkins, 17). Based on their research, "old Captain Jack proved to be as fine a citizen as any man in the county" (Cullen and Watkins, 17). Although Faulkner's story should be regarded as a fictional composition, and the personalities of Homer Barron and Caption Jack cannot be equated, the depiction of Homer in the story as well as the analysis presented by Cullen and Watkins shows the fact that Northerners and Southerners are equal in their ability and status, and the only difference

goes to their birthplace. Hence, Emily's love affair with Homer—a northerner can't be regarded as a matter of devaluing or mismatch, but implies Emily's conviction to fight against the Old South, especially the Southern tradition.

Faced with rumors and suspicions from the town people, Emily is fearless for she "carried her head high enough" (Faulkner, 55). Townspeople recognize "her dignity as the last Grierson" (Faulkner, 55-56) when staying with Homer, but similar to the absent flower in the story, her rebellion as the symbolic rose is hidden in the misunderstanding of the narration. Her dignity is not for the perseverance of the tradition, but a victory to transcend it. When Emily dates with Homer, "rustling of craned silk and satin behind jalousies closed upon the sun of Sunday afternoon as the thin, swift clop-clop-clop of the matched team passed: 'Poor Emily'" (Faulkner, 55). The narration can be seen as a typical type of zero focalization (in Gérard Genette's term), which means what described above should be the real scene in the storyworld. But the confusing and misleading part of the depiction—"the matched team passed: 'Poor Emily'" should be a simple recording of townspeople's opinion, and "poor Emily" is commended relatively subjective. That is to say, Emily's love affair with Homer has been considered a shame and misfortune only in the eyes of the townspeople, and Emily's own view of her dating is hidden under the verbal appearances created by the "we" narrator, like the connotation of the "rose". "Poor Emily" appears five times in this episode, and seemingly solidifies the impression of Emily's degradation as an honorable Southern lady. But, exploring rigorously between the lines and the words, the narration has already "betrayed" itself. "rustling" and "the sun of Sunday" in this sentence and also a skeptical voice "behind their hands" (Faulkner, 55) shed light on the total opposite possibility, that is, Emily's self-liberation and complete joy in this relation. In this sense, the love affair with Homer Barron provides a chance for Emily to shed the shackles of Southern norms, and demonstrate her determination to be the real herself and challenge the Southern tradition.

The Secret and Ghostly Rebellion: Rose as a Presence-Absence

Emily's resistance towards traditional South, however, is forced to be in secret when the overt rebellion is impeded. Yet, it is also a blessing in disguise because her transcendence, being a presence-absence, becomes an eternal victory. According to Jacque Derrida, the meaning exists in its absence, because "the nonpresense of the other inscribed within the sense of the present" (Faulkner, 71). Emily's evident surrender to the tradition is present in the story, while her insistence to rebel implied by the kill of her lover is almost absent in the narrative. But it is discovered to be always present until the end of the story informs the secret truth.

Followed by the narration, Emily, as a single woman, flirting with a man in public "was a disgrace to the town and a bad example to the young people" (Faulkner, 57). Hence, the townspeople ask the minister and her relatives—representatives of the tradition to persuade Emily back on track. The narrator "we" deems that the two sides finally agree on a marriage between Emily and Homer. The jewelers, men's clothing, and other items Emily orders are thus explained by "we" as the preparation for a wedding. The abnormal and rebellious Emily is occupied by a repentant and obedient one. And in the battle with the traditional South, the apparent resistance no longer exists, whereas tradition prevails. However, the story is totally different when Emily's kill of Homer is regarded as a premise. The murder happens during the negotiation between Emily and her sisters. The outcome provides by "we", hence, is misleading. They don't agree with each other, and Emily, prevented by the ordinary Southerners and her relatives, engenders another solution to continue her resistance to the yoke. That is, to kill the lively "rose" and maintain it secretly forever.

The meaning of the rose that Emily is convicted to transcend the Old South is discovered only at the end of the time of narrative. At the end of the story, the narrator depicts, "What was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the night–shirt, had become inextricable from the bed in which he lay" (Faulkner, 61). It implies that Homer's dead body has long been placed at Emily's bed, but from the readers' point of view, "these images from the past are being seen through a reversed telescope or bottle–neck" (Harris, 173). The narrator "we" sets up this suspense, making the past event of Emily's killing her lover always pending—"left unmoored, afloat in time" (Harris, 173) in the narration. But in the chronological order of events, or if the reader rereads the story, the secrecy has been presented itself "as irreducible absence within the presence of the trace" (Derrida, 47) since the year 1894. To be specific, most stories are exactly narrated under the existence of the biologically death of the "rose" and its symbolic eternity.

Dramatically, even in the first section of the narrative when Emily is described as an icon of tradition, her transcendence is ghostly concealed and pervaded in the house as a presence-absence. The board of Aldermen come and see "a small, fat woman in black" (Faulkner, 51), "like a body long submerged in motion-less water" (Faulkner, 51). The depiction represents an old-fashioned image of Emily, metaphorically indicating that Emily belongs to the past. And her rejection to pay the tax also implies that she still abides by the traditional Southern law. Another proof to show her out-of-date ideology is that she uses Colonel Sartoris, a dead man's words to argue with them. The whole section portrays a huge comparison between a traditional woman and the modern society. It seems that Miss Emily is the walking past. However, the rose for Emily is still alive. When the Aldermen talk and negotiate with Emily, regarding the woman as a traditional monument, the dead body of Homer Barron is right posited in the house, symbolizing Emily's transcendence towards the Southern past. What they encounters is never a symbol of tradition; instead, it is a woman who courageously fights against the patriarchal society for more than 40 years.

Another typical example happens in the funeral but early before the mourners find out the dead body:

> the very old men-some in their brushed Confederate uniforms-on the porch and the lawn, talking of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs, believing that they had danced with her and courted her perhaps, confusing time with its mathematical progression, as the old do, to whom all the past is not a diminishing road but, instead, a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches, divided from them now by the narrow bottle-neck of the most recent decade of years. (Faulkner, 60)

Without knowledge of Emily's murder, this account will be seen as a sincere commemoration to Emily by older Southerners, and as an emblem of the Southern family romance, her body transforms to be a "site of memory" (in Pierre Nora's term) for these men to memorize the Southern past. But Homer's dead body is securely placed in the house, and as a presence-absence, reaffirms Emily's transcendence to the Old South. Dramatically speaking, while those old men think of them dancing with or courting Miss Emily in the past, young Emily herself hasn't fell in love with neither of them; in contrast, she loves the Northerner Homer and even sleeps for years beside his dead body. Moreover, when the old men memorize the Old South "in their brushed Confederate uniforms" and talk "of Miss Emily as if she had been a contemporary of theirs", the corpse serves as a testament to Emily's rebellion against tradition, silently poking fun at these people's misconceptions about this

lady. In their sense, the past is "a huge meadow which no winter ever quite touches", and they take advantage of Emily's funeral to cherish the Southern glory as well as the Cavalier-like fathers. In contrast, Southern past in Emily's eyes suits perfectly the narrator's depiction—"a diminishing road". It is a past that women live under the patriarchal system, always in the chaste, pure image from the male gaze. When the old male mourners look back to the past, Miss Emily—though dead, but left behind a "rose" for herself: a corpse that symbolizes transcendence and rebellion against the Southern tradition—expects a chance to repulse the past and welcome the future.

The rose is a presence-absence, from the mention of "the valance curtains of faded rose color" (Faulkner, 60) and "the rose-shaded lights" (Faulkner, 60) in the story and the rose in the title to the symbolic rose filled in the story as a secret ghost. In brief, the rose symbolizes Emily's rebellion to traditional South, and the lamented "rose" given to her from the narrator and Faulkner, shows "Faulkner's reflection on the Southern society and his care for the southern women, especially his attacks towards the prevailing patriarchal system of persecuting women in the South and the puritanism of the concept of women" (Yuan, 76).

Conclusion

The symbolic rose is the sum of love, lament, secrecy and ghostly characteristic. The four elements together convey a most specific meaning—Emily's transcendence towards the tradition. The high-profile love affair with Homer Barron is her first attempt to resist the pain she suffers from her dominant father and the Southern womanhood. Her rebellious action transforms to be in secret when she faces with the prevention from her relatives and other Southerners. Her brave kill of her lover, which is revealed at the end of the story, successfully remains her transcendence. Ultimately, the presence-absence "rose" safely conceals in Emily's pretense to be traditional as well as townspeople's repeated comments and impressions of an old-fashioned and abided Emily. In this sense, Faulkner by designing a presence-absence rose in the story, sheds light on his humanistic concern towards such ladies in the Old South.

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A Study on Fact-Checking and Challenges to Combating Disinformation While AI Is Threatening the Media in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The spread of disinformation, misinformation, and fake news has increased due to the widespread use of social media. Recently, artificial intelligence-generated disinformation and deepfake have added new threats to society. Anyone who has little technology knowledge can produce deep fake or fake content and spread it online with the help of AI tools. As a result, the risk of publishing false information in the media has increased, which has triggered the importance of fact-checking. The main objective of this study is to explore fact-checking practices and challenges in combating disinformation in Bangladesh. Using the qualitative research method and the in-depth interview, this study analyzed the data obtained from 15 senior journalists on their fact-checking practices and challenges. The result of the study suggested that media organizations are not ready yet to combat disinformation and deepfake. There is no systematic process for fact-checking within the media houses in Bangladesh. Interviewed journalists have not witnessed any serious impact of AI-generated disinformation so far due to its early-stage development. But they think, advanced technical support, standard education, training, and regulations made by government and media will be needed to combat disinformation. For example, journalists expressed that fact-checking software can help us to detect disinformation. This study identified some challenges related to fact-checking such as fund crisis, lack of skilled human resources, partisan journalism, etc. Media organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders should take action to overcome the challenges. Although the research was conducted in the context of Bangladesh, its findings would be considered as new academic knowledge in the global arena that will contribute to combat disinformation.

Keywords: AI, Disinformation, Misinformation, Deepfake, Fact-Checking, Media

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Introduction

While we are living in a digital world, misinformation, disinformation, and rumors have been flooding every corner of the globe. These are being spread out for political (Landon-Murrey and Mujkic, 2019), religious (Haque et al., 2020), and financial reasons. From the individual to the government level (Leong, 2019), false information is deliberately spread to deceive people. By using advanced generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, anyone can generate a cloned human voice, hyper-realistic pictures, and videos in a few seconds and with minimal costs. This disinformation is a new threat to journalism (Kahn, 2023). AI can produce targeted fake emails, texts, statements, audio, and video content to manipulate public opinion, mislead voters, tarnish the candidate's image, and undermine the results of the election, which erodes the value of democracy (Robins-Early, 2023).

In the last couple of years, Bangladesh, with a population of over 170 million, has experienced several communal unrests and mob lynchings that were incited by spreading falsely claimed information through social media (Haque et al., 2020). Buddhist temples and hundreds of minority houses at Ramu in Cox's Bazar (one of the districts of Bangladesh) were set on fire; Hindus' houses at Nasirnagar upazila, Brahmanbaria district, were attacked and torched; and a series of mob attacks happened in different parts of the country after disseminating rumors of child abduction (Alam and Ahmed, 2012). Now, AI is being used as a weapon for making and spreading false content against opposite political parties and leaders in Bangladesh (Afrin, 2023). Such contents usually increase during the general election in Bangladesh. Bangladeshi fact-checking organization Dismislab pointed out that 44.4% of disinformation circulated from July 2023 to August 2023 was politics-related (Afrin, 2023). Therefore, the importance of fact-checking in media organizations has increased.

Thus, this study explores the fact-checking practices media organizations use to combat disinformation and the challenges of fact-checking. As follows, this study also presents the significance of automated and manual fact-checking practices in media. Then the research explores journalists' knowledge of AI technology and its usage in media. In conclusion, the study offers potential solutions to overcome the fact-checking limitations.

Literature Review

Artificial intelligence (AI) is considered the most revolutionary and complex human innovation yet (Sukhadeve, 2021). The representation of AI is in every sector of human life except some unexplored fields (Tai, 2020). It incorporates human knowledge or intelligence into machines through a set of algorithms that can do multiple things, such as give reason, learn, gather knowledge, communicate, manipulate, and perceive objects (Collins et al., 2021). As the influence of AI has increased around the world, its business market has expanded. This market is estimated to reach $22.6 billion by 2025 (Forbes, 2023). But the use of AI technology in journalism has advantages and disadvantages (Dorr, 2016). For example, while AI is being used to produce media content, it can also create fake news. Westerlund, (2018) stated, AI created challenges to fair journalism. So, as a topic, AI gained popularity among media researchers (Goni and Tabassum, 2020).

Machine Learning vs Deep Learning vs Generative AI

Machine learning is a subset of AI technology (Ongsulee, 2017). It provides computers with the capability to learn without being explicitly programmed (Munoz, 2012). It produces

algorithms that learn from the provided data and make decisions based on patterns observed in this data. However human assistance is needed when it makes an incorrect or undesirable decision (Singapore Computer Society, 2020). Machine learning does a variety of computing tasks, including troublesome or impractical works; for instance, information or email filtering, detection of intruders in network systems or hostile insiders working towards a data breach (Ben, 2017), and optical character recognition (OCR) (Yang et al., 2010). On the other hand, deep learning is part of machine learning methods based on learning representations of data. It is called a subfield of machine learning (IBM Blog, 2023).

Processing data through different layers of algorithms utilizes an artificial neural network and confirms a perfect decision without human intervention (Singapore Computer Society, 2020). Different types of deep learning are applied to various fields like automatic speech recognition, computer vision, natural language processing, bioinformatics, and audio recognition (Ongsulee, 2017). Another subset of AI is generative AI, which is now more applicable to making news content (Collins et al., 2021). At present, the most popular generative AI tools are ChatGPT, Dall-E, Midjourney, Bard, DeepMind, etc., which are considered to be in an era of transformation in journalism (Pavlik, 2023). It can produce various media contents such as text, audio, video, images, code, and other data (Bell, 2023).

Automated Journalism and Some Debates

Chadwick (2013) stated that automated journalism is a complicated hybrid system. 'Computational journalism' and 'computer-assisted journalism' (Parratt-Fernandez et al., 2021; Codina and Vallez, 2018), 'robotic journalism' (Clerwall, 2014), 'algorithmic journalism' (Anderson, 2012), 'machine-learning journalism' (Van-Dalen, 2012)—all are commonly known as 'automated journalism' (Graefe, 2016; Moran and Shaikh, 2022). Top media organizations, including The Washington Post, The New York Times, Reuters, and Associate Press (AP), are trying to practice this type of journalism (Fanta, 2017; Tunez-Lopez et al., 2018; Chan-Olmsted, 2019; Dorr, 2015; Linden and Tuulonen, 2019). However, this practice is mainly confined to the sports and finance sectors (Canavilhas, 2022).

Generative AI is helping to advance automated journalism. For content creation, many news portals have openly acknowledged the use of AI tools robustly and systematically (Korneeva, 2023). But AI tools are also used to identify and combat any kind of disinformation (Ruffo and Semeraro, 2022). Adami (2023) thinks AI technology can be an opportunity or a threat to journalism. Cassauwers (2019) explained that with the help of AI, fake videos, audio, and pictures can be generated, which would be the worst practice in journalism. Hosseini et al. (2023) researched the OpenAI (one of the popular generative AI platforms) chatbot's answers. He found that the majority of answers were incorrect, misleading, and inappropriate. Galactica (another AI platform) programmers warned about their biased language models (Galactica 2022; Heaven 2022). Pena-Fernandez et al. (2023) explained that more reliance on technology platforms for doing journalism will be the prime challenge in the next few decades. News Guard (a renowned fact-checking company) placed 100 facts on the ChatGPT platform in January 2023. The facts were about American politics and the health situation. It found that most responses were categorically false and misleading (Brewster, J. et al., 2023).

Misinformation, Disinformation, and Deepfake

Misinformation, disinformation, and rumor—all are made to deceive others intentionally. All of them are elements of fake news. Cummings and Kong (2019) suggested that

misinformation and rumor have a bit of a target to deceive, while disinformation and propaganda come from vested interests to deliberately influence others. Spreading misinformation, disinformation, and rumor has many purposes, including exploiting individual and communal harmony (Banaji et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019), the economic interest (Clarke et al., 2020; Marten et al., 2020; Wooley, 2016), and politics (Wooley, 2017; Bastos and Dan Mercea, 2019).

Advanced technologies, social media, and electronic platforms have created new paths for disseminating misinformation (Bode and Vrage, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2016). Renowned journalist Bellingcat Eliot Higgins generated some pictures of former US President Donald Trump's fictional arrest by using the generative AI platform Midjourney. The artifacts went viral quickly (Kahn, 2023). Techno specialist Marilin Gonzalo wrote that visual disinformation could have a strong emotional impact on audiences' perceptions (Kahn, 2023). Deep fake is another threat to journalism (Day, 2018; Fletcher, 2018). Deepfake is a growing concern in Bangladesh. For spreading fake information, replica websites of established news organizations were developed during the country's national poll in 2018 (Alam et al., 2018). In Bangladesh, 1,400 false news stories related to 206 issues were published by the media from January to December 2022 (Rumour Scanner, 2023).

Methodology and Framework

This study employed the in-depth interview method to answer the research questions, which are: What activities do media organisations conduct for fact-checking as generative AI-generated disinformation poses a threat to fair journalism in Bangladesh? and What limitations do Bangladeshi media organisations have for fact-checking? The purposive sampling method was used to select journalists for interviews. Lavrakas (2008) says that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling that corresponds to the whole population size of a research topic for a specific logic or reason. Since fact-checking is a new issue, purposively I selected 15 top-listed media houses: The Daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Bangladesh Protidin, The Daily Jugantor, The Daily Samakal, and The Daily Kalerkantho, The Daily Star, Financial Express, bdnews24.com, jaggonews24.com, banglatribune.com, dhakapost.com, Independent TV News, Somoy Television, Jamuna Television, and ATN News. One senior journalist from each media was selected for a roughly 40-minute interview. Interviews were conducted online with a questionnaire.

Results

Manual Practice for Verification

Interviewees have revealed that despite having improved technology in the past couple of years, there has been no development of fact-checking methods in media houses in Bangladesh. They still use the old manual technique to verify information if they have suspicions. The fact-checking term is very new for them. Most of the interviewees stated that IT tools or software are a big arm for fact-checking, while AI-generated disinformation is being spread out everywhere. But they do not know how to use this new technology. Interviewee Udisa Islam, Special Correspondent, Bangla Tribune, said:

> *'When we get any suspicious information, we try to reach the root of that information. We talk to the respective sources of the news: local correspondents, government*

officials, etc. Everything is being conducted manually. There is no software or AI tool for fact-checking in our office.'

Most respondents in the study think that logistic support is important for a skilled journalist to do fact-checking. In this case, media organizations must hire tech-savvy journalists who have literacy in advanced technology. Training can also bring fruitful results. Selim Khan, Executive Editor, Independent TV, stated:

> *'Skilled manpower and logistics support, which are needed to conduct fact-checking digitally, are not available in our media organization. Due to this limitation, we cannot conduct digital activities to verify the facts.'*

Some interviewees emphasized the improvement of journalists' efficiency for fact-checking rather than setting up fact-checking teams in media houses. They commented that if journalists can suck up the fact-checking technique properly with the help of technology, it will be easy to combat disinformation, misinformation, and fake news. Golam Mortuja, senior reporter on crime and human rights at bdnews24.com, said:

> *'I think, before installing fact-checking team, journalists should be made skilled at fact-checking. If we get training and facilities, we will be able to manage any kind of disinformation or rumors.'*

Md. Mafuzur Rahman (Mishu), Special Correspondent on Politics, Gas, and Energy, Jamuna Television, commented on the news verification process:

> *'To verify the information, we analysed first-hand information from the beat reporter. Later, we check the respective person's Facebook, Twitter (now X), or other social media accounts to confirm that information. This is our general practice for fact-checking.'*

However, some of the journalists in the study asserted that they try to reach local sources and correspondents and sometimes go to the spots to verify the local news while doing verification of the international news. They search for the same news in famous international media organizations like AFP, Reuters, BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera, etc. If these media contain that news, then they think it is not fake news. Manwar Hossain, Senior News Editor, Somoy TV, said:

> *For local news, we contact beat reporters. We ask them to provide supporting documents related to the statement or information. If the documents sent by the reporter are fake, then it is very tough for us to verify the information's genuineness. On the other hand, we rely on international media organizations to verify international news.*

Although some interviewees emphasized the credibility of the international media in choosing their news for publication in their media, Goutam Mondal, News Editor (online), The Daily Samakal, explained:

> *When we intend to publish any reports concerning the international media, we first try to weigh the credibility of that media. After examining this, the news is published*

in our media. This practice not only ensures the credibility of the news but also promotes the responsibility of objective and fake-free journalism.

Image Verification

Most of the interviewees opined that it is equally important to verify text news along with pictures. However, they are not so aware of AI-generated news, pictures, and fake content. Using technology tools or software to verify news has not started in the media house in Bangladesh. However, very few journalists stated that they use technology, especially Google, to verify images. Zohaer Ibna Kalim (Zoha), shift in-charge, Central Desk, The Daily Jugantor, presented his experience:

> A *few days ago, one of our local correspondents sent some pictures with news to our newsroom. The picture caption said a group of wild elephants attacked innocent villagers. Human bodies were scattered there. From the doubt, I called our correspondent. He replied that the images were collected from one of the villagers. When we contacted the villager over the phone, he said that he did not snap the pictures with my hand; he collected them from the Internet. After that, I took help from Google to check the image date. Finally, I identified that this happened in an Indian village where these pictures were published in online media two years ago.*

Individual Efforts

Interviewees noted that verification of information is a common practice in journalism. But fact-checking practices with the help of technology tools are not common. But few reporters and copyeditors fact-check with their knowledge and efforts. Few national and international NGOs and independent fact-checking organizations arranged fact-checking training and workshops where they participated with their interests. Media houses do not arrange any in-house training for their employees. Razib Hasan, News Editor, The Daily Prothom Alo, said:

> As fact-checking has not been institutionalized, we cannot start it officially. We did not arrange any training regarding the issue in our house. But some of our colleagues do fact-checking on their initiative. They verify news and images by using Google, and sometimes they get help from our social media team.

Udisa Islam, Special Correspondent, Bangla Tribune, echoed:

> I attended fact-checking training. Some fact-checking organizations provide training to journalists in Bangladesh. However, two years ago, there was no idea about fact-checking among journalists. I had not heard anyone talking about it. Now they are familiar with this matter. Policymakers in media organizations need to come forward with this issue more effectively.

Goutam Mondal, News Editor, The Daily Samakal, explained:

> Fact-checking has not officially started yet in our country. But in my media house, a few journalists have some knowledge of fact-checking using technology. Approximately 5–10% do this practice.

Media and Fact-Checking Platforms' Relationship

Journalists are aware of the independent fact-checking organizations and their activities. Except for very few, they follow fact-checking platforms online. However, there is no collaboration between any media organizations and fact-checking platforms for combating disinformation. Interviewees think that this collaboration will improve fact-checking practices and develop a sense of objective journalism. Udisa Islam, Special Correspondent, Bangla Tribune, noted here:

> *I am observing some fact-checking organizations' activities, which regularly publish reports based on their research. They presented several fake news stories that were published in different media organizations during a certain period. Now and then they contact the media houses to inform them what types of fake news they have published. They offer training to journalists as well.*

The Digital or IT Team Is Doing Fact-Checking

Journalists used their digital or IT team for fact-checking as an alternative to the fact-checking team. IT or social media teams of media organizations are becoming more relevant to fact-checking. Razib Hasan, News Editor, the Daily Prothom Alo, noted:

> *In the age of technology, the importance of fact-checking has increased. Therefore, we are to verify many news stories. Sometimes we get help from IT and social media teams to ensure whether the news is fake or not, as there is no fact-checking team. Since AI-generated content has emerged as a threat to objective journalism, we discussed this issue with the IT and social media teams. Apart from this, we are planning to adopt a policy on using AI-generated tools for making news and pictures.*

Joysree Bhadury, senior reporter for the Daily Bangladesh Protidin, said:

> *If we cannot ascertain the truth of any information or pictures, I approach the IT or social media team of our media house. If there was a fact-checking unit, I would go to them.*

Challenges

Fact-Checking Is an Insignificant Issue

Most of the interviewees stated that senior officials in the media failed to understand the importance of fact-checking. While fake news, rumors, and disinformation are flooding social spheres, this practice can help combat them. They concluded that if continuously false and half-true news is published by media organizations without verification or fact-checking, then it will damage the credibility of the media. Golam Mortoza, Editor, The Daily Star (Bengali Section), noted:

> *Government repression, the crackdown by applying the Digital Security Acts 2018, unethical journalism, paid journalism, etc. are common phenomena in the media industry. If AI-generated disinformation is added, then the journalism of Bangladesh will face a grave threat. To deal with this adversity, the policymakers of journalism should be alert in advance. But, indeed, media organizations, policymakers, and*

organizations (government and non-government) that are engaged in developing the quality of standard journalism could not perceive the importance of this crisis. At first, we have to understand the gravity of this problem, and then find the solution.

Md. Mafuzur Rahman (Mishu), Special Correspondent on Politics, Gas, and Energy, Jamuna Television, presented his comment in the interview:

The biggest challenge is that the media staff do not understand the crisis of fake news. They cannot still realize it. Owners and managers of media do not want to welcome new thinking and knowledge. This is the reason they are afraid of any change.

Interviewees noted that there is little discussion in the media about the importance of fact-checking. As the issue has become less important, media organizations are being pushed into a big hole of trouble. Joyshree Bhadury, senior reporter for the Daily Bangladesh Protidin, observed:

Recently, I watched an AI-generated video on social media in which the presenter said that if you take two white cardamoms in the morning, you will be cured of high blood pressure. After a few days, I discussed this matter with a specialist doctor. He said, 'It is not scientific proof.' Such disinformation is merged into social media. As journalists, we have some social responsibilities to people so that they get accurate information. For this, a fact-checking unit is needed in our media house. But there is no discussion about it in our media at all.

Financial Insolvency

It emerged from interviewees that a lack of funds hinders conducting fact-checking activities. For fact-checking, skilled technical manpower and equipment are essential. While media houses struggle to pay their employees' salaries regularly, this extra expense is a burden for them. Layoffs in the media are a common phenomenon in the country. Since media organizations are not financially independent and solvent, editors cannot implement many good plans for developing news management. Zohaer Ibna Kalim (Zoha), shift in-charge, Central Desk, The Daily Jugantor, explained:

Our media organization is struggling as the price of newspaper elements has gone up recently. The media has adopted a cost-reduction policy to survive. In this circumstance, it is a question of how the media will install a fact-checking unit. They are to consider the expense of adapting a new team. Along with the new team, various instruments like computers and advanced software are needed that are more expensive.

Competition

Some of the interviewees said that competition for publishing news first creates a way to publish fake news in the media. This practice is prevalent among online news portals. This culture obstructs news verification practices. To catch readers online, news managers want to publish news without any verification of information or sources, even though some news is published without any editing or proofreading. Ariful Islam Arman, Future Editor, dhakapost.com, commented:

A fact-checking team is essential for any media house. However, a competitive culture indeed triggers the need for this team. Disinformation spreads more through online media. To achieve the target of news publishing, journalists rush to publish news and make mistakes. They do not want to allow more time for fact-checking and verifying sources.

Golam Mortoza, Editor, Daily Star (Bengali Section), noted:

Media organizations, especially online news portals, are in a race to publish news quickly. This practice becomes more evident when an important issue appears. If we are not aware of it, the risk of spreading fake news and disinformation will increase. Moreover, using AL tools, anyone can subtly create fake videos, audio, and images that have triggered the risk of publishing fake news in the media. So, if we emphasize fact-checking practices, it will reduce the spreading of disinformation.

Lack of Skilled Human Resources

Most of the interviewees agreed that journalists can fill up the gap left by fact-checkers if they get proper training on fact-checking and using advanced technology. They have a lack of efficiency in technology. Sheikh Salam, News Editor, ATN News, said:

AI tools can generate videos, audio, and images that look genuine. It cannot be identified if there are no IT-skilled and experienced people in media houses. There are no such skilled people in our TV station. We should seriously look into this matter, which will help combat AI-generated disinformation.

Political Pressure and Partisan Journalism

Some of the interviewees said that most of the journalists have their political ideologies. Sometimes they serve their political purposes by publishing reports. Therefore, when they see any news that is favorable to their political parties and ideology, they try to publish or broadcast it in any way. Whether the news is fake or true does not matter to them. They do not want to properly verify the news. Moreover, some media intentionally publish false and biased news for political gain. Publishing corrections while acknowledging the mistake is part of journalism ethics that is not seen in this case. Golam Mortoza, Editor, Daily Star (Bengali Section), stated:

The worst aspect of journalism in Bangladesh is that journalists have become workers of a political party, and journalist leaders have become leaders of a party. Therefore, journalists, except for some top media houses, have derailed the principles of objective journalism, propaganda-free journalism, or disinformation-free journalism.

No House Policy

It became obvious from the interviews that no media has adopted a house policy regarding fact-checking in Bangladesh. House policy is a guide for media organizations or journalists to ensure professional and objective journalism. This policy is also important to combat disinformation. As there is no policy, journalists do not place importance on fact-checking. Golam Mortuza, Editor, Daily Star (Bengali), noted:

> *There are two reasons for the crisis of credibility in our journalism. One is malpractice journalism; another is falsehood journalism. Due to both reasons, journalism is suffering from this crisis. A few days ago, the Bangladeshi fact-checking platform Rumour Scanner presented a scenario of fake and falsely claimed news published in different media in the last six months. It was found that a TV channel published 38 fake news stories. I think that the media has no longer credibility after publishing a large number of fake stories. We should enact a policy where it is mentioned that we will not publish false news.*

Government and Professional Organizations' Inactiveness

The result found that government and professional organizations could play a vital role in developing a fact-checking culture in media organizations by arranging training, seminars, and workshops. But only two interviewees out of 15 said they got fact-checking training from the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), a government organization. The activity of professional organizations was more frustrating. No journalists in the study got any training or participated in workshops from professional organizations for journalists. Golam Mortuza, Editor, Daily Star (Bengali), pointed out:

> *The leaders of our professional organizations were busy with politics. They did not think about how to develop the journalism profession. As they are partisan journalists, it is foolish to expect good things from them that are effective for journalists. I never participated in their programs and never heard that our colleagues got invitations to participate in their fact-checking training or such kinds of programs.*

Discussion

Automation Journalism

Approximately 70% of journalism students in Bangladeshi universities believe that AI technologies are effective in detecting fake news, and 64% think AI is good for automated media content (Goni and Tabassum, 2020). The research data suggested that no media organizations work with automation systems for verifying information or making content. Journalists use manual techniques. On the other hand, most journalists have no proper knowledge about the automated techniques that are being used for fact-checking, news writing, and editing in many countries. A few of the journalists use Google Lens to verify images.

Fact-Checkers or Journalists: Who Are the Frontliners?

While almost all the mainstream media in neighboring India have a separate fact-checking team (Hossain and Muzykant, 2023), there is no separate fact-checking team or specialists in any media organizations in Bangladesh, which is a big loophole for fact-checking practices. So, media organizations are unprotected. If there is a weakness in fact-checking, fake news spreads everywhere in society (Lowrey, 2017). It is difficult for journalists to identify AI-generated disinformation, which can create genuine content.

There is no official collaboration between media organizations and independent fact-checking platforms. It is true that if they worked together, the spreading of fake news would be greatly

reduced. FactCheck.org and PolitiFact have collaborated with local and national news organizations in the USA to assist journalists with fact-checking and sharing their works, which is effective in combating fake news (Amazeen, 2013).

Journalists are aware of fact-checking platforms' activities. They follow the activities. This finding contrasts with the previous study that concluded that most of the journalists in Bangladesh are not aware of fact-checking organizations' work. (Haque et al., 2022). Although fact-checkers think their involvement and position in society are unique and different from journalists' work (Graves et al., 2016; Shin and Thorson, 2017).

Improving literacy

To build awareness about fake information among the general public, the media, civil society, NGOs, government, and professional organisations can play a vital role. Additionally, for journalists, training, workshops, or seminars on AI and disinformation and their impact on society should be organised regularly. Some respondents said that few NGOs conducted these types of programs for journalists on a small scale. Hossain and Muzykant (2023) found, Bangladeshi journalists need to acquire fact-checking techniques to combat disinformation. The USA, Germany, and Australia introduced media literacy programs to combat disinformation (Tulodziecki and Grafe, 2029; Ciampaglia et al., 2015). The New York Times, Washington Post, and many more media organizations offer general people curricular resources around information credibility, use of evidence, and news production (Bulger and Davison, 2018). This builds trust in the media. Spreading fake news or disinformation will create a big threat not only to journalism but also to democracy (Kaplan, 2020; Borges et al., 2018; Qayyum et al., 2019).

Ethical and Legal Binding

Some interviewees suggested that political pressure and partisan journalism pushed the fact-checking initiative backward. Due to political pressure, journalists lost interest in uncovering the innocent truth. Therefore, understanding and pursuing journalism ethics and morality is important, which may reduce the publication of fake news in the media. Most journalists maintain personal relationships with political leaders and top government officials, which is tantamount to self-interest. Haque et al. (2020) found that the collaboration between journalists and political leaders may harm journalism. Legal binding is also crucial for ensuring fair journalism. For this purpose, the Press Council Act, the Official Secret Act, the Defamation Act, the Digital Security Act (now the Cyber Security Act), and many more have been enacted. However, these laws are being used more on journalists so that they cannot uncover any government corruption or human rights violations instead of ensuring fair journalism. From January to April 2023, there were 1,295 cases under the Digital Security Act; 27% of the cases were against journalists (Hasan, 2023).

Conclusion

The study finds that there is no separate fact-checking activity in media organizations. Journalists usually do it manually when they have doubts about any information. Automation systems for making content and fact-checking are fully absent, while misinformation and disinformation are flooding the social sphere. As a result, false and fake information is continuously becoming news for readers. Fact-checking platforms (very few) examine the authenticity of information when it goes viral. If they had a collaboration with the media,

fact-checking practices would improve. The result shows that journalists are unable to fact-check due to a lack of skills and tools, like software.

However, the study is limited to a small number of participants and a short period of time. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized. Despite this limitation, the study made an important contribution to bringing out the real scenario of fact-checking and its challenges in Bangladesh. The results of the research and suggestions will help conduct future research with larger participants and a broader scope. Moreover, this research brought attention to media investors, scholars, and journalists about the mighty power of AI and its usages.

Acknowledgement

Appendix-A

Interview Questions for Journalists

1. What is your duty with your news organization? What issues do you cover?
2. How long are you working in journalism?
3. To what extent do you take help from the tools (ChatGPT) of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for writing and editing report in your work?
4. What do you think about the role of AI technology in journalism in the age of technology?
5. Are you aware of AI generated disinformation?
   If yes, what do you think the threat of AI generated disinformation pose to objective journalism?
6. How do you verify the sources of information when you are in doubt about the accuracy of the information? Please give examples.
7. Do you apply any technological tools to prove sources of information and data? If yes, please give an example.
8. Did you participate any fact-checking training and workshop in any stage of your career?
9. Do your organization arrange any factchecking training for their employees?
10. Are you aware of any fact-checking organizations in Bangladesh? Do you follow their fact checks?
11. Do your organization take help from independent factcheckers if need help?
12. Does your news organization have a separate fact-checking unit?
    If yes, then describe how they work to combat disinformation?
    if no, do you think your media organization should have to combat the flood of disinformation? Does your organization have any plan to install factchecking unit?
13. What challenges do you think have in media organizations in Bangladesh for doing factchecking while disinformation especially AI-generated disinformation is spreading in every social sphere?

Appendix-B

Name of Interviewees

Name	Post	Org.	Email
Golam Mortoza	The Editor	The Daily Star (Bengali)	mortoza@thedailystar.net
Selim Khan	Executive Editor	Independent TV	selimkhan70@gmail.com
Ariful Islam Arman	Future Editor	Dhakapost.com	arif.arman@gmail.com
Razib Hasan	News Editor	The daily Prothom Alo	razib.hassan@prothomalo.com
Goutam Mondal	News Editor	The Daily Samakal	gmondal@hotmail.com
Sheik Salam	News Editor	ANT News	sasalammc@gmail.com
Manwar Hossain	News Editor	Somoy TV	in2manwar@yahoo.com
Zohaer Ibna	Join-news	The Daily	zoha.ik@gmail.com

Kalim(Zoha),	Editor	Jugantor	
Md. Sakhwat Hossain	Assistant News Editor	Jagonews.com	mshossain.sujan@gmail.com
Ahmed Juwel	News Editor	The Daily Kaler Kantha	+8801707077958
MafuzurRahman (Mishu),	Special Corresp	Jamuna Television	mishubdf@gmail.com
Joysree Bhadury	Senior Reporter	Bangladesh protidin	joysreemun@gmail.com
Udisa Islam	Special Corresp.	Bangla Tribune	udisaislam@gmail.com
Sajibur Rahman	Senior Reporter	The Financial Express	sajibur@gmail.com
Golam Mortuja	Senior Reporter	Bdnews24.com	golam.mortuja@bdnews24.com

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Dorje Shugden Worship in Mongolia: Way to De-Tibetanize Mongolian Gelug Tradition

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Abstract

This paper explores the role of the Dorje Shugden worship community in Mongolia's national consciousness revival, exploring how religious practices intersect with the quest for cultural identity and autonomy in the post-socialist landscape. It argues that the engagement with Dorje Shugden, amidst controversies and global Tibetan Buddhist intersections, illuminates broader dynamics of religious revival and national identity negotiation. Through a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative analyses, including participant observations and interviews within the Mongolian context, this research uncovers the multifaceted relationship between the Dorje Shugden community's practices and the broader societal attitudes towards nationalism and cultural identity. The study reveals that the Dorje Shugden community's activities are integral to understanding Mongolia's religious and national identity reformation. It situates the Dorje Shugden controversy within the historical continuum of Tibetan Buddhism's global spread and its manifestation in Mongolia, providing a nuanced perspective on the community's contemporary challenges and its contribution to Mongolia's national identity discourse. This investigation into the Dorje Shugden worship not only sheds light on the religious dimension of Mongolia's cultural revival but also on the complex interplay between tradition, modernity, and national consciousness in shaping community practices and beliefs. By documenting the resurgence of Buddhism in Mongolia through the lens of the Dorje Shugden controversy, this research contributes significantly to the academic discourse on the intersections of religion, nationalism, and identity. It offers a fresh perspective on how religious communities navigate the pressures of globalisation and local identity formation, enriching our understanding of the sociopolitical and cultural processes shaping post-socialist Mongolia.

Keywords: Dorje Shugden, Buddhism in Mongolia, Gelugpa, Mongolia, Tibetanization, De-Tibetanization

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Introduction

The choice of investigating the Dorje Shugden community in Mongolia is driven by the community's unique position within both the national and religious landscapes of Mongolia. In the post-socialist era, Mongolia has witnessed a profound resurgence of Buddhism, which has been instrumental in shaping the country's national identity. The Dorje Shugden community, with its distinctive practices and theological positions, represents a focal point for understanding broader processes of religious revival, the negotiation of cultural identity, and the tensions inherent in the global intersections of Tibetan Buddhism. Despite the significant role of this community in Mongolia's religious and cultural revival, existing research has primarily focused on Tibetan Buddhism from a Tibetan perspective, leaving a gap in our understanding of how these religious practices and communities manifest and adapt within the Mongolian context (Humphrey C. , 1995); (Kapstein, 1999).

The methodology of this research is designed to provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the intersections between religion, specifically focusing on a particular deity within Tibetan Buddhism, and the constructs of nationalism and national identity within the Mongolian context. The study employs a multifaceted approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

This research argues that the Dorje Shugden community's efforts in Mongolia constitute a form of "New Mongolian Buddhism" that seeks to delineate a religious identity distinct from Tibetan influences while simultaneously engaging with global Buddhist traditions. This endeavour is not merely a religious or doctrinal reformation but is deeply entwined with the aspirations for national sovereignty and cultural preservation within the broader Mongolian society. Thus, the research problem addressed herein is the dynamic interplay between religious practice, national identity, and cultural autonomy as exemplified by the Dorje Shugden community in Mongolia.

By examining the Dorje Shugden community in Mongolia, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between religion, nationalism, and identity. It offers new insights into how religious communities navigate the tensions between tradition and modernity, local and global identities, and religious autonomy and cultural sovereignty. This research not only enriches the academic discourse on Buddhism and nationalism but also provides a valuable perspective on the ongoing processes of cultural differentiation and identity formation in post-socialist Mongolia.

Tibetanisation in Mongolia

The process of Tibetanisation in Mongolia, particularly under the Qing dynasty's oppression, signifies a period of both religious and cultural transformation (Smith, 2015). The Qing dynasty, which ruled from 1644 to 1912, exerted significant influence over Mongolia, affecting its political, social, and religious life (Elverskog, 2008). This period was marked by the expansion of Tibetan Buddhism into Mongolian society, a process that not only introduced new religious practices but also reshaped Mongolian identity.

The Qing emperors, themselves followers of Tibetan Buddhism, played a crucial role in promoting and legitimising the religion's expansion into Mongolia. They bestowed upon Tibetan Buddhism a privileged status, using it as a tool for governance and to establish their legitimacy over the Mongolian territories (Wu, 2022). One of the most significant aspects of

the Qing dynasty's support for Tibetan Buddhism was the policy of allowing high-ranking Mongolian lamas to be recognised and enthroned through a system controlled by the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy in Lhasa (Vesna A., 2016). This policy not only ensured that Mongolian Buddhism aligned with the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, which was favoured by the Qing, but also allowed the Qing emperors to maintain a degree of control over Mongolian religious affairs.

Imperial Strategies: The Qing Dynasty's Control Over Tibetan Buddhism. Conquering and ruling embody fundamentally distinct notions. Governing a country with the aim of maintaining peace over an extended period necessitates the establishment of a dependable, long-term strategy. When a significant portion of a realm is influenced by a single religion, it becomes not just a strategic advantage but also a moral imperative to both ally with and oversee this religion. Successive generations of Manchu Emperors strived for this, with true success being realised during the reign of Qianlong, Kangxi's grandson, who managed to bring the entire Gelug school under imperial control. It's noteworthy to mention that Tibetan Buddhism recognises not just two but four supreme spiritual leaders within the Gelug tradition: two in Tibet, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama, one in Outer Mongolia, and one in Inner Mongolia. Therefore, gaining control over these four lineages was crucial for fully integrating the Mongols into the Qing Empire, ensuring their allegiance to the Manchu Emperors over their spiritual leaders.

Qianlong's era marked a turning point in this endeavour. In 1756, following an insurrection led by an Outer Mongolian prince allied with the Dzungars, Qianlong swiftly quashed the rebellion, executing the prince and his family, along with any rebels and sympathisers. This included the execution of the 2nd Outer Mongol Living Buddha's brother, a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, which incited outrage among Outer Mongolian nobles. Subsequently, the mysterious death of the 2nd Outer Mongol Living Buddha, believed by some to be orchestrated by Qianlong, signalled the end of Outer Mongolian spiritual autonomy. Qianlong decreed that all future reincarnations of the Outer Mongolian spiritual leaders would be selected from Tibetans, thereby extending his influence over two of the four spiritual lineages.

The Yonghegong Lama Temple, originally Yongzheng's palace and Qianlong's birthplace, was transformed into a monastery under Qianlong's rule. This site became a center for Tibetan affairs and housed many Living Buddhas from Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Outer Mongolia, and Qinghai. Qianlong's crackdown on the Dzungars and consolidation of power in Outer Mongolia and Tibet led him to reevaluate the system of Tibetan Buddhism's reincarnation process. He instituted a new law that aimed to depoliticise the reincarnation process, ensuring that selections were made impartially through a drawing of lots from a golden urn. This law was documented on a multilingual stone tablet at the Yonghegong Lama Temple, signifying its importance to Qing policy and its attempt to assert control over Tibetan Buddhism's spiritual hierarchy.

During my 2019 visit to Beijing, China, primarily for travel, I stumbled upon an intriguing artefact relevant to my research - an article inscribed on a 6-meter tall stone tablet within the Yonghegong Lama Temple. In a bid to ensure widespread comprehension, Emperor Qianlong ordered the inscription to be translated into four languages: Mongolian, Chinese, Manchurian, and Tibetan. The article, extensive for substantial reasons, caught my attention, prompting me to share its contents here:

> We support the Yellow School to appease the Mongols. Due to its significance, we must protect it. The reincarnation system has a long history. However, in recent decades, it has become corrupted. Living Buddhas were born into the same families as if it were hereditary. I don't think this is right. Buddha was not born a Buddha. How could he be reincarnated? But if I stop the reincarnation, tens of thousands of lamas will have no leader, so I have to allow the reincarnation system to exist. However, Living Buddhas born into the same families is proof of selfishness. Buddha is selfless. Therefore, this system must be changed. I will send a golden urn to Tibet. Whenever a Living Buddha is reincarnated, authorities must put candidates' names in the urn and draw lots to decide. This is not a perfect solution, but better than the previous one, where one person gets to decide.

Qianlong was certainly not the inaugural Manchu emperor to conceptualise the strategy of replacing Mongolian influence with Tibetan Buddhism, yet his approach was the most forthright. Deciding to discard any pretence, he openly declared the strategic patronage of the Gelug school (Yellow School) as a means to quell Mongolian unrest. He openly criticised the traditional reincarnation system, questioning its validity by pointing out that the Buddha himself was not born enlightened. In place of this, he proposed a system that he could comprehend and manage: a process where all future reincarnations of the living Buddhas in Mongolia and Tibet, including the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, would be selected through a lottery system. Names of candidates would be inscribed in three languages—Manchurian, Mongolian, and Chinese—on ivory slips, placed into a golden urn, and drawn in a ceremony overseen by the Manchus.

This reform was more than just an administrative change; it was a symbolic assertion of control over the spiritual lineage of the Yellow School, effectively ensuring all four sacred lineages were under Manchu oversight. The implementation of this system signified the transformation of the Yellow School into an instrument of state policy for managing Mongolian affairs. The Manchu support led to widespread promotion of the Yellow School across Mongolia, bringing about significant changes in Mongolian society. This included the establishment of a hierarchical system within the religion, assigning noble titles and special status to lamas, and the construction of thousands of monasteries, funded generously by the state.

This strategic approach not only facilitated the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among the Mongols but also fundamentally altered their nomadic lifestyle and social structure. Interestingly, despite the theoretical celibacy of monks reducing the Mongolian population, this shift was not met with resistance. In the challenging environment of the Mongolian plateau, assuming the role of a lama was seen as a desirable life choice, offering both security and prestige to families.

By the early 20th century, the pervasive influence of Tibetan Buddhism had led to a profound Tibetanisation of Mongolian society. Mongols began adopting Tibetan names, medicine, calendars, and holidays. Cities were predominantly constructed around monasteries, with a significant portion of the male population becoming monks—a higher proportion than even in Tibet. By 1900, there were over 243 recognised living Buddhas across Mongolia and more than 2,000 monasteries, indicating the deep-rooted influence of Tibetan Buddhism.

Reflecting on this transformation, it's evident how the once formidable land of warriors had evolved into a society centred around monastic life. This shift represents a remarkable and

somewhat ironic turn in the history of a region known for its formidable cavalry and warriors, now distinguished by its spiritual and monastic traditions.

A New Era: Post-socialist Mongolian Buddhism

The collapse of the socialist regime in Mongolia in 1990 marked a significant turning point for religious expression in the country, initiating a period of revival and reinvention for Mongolian Buddhism. This "New Era" saw the resurgence of Buddhist practices, institutions, and identities that had been suppressed under socialist rule. Central to this revival were the Gandantekchinlen (often Gandantegchilen) and Amarbayasgalant monasteries, which emerged as beacons of spiritual renewal and national identity reconstruction. The revitalisation of these monasteries and the broader Buddhist landscape in Mongolia exemplifies the country's efforts to reclaim and redefine its religious heritage in a post-socialist context.

Gandantegchinlen Monastery, located in the heart of Ulaanbaatar, has historically been one of the most significant centres of Mongolian Buddhism. Founded in the early 19th century, it survived the socialist purges of the 1930s that decimated much of Mongolia's Buddhist infrastructure, serving as a symbolic repository of the nation's religious tradition throughout the socialist period (Humphrey & Ujeed, 2019). With the advent of democratic reforms, Gandantegchinlen swiftly regained its status as a vibrant center of religious learning, practice, and community life. The monastery became a focal point for the rekindling of Buddhist education, with the reopening of its monastic schools and the initiation of young monks into the Buddhist sangha. Additionally, Gandantegchinlen's active engagement in social and cultural activities has reinforced Buddhism's relevance in contemporary Mongolian society, fostering a sense of continuity with the past while navigating the challenges of modernity.

Amarbayasgalant Monastery, situated in the northern province of Selenge, represents another pivotal site in Mongolia's Buddhist revival. Established in the early 18th century as a dedication to Zanabazar, the first Bogd Gegeen of Mongolia, Amarbayasgalant suffered significant destruction during the anti-religious campaigns of the 1930s. The post-socialist era, however, witnessed concerted efforts to restore the monastery's physical and spiritual heritage. Restoration projects, often funded by international donors and the Mongolian government, have revitalised Amarbayasgalant's architectural splendour, transforming it into a symbol of national resilience and religious renewal (Humphrey C. , 1995). The monastery's revival has not only restored its role as a site of pilgrimage and religious study but has also contributed to the broader reclamation of Mongolia's Buddhist identity, linking the present to a revered past.

The resurgence of these monasteries and Mongolian Buddhism more broadly has been instrumental in the construction of a post-socialist Mongolian identity. Buddhism's revival has allowed Mongolians to reconnect with a spiritual heritage that was largely suppressed under socialism, offering a source of cultural pride and continuity. This reconnection is not merely about the restoration of old traditions but involves the active reinterpretation of Buddhism to address contemporary needs and sensibilities. Mongolian Buddhists have engaged in a process of selective adaptation, embracing elements of the Buddhist tradition that resonate with modern values such as environmentalism, social welfare, and national unity (Wallace, 2015).

Moreover, the revival of Buddhism in Mongolia has been marked by an emphasis on establishing a distinctly Mongolian expression of Buddhism. This entails a conscious effort to differentiate Mongolian Buddhism from other Buddhist traditions, particularly Tibetan Buddhism, on which it has historically been heavily reliant. While maintaining doctrinal and liturgical ties to Tibetan Buddhism, Mongolian Buddhists have sought to emphasise the unique aspects of their Buddhist practice, including the veneration of specific Mongolian saints and the revival of Mongolian Buddhist art and literature. This focus on cultivating a national form of Buddhism not only reinforces Mongolia's cultural sovereignty but also strengthens the bonds between Buddhism and Mongolian national identity.

This era has ushered in a new chapter for Mongolian Buddhism, characterised by revival, reinterpretation, and renewal. The restoration and revitalisation of Gandantegchinlen and Amarbayasgalant monasteries symbolise the broader resurgence of Buddhism in Mongolia, reflecting the nation's desire to reclaim its religious heritage while adapting it to the demands of the contemporary world. This process of revival is not merely about recovering what was lost but about forging a form of Buddhism that is distinctly Mongolian, serving as both a bridge to the past and a path to the future. The reemergence of Buddhism as a central facet of Mongolian identity underscores the enduring relevance of spiritual traditions in shaping national narratives and individual lives in the post-socialist landscape.

Re-establishing Buddhism in Mongolia and Dorje Shugden. The dissemination of Buddhism in Mongolia has unfolded along two distinct trajectories. Despite the predominance of the Gelugpa school among Mongolian Buddhists, it's observed that this tradition has branched into two divergent paths within the country. As articulated by a monk from Gandantegchinlen Monastery—Mongolia's largest Buddhist temple—during an interview:

> One pivotal figure in the resurgence of Buddhism post-socialism was Guru Deva Rinpoche, a proponent of Shugden worship, which was somewhat discouraged by the Dalai Lama. Though the form of Buddhism he revitalised in Mongolia was rooted in the Gelugpa tradition, it diverged in its adherence to a specific internal dharma protector and religious teachings. Conversely, Gandantegchinlen Monastery pursued religious dissemination with support from the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan monks.

Further insights were provided in another interview:

> A Mongolian proverb states, 'Once one become teacher and student, it cannot be stopped. Similarly, if you hold a tiger by its tail, you cannot let it go.' This echoes the sentiment held by many Tibetan monks that venerating the Master Lama is of utmost virtue, and following the Guru's teachings is the best path.

From these discussions, two key insights emerge. Firstly, Buddhism's propagation in Mongolia is characterised by its dual nature. Additionally, as noted by anthropologist Lhagvademchig, Mongolia's profound engagement with Tibetan Lamaism is underscored by an unwavering devotion to monastic figures, venerating them as living deities whose teachings are infallible. Consequently, an individual's religious orientation is significantly influenced by their chosen spiritual guide. This underscores the importance of examining the revival of Shugden worship by its adherents within Mongolia's contemporary religious landscape. To delve deeper into the beliefs and practices of the Dorje Shugden community—the focal point of my study—it is essential to explore the key figures and activities defining

this group, alongside societal perceptions surrounding them. These aspects will be elaborated upon in the forthcoming section.

Dorje Shugden in Mongolia

Community Building. During my interviews, one narrative emerged with particular clarity, shedding light on Guru Deva Rinpoche's profound impact on Mongolia's religious landscape since 1991. One interviewee, reflecting on the scale of Rinpoche's commitment, shared, *"Guru Deva Rinpoche didn't just bring resources; he brought a vision for the revival of our spiritual heritage."* This vision was manifested in his dedication to restoring Gandantegchilen and Amarbayasgalant Monasteries, with a focus on Amarbayasgalant Monastery's full restoration. Initially established in 1725 by Emperor KangXi to honour Zanabazar's manifold contributions, the monastery had faced severe destruction between 1937 and 1938 under the Soviet regime. Guru Deva Rinpoche spearheaded its revival in 1991, preserving over 10 of the original 40 temples within its historic walls.

The restoration of Amarbayasgalant was not just an act of physical reconstruction but also a revitalisation of the Gelugpa tradition, to which the monastery is intrinsically linked. Rinpoche's innovative fundraising strategies were crucial in this endeavour. He introduced the production of Bumba, a sacred ritual object, which he offered annually in exchange for donations equivalent to the value of one Buddha statue. This initiative not only generated necessary funds but also engaged the community in the monastery's rebirth. As the interviewee[1] recounted:

> Guru Deva Rinpoche's creation of Bumba and the institution of the Bumbanii Tahilga ceremony were genius moves. They not only secured funds for the monastery's reconstruction but also reinforced our connection to the practice.

This approach exemplified Rinpoche's unique blend of spiritual leadership and pragmatic innovation, which was instrumental in re-establishing a vibrant Buddhist community in Mongolia. His efforts extended beyond the restoration projects, contributing to the cultural and spiritual reawakening of the nation.

Guru Deva Rinpoche's efforts culminated in the erection of Ulaanbaatar's largest outdoor golden statue, funded by his followers, marking the establishment of a vibrant community around his teachings.

His disciple, Zava Damdin Rinpoche, further expanded this community within Mongolia, attracting a significant following. Unlike Gandantegchilen Monastery, which benefits from governmental funding, the monastery established by Zava Damdin Rinpoche in Dundgovi Province was constructed through private support, featuring three large temples including Mongolia's largest yurt and a three-story main temple with a golden roof and dragon-carved redwood interiors. This investment reflects the strong support network among his disciples and devotees, highlighting the resilient and expansive community fostered by their collective efforts.

In the context of community dynamics within the Dorje Shugden following in Mongolia, it becomes apparent that manifestations of devotion and the socio-economic profiles of

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[1] Interviewee, R3

adherents are significant. The construction of religious edifices rivalling monastic complexes, supported not just by individual devotees but also by state resources, signifies a display of wealth and commitment to more elaborate religious observances. This phenomenon perhaps suggests an underlying wealth among followers. The process of community building within this context seems to stem from personal relationships and the traditional Mongolian guru-disciple dynamic. The act of converting one's inner circle into followers not only expands the community but also reinforces the veneration towards the guru, creating a closely-knit group bound by spiritual and social ties. This network may become particularly influential if its core members are prominent societal figures, thereby attracting a wider circle of affluent participants.

A distinctive aspect of this group lies in their practices surrounding sermons and manual readings. Within the Lama-Disciple dynamic, there exists a strict protocol that forbids the sharing or discussion of the protector's teachings or texts with those outside the relationship. This secrecy is not merely a preference but a fundamental part of their Tantric commitment, emphasising the sacredness and exclusivity of their spiritual journey. To provide a concrete example, the appendix includes images of books and brochures utilised by this group. Notably, one pamphlet explicitly states that the teachings "must not be disclosed or exhibited to individuals who have not undergone proper initiation or who do not share vows with a Lama." This principle underscores the group's unique and profound spiritual cohesion.

Field observations during the "Khuree Ikh Tahilga," the annual Dorje Shugden Initiation Ceremony and Puja, reveal the ceremony as a pivotal event for this community. Attendance by notable individuals and their families, alongside the exchange of substantial offerings such as yellow silk and monetary gifts, underscores the economic capacity of participants. Notably, the offering of Baranzad khadags, a highly valued ceremonial scarf with historical significance, reflects both the devotees' dedication and their financial means, with prices reaching up to 2,000,000 Tugrigs for replicas of ancient khadags once presented to Mongolia's last king, Bogd Khan.

The observed practices suggest that a high standard of offerings and participation may inadvertently set a threshold for community membership, privileging those of considerable means. This dynamic could potentially isolate or exclude individuals unable to meet these unofficial standards, thereby shaping the community's composition to include predominantly wealthier members. This observation naturally transitions us to the subsequent theme that will be explored in the following section of this research.

Stereotypes. During this study, when inquiring non-worshipers about Dorje Shugden, it was found that all practicing Buddhists and half of the non-practicing ones view this entity as a wealth deity. They believe worshiping Shugden brings prosperity in this life, but at the cost of suffering in future lives. Those who accept reincarnation as truth are particularly cautious, choosing to steer clear of this protector to avoid such peril. Amid the 2012 parliamentary elections, media broadcasts disseminated claims that Shugden devotees accumulated wealth through their allegiance to the "Demon of Deed," enjoying prosperity now at the cost of suffering in subsequent lives. This video still exists on YouTube[2]. Comments beneath these posts reflect a common view of Shugden as a demon associated with material wealth. This perspective has permeated modern Mongolian hip-hop culture, with artists portraying Dorje Shugden as an emblem of financial success in their work. Notably, celebrities in the arts have

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05_JGCGvXc0&t=43s

been spotted using the hashtag #shugdenstyle, accompanying images of clasped hands. This sentiment echoes in the lyrics of songs like:

- *"Only money stole my heart, I don't believe in any god, but I worship Shugden"* by FLA, Lil Thug-E, GINJIN in "Get Money"
- *"I worship money, I'm a trap Shugden, Your god bows before me"* from GINJIN's "BAIJI"
- *"Thick wallet, my idol is Shugden"* in Tsetse's "Aliv ahdaa dansaa"

All highlighting the fusion of spiritual reverence and material pursuit.

Diving into the complex world of Dorje Shugden's worship and opposition, I've sifted through 62,800 online articles. My analysis categories these articles into three distinct clusters: those casting Shugden in a positive light, those skewing negative, and a neutral set that neither praises nor condemns.

Diving into the reasons why some cherish Shugden's worship while others shun it, I've encountered compelling arguments on both sides. Advocates for Shugden, for instance, elevate him to a pedestal for reasons deeply rooted in cultural, religious, and historical contexts. Zasep Tulku Rinpoche articulates a perception that Shugden worship is incited by the Tibetan central government to veil its own shortcomings. A fascinating angle is the belief in Shugden's affinity for Mongols, attributed to his Mongolian origins, contrasting with a perceived animosity towards Tibetans who are blamed for his demise. Supporters passionately argue that Shugden stands as the singular guardian of the Gelugpa tradition, attributing to him the power to foster wealth, virtue, and knowledge, thus elevating one's social, spiritual, and power status. They speak of secret mantras and rituals believed to alleviate internal sins and external obstacles.

Conversely, the detractors of Shugden worship lay down equally strong counterpoints. They warn of the protector's potential to foster religious fundamentalism and its adverse effects on the Dalai Lama. The crux of their argument rests on the divisive nature of Shugden, painting him as a mere worldly demon whose veneration the revered Dalai Lama has explicitly banned, deeming it harmful for future generations. A particularly stark claim suggests that although Shugden might bestow wealth in this life, such fortune comes at the cost of impoverishing the next seven generations.

The distribution of the articles themselves tells a story of divided perspectives: 21.8% highlight Shugden's positive aspects, stemming mainly from his historical significance and interviews with leaders like Zava Damdin Rinpoche. In contrast, 18.2% take a negative stance, often linking Shugden worship to political controversies, including Mongolian parliamentarians' devotion and alleged support from the Chinese government. The vast majority, 60%, maintain a neutral stance, not overtly categorising Shugden in either a positive or negative light.

Interestingly, the neutral articles, which comprise a mere 9% of Shugden-related content, largely orbit around G. Ayurzana's novel "Shugden", suggesting a cultural penetration of the subject that transcends mere religious or political discourse.
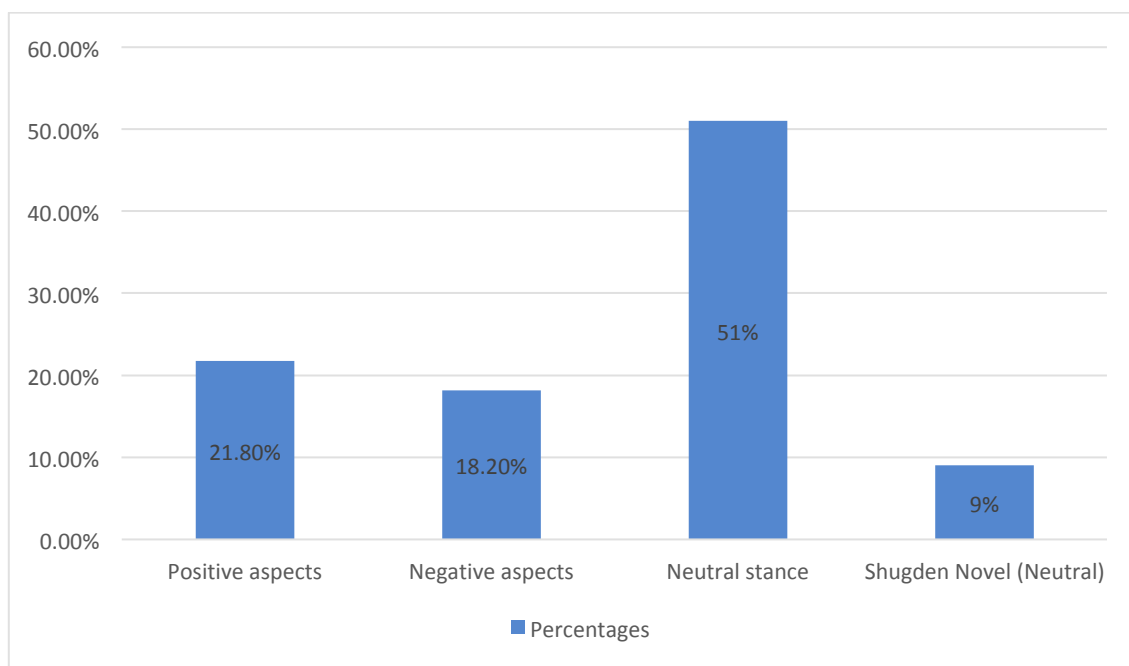
Figure 1. Online Articles

The distribution and content analysis of the articles further delineate the contours of the debate surrounding Shugden, where positive portrayals, criticisms, and neutral assessments coexist in a complex web of discourse. This discourse is reflective of a multifaceted narrative that does not merely navigate theological disagreements but also engages with deeper questions of identity, cultural continuity, and the role of religion in contemporary society.

It is clear that the stereotypes and narratives surrounding Dorje Shugden are emblematic of broader cultural and societal dynamics. They are not static or monolithic but are continually reshaped by changing contexts, media representations, and the evolving landscapes of belief and practice. The controversy and diversity of views surrounding Dorje Shugden thus offer a window into the ways in which religious figures are constructed, contested, and transformed within the collective consciousness, shedding light on the intricate interplay between tradition, modernity, and the quest for meaning in the contemporary world.

De-Tibetanization

Embracing the Nationalism. During my study on the Dorje Shugden devotion in Mongolia, a compelling narrative emerged regarding the interplay between religious practice and national consciousness. The fervour of Dorje Shugden's followers reveals a deep intertwining of religious devotion with Mongolian nationalism. This synthesis is evident in the religious activities, interviews, and pamphlets produced by adherents. Notably, Zawa Damdin Rinpoche and Dandar Lharamba Rinpoche place a significant emphasis on the Mongolian state during their religious discourses, which, as they explain, delve into how Dorje Shugden and associated rituals are integral in "ensuring Mongolian traditionalism and stable political independence."

An intriguing pattern emerged from the language used during interviews with active Buddhists. Terms related to "National consciousness, being Mongolian, Mongolian customs, cultural purity, Mongolian religion, Mongolian protector, real Mongolian holy state, independent state" were mentioned over 870 times among approximately 113,400 words.

This repetition underscores a collective aspiration towards religious freedom and the strong inclination towards preserving culture within the independent Mongolian context.

The presence of a Sukhbaatar statue at Zawa Damdin Rinpoche's monastery, situated southwest of the temple dedicated to Dorje Shugden, symbolises more than the nation's capital; it embodies the Mongolian people's beliefs and their historical resilience. Since its erection in summer 1946, the statue has borne witness to significant national events. The acquisition of the original Sukhbaatar statue in 2011, saved from destruction by a high-ranking government official and student of Zawa Damdin Rinpoche, signifies a monumental effort to safeguard Mongolian pride, culture, history, and past. The official recounted[3]:

I was very happy when Zawa Damdin Rinpoche asked me if I could bring the statue... Mongolians should not forget their pride, culture, history, and past, but they should save and protect it. I am happy that Zava Damdin Rinpoche is doing such a thing.

Zawa Damdin Rinpoche's teachings further illuminate the sacredness of Mongolian national consciousness, suggesting that the lineage of Dorje Shugden's previous incarnation has Mongolian roots, thereby serving as a protector of the Mongolian state. This distinction between Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism is nuanced by linguistic practices; Mongolian Buddhists utilise Tibetan script for sacred texts but recite these texts in a Mongolian dialect, underscoring a cultural and linguistic divergence from Tibetan traditions. Zawa Damdin Rinpoche's publication efforts, particularly in providing Dorje Shugden recitation booklets in a format accessible to Mongolians, highlight his commitment to preserving the Mongolian linguistic and cultural identity within Buddhist practice.

He's initiative to conduct a 10-day enlightenment program for children, "Buddhist Children," embodies a strategic approach to instilling a profound understanding of Dharma, the interconnection between the state and religion, and the value of national traditions in Mongolia's youth. He stated:

We introduce children to the teachings of the Dharma, the world, the state and religion... It is to educate and train people who are resilient, courageous, goal-oriented, and active in society. This quote from Zawa Damdin Rinpoche during the interview exemplifies the program's objectives, which aim to imbue participants with a deep appreciation for Buddhist philosophy, Mongolian cultural heritage, and national identity, fostering a generation that respects and perpetuates Mongolia's unique traditions and values.

Through these findings, it becomes evident that Zawa Damdin Rinpoche and his disciples exemplify a pronounced nationalist orientation, weaving the fabric of Mongolian national identity into the very heart of their religious practice. This synthesis of Buddhism and nationalism in Mongolia not only preserves but also revitalises Mongolian cultural heritage, ensuring its transmission to future generations.

Nationalism in Mongolia/The Cultural Purism. The exploration of Mongolian nationalism and cultural purism, particularly through the lens of the Dorje Shugden community's practices and beliefs, offers a nuanced understanding of how these ideologies manifest within specific religious contexts. By comparing general Mongolian sentiments towards nationalism and cultural purity with those prevalent within the Dorje Shugden community, we can discern

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[3] Interviewee, R4

the complexities and variances of national identity construction in Mongolia. This analysis draws upon empirical data from the Asian Barometer Survey (ABS) which collectively provide a robust framework for understanding the intersection of religion, nationalism, and cultural purism in Mongolia.

The ABS data indicate a strong inclination among Mongolians towards maintaining a distinct national identity and cultural purity. For instance, a substantial majority of Mongolians expressed pride in their citizenship, with data from "ABS, Wave 3" showing that 702 out of 1210 respondents identified as "very proud" to be Mongolian citizens. This high level of national pride is indicative of a deeply ingrained sense of belonging and identity among the populace. Furthermore, when asked about the defence of the Mongolian way of life against foreign influences, an overwhelming 540 out of 1210 respondents strongly agreed that the country should safeguard its cultural and national integrity, reflecting a widespread aspirational purism and apprehension towards globalisation's impacts.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very proud	849	70,2	70,2	70,2
Somewhat proud	332	27,5	27,5	97,6
Not very proud	20	1,7	1,7	99,3
Not proud at all	7	,5	,5	99,8
Decline to answer	2	,2	,2	100,0
Total	1210	100,0	100,0	

Table 1. q154. How proud are you to be a citizen of Mongolia? (ABS, Wave 3)

Comparatively, within the Dorje Shugden community, these nationalistic and purist tendencies are intertwined with religious practices and beliefs. The Dorje Shugden practice, which has faced controversies and opposition due to its perceived exclusivity and alignment with certain nationalistic sentiments, exemplifies how religious communities can mirror broader societal trends of nationalism and cultural purism. The devotion to Dorje Shugden, often portrayed as a protector of the Mongolian Buddhist tradition, becomes a focal point for expressing nationalistic and purist aspirations, thus reinforcing the community's commitment to preserving Mongolian identity and cultural purity within a religious framework.

The empirical analysis further elucidates these dynamics by examining responses to questions about tolerance towards people of different cultures and ethnicities. The ABS data reveal a nuanced landscape of tolerance and intolerance in Mongolia. While there is a general trend towards valuing cultural purity and national identity, there is also an acknowledgment of the complexities of living in a globalised world. For example, the data on respondents' willingness to live in another country, despite strong national pride, suggests a recognition of the potential benefits and inevitabilities of cross-cultural exchange and interaction. This ambivalence reflects broader global patterns of nationalism and cultural purism, where communities navigate the tensions between preserving their unique identities and engaging with the wider world.
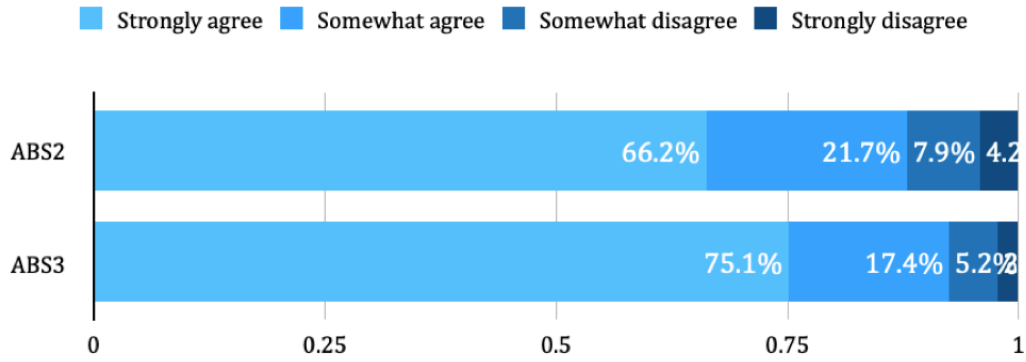
Figure 2. Should be loyal to own country
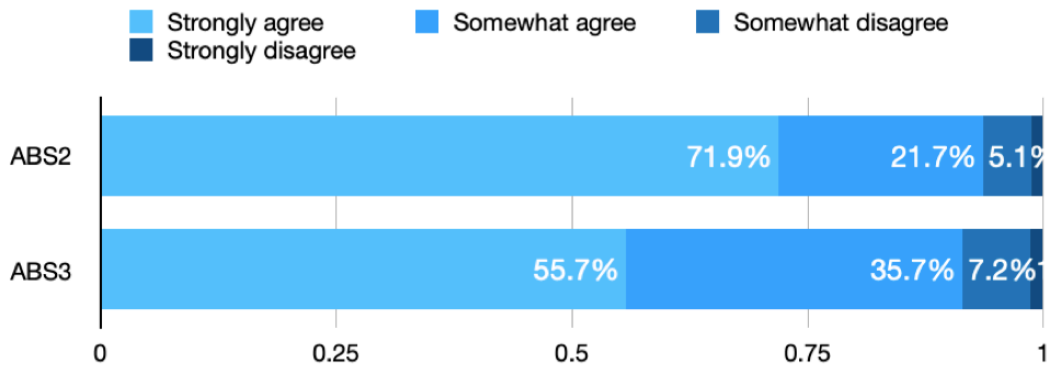
Figure 3. Defend our way of life
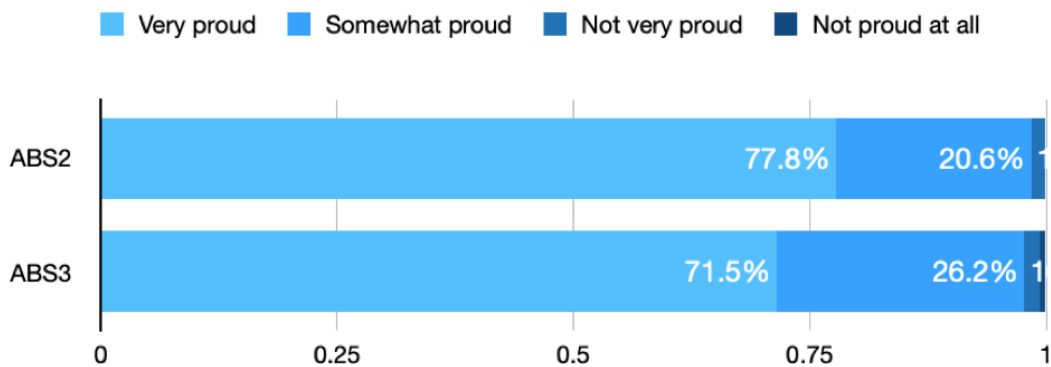
Figure 4. How proud to be a citizen of Monoglia
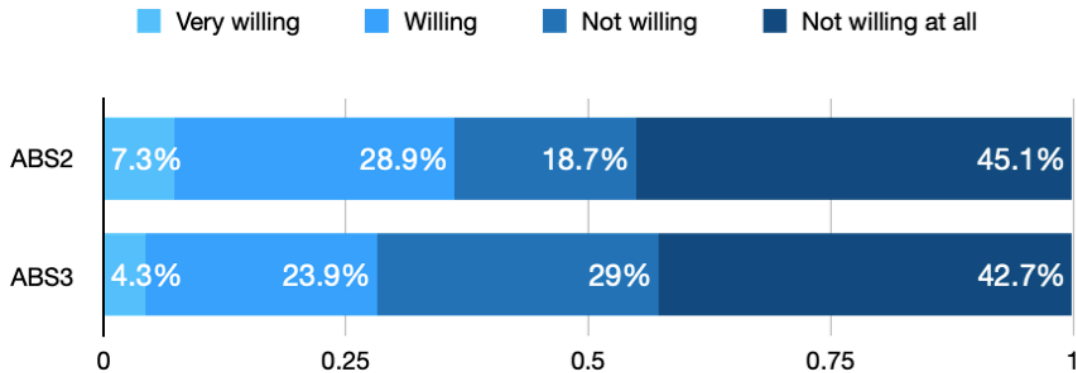
Figure 5. Will to go and live in another country

In comparing the general Mongolian populace's views with those of the Dorje Shugden community, it is clear that both groups exhibit strong nationalistic and cultural purist

tendencies, albeit manifested and expressed differently according to their specific contexts and beliefs. The Dorje Shugden community, with its particular religious practices and historical controversies, offers a microcosm through which to explore how nationalism and cultural purism are negotiated within the framework of religious identity and devotion. This comparison not only highlights the multifaceted nature of nationalism and cultural purism in Mongolia but also underscores the significant role that religious communities play in shaping and reflecting national identities.

A substantial majority of Mongolians strongly agree that their country should defend its way of life instead of becoming more and more like other countries (ABS, Wave 3 & 4). This sentiment underscores a collective desire to preserve the unique cultural and national identity of Mongolia, amidst globalisation and external cultural influences. This emphasis on cultural purism is further manifested in the notable pride Mongolians take in their citizenship, with a large number of respondents expressing that they are very proud to be a citizen of Mongolia (ABS, Wave 3 & 4). This national pride is intricately linked to the preservation of Mongolian culture and identity, serving as a foundational element of the social and political discourse within the country.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly agree	572	46,6	46,6	46,6
Agree	521	42,4	42,4	89,0
Disagree	112	9,1	9,1	98,1
Strongly disagree	14	1,2	1,2	99,2
Do not understand the question	1	,1	,1	99,3
Can't choose	7	,5	,5	99,9
Decline to answer	2	,1	,1	100,0
Total	1228	100,0	100,0	

Table 2. 151. Our country should defend our way of life instead of becoming more and more like other countries. (ABS, Wave 4)

The data also reveal a significant apprehension towards the inflow of foreigners, with a majority advocating for the reduction or complete cessation of foreign immigrants coming to work in the country (ABS, Wave 4 & 5). This reflects concerns over the dilution of Mongolian cultural purity and the potential economic and social repercussions of increased foreign presence. Such attitudes towards immigration are indicative of broader sentiments of exclusivism and nationalism that prioritise the interests and welfare of the Mongolian people above those of outsiders.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
The government should increase the inflow of immigrants	14	1,2	1,2	1,2
The government should maintain the current inflow of immigrants	204	16,6	16,6	17,8
The government should reduce the inflow of immigrant	689	56,1	56,1	73,9
The government should not allow any more immigrants	296	24,1	24,1	98,0
Do not understand the question	1	,1	,1	98,1
Can`t choose	21	1,7	1,7	99,8
Decline to answer	3	,2	,2	100,0
Total	1228	100,0	100,0	

Table 3. 153. Do you think the government should increase or decrease the inflow of foreign immigrants into the country? (ABS, Wave 4)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
The government should increase the inflow of foreigners	36	2,8	2,8	2,8
The government should maintain the current inflow of foreigners	207	16,1	16,1	19,0
The government should reduce the inflow of foreigners	607	47,3	47,3	66,3
The government should not allow any more foreigners	375	29,3	29,3	95,5
Do not understand the question	5	,4	,4	95,9
Can`t choose	41	3,2	3,2	99,1
Decline to answer	12	,9	,9	100,0
Total	1283	100,0	100,0	

Table 4. 158 Do you think the government should increase or decrease the inflow of foreigners who come to work in our country? (ABS, Wave 5)

Religiosity in Mongolia, as evidenced by the ABS data, shows a complex relationship with national identity and cultural purism. A significant portion of the population identifies as Buddhist, which is an integral part of Mongolian cultural heritage (ABS, Wave 4 & 5). The practice and importance of religion in daily life are indicative of the ways in which traditional beliefs and practices are maintained and revered, further contributing to the cultural purism that characterises Mongolian national identity.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Roman Catholic	4	,3	,3	,3
Protestant	15	1,2	1,2	1,5
Islam	20	1,6	1,6	3,1
Buddhist	774	63,0	63,0	66,2
Other	63	5,1	5,1	71,3
None	352	28,7	28,7	100,0
Total	1228	100,0	100,0	

Table 5. se6 Religion (ABS, Wave 4)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very religious	107	8,7	8,7	8,7
Moderately religious	451	36,7	36,7	45,4
Lightly religious	311	25,4	25,4	70,8
Not religious at all	316	25,7	25,7	96,5
Decline to answer	43	3,5	3,5	100,0
Total	1228	100,0	100,0	

Table 6. se7a Would you describe yourself as very religious, moderately religious, lightly religious, not religious at all? (ABS, Wave 4)

The Playground. Building upon the foundation laid in this research, this section aims to elaborate on a crucial aspect of Mongolian Buddhism's evolution—its journey towards autonomy from Tibetan influence. The historical backdrop of the Dorje Shugden controversy serves as a pivotal point of reference, illuminating the complexities surrounding the Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama's stance against this deity. International scholarship on this

subject points to the prohibition of Dorje Shugden as a measure to prevent internal religious discord, attributing the ban to perceived threats to the spiritual harmony within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Central to the Mongolian perspective on this controversy is the deep-seated nationalism that characterises the country's religious and cultural identity. Mongolian devotees of Dorje Shugden, emphasising the deity's Mongolian incarnation and its historical veneration as a state protector before the socialist era, perceive this conflict as a matter of national significance. This stance is further reinforced by allegations from figures like Zava Damdin, who accuse the Dalai Lama of undermining Mongolia's national unity and religious freedom. Such assertions highlight the role of nationalism in shaping the discourse around Dorje Shugden, framing it as a protector of the Gelugpa lineage and a symbol of Mongolian religious independence.

The debate surrounding Dorje Shugden in Mongolia transcends mere theological disagreements, touching on issues of national identity, cultural sovereignty, and the dynamics of power within the broader Tibetan Buddhist world. Critics of Dorje Shugden worship often raise concerns about potential external influences, notably the alleged financial support from the Chinese government. This claim taps into historical sensitivities and contemporary anxieties regarding foreign interference, resonating with broader themes of purity and national integrity in the face of globalisation.

On the other side, Dorje Shugden's followers position themselves as defenders of Mongolian cultural heritage and religious autonomy. They contest narratives of Tibetan dominance, particularly during the Manchu Dynasty, advocating for a vision of Mongolia that is self-reliant and faithful to its own religious traditions. This discourse challenges the hegemony of Tibetan Buddhism, asserting a unique Mongolian Buddhist identity that respects historical ties to Tibet while striving for independence in religious matters.

Conclusion

In concluding this exploration of the Dorje Shugden community in Mongolia, our journey through participant observation, interviews, and the analysis of broader societal attitudes via the Asian Barometer Study has revealed a complex tapestry of devotion, nationalism, and identity. The unique social group that adheres to the worship of Dorje Shugden has not only cultivated a distinct religious mission but has also aligned itself closely with burgeoning Mongolian nationalistic sentiments, aiming to carve out a national Buddhist religion that resonates deeply with the Mongolian ethos.

This paper has illuminated the intricate ways in which the Dorje Shugden community has navigated its position within the broader Mongolian religious landscape. By fostering a milieu that champions secrecy and exclusivity in its tantric teachings, the community has effectively created a dense and special enclave, accessible only to those who have formed a Lama-Disciple relationship and have been initiated into its esoteric practices. This approach to religious practice underscores a deeper commitment to preserving the sanctity and integrity of their teachings, as demonstrated through the careful control of access to their sermons and manuals. The inclusion of photographs of books and brochures in the appendix, bearing inscriptions that forbid sharing with those outside the initiated circle, further attests to the community's dedication to maintaining the secrecy of their tantric mission.

The nationalistic undercurrents that pervade the Dorje Shugden community in Mongolia are palpable. Through the lens of this research, it is evident that the group's religious mission intertwines with a fervent loyalty to the Mongolian state, manifesting in a collective aspiration to foster a Buddhism that is distinctly Mongolian. This ideological stance not only attracts individuals with nationalistic leanings but also reinforces the community's allegiance to the monastery and the broader Mongolian nation-state. Such findings underscore the pivotal role that nationalism plays in shaping the community's religious identity and practices.

The Dorje Shugden controversy, primarily a point of contention between the Tibetan government and the Dalai Lama, introduces a significant dimension to the community's narrative in Mongolia. Despite the Dalai Lama's disciples' presence in Mongolia and their advocacy against the worship of Dorje Shugden, the community persists in promoting the deity as Mongolia's guardian. This defiance underscores a broader critique of Tibetan influence in Mongolian Buddhism and articulates a compelling argument for the creation of Mongolian Tukus and the preservation of a separate Mongolian religious tradition. Such aspirations reflect a deep-seated desire for religious autonomy and the establishment of a Buddhism that is unequivocally Mongolian.

The dichotomy between worshippers and non-worshippers of Dorje Shugden within Mongolia has given rise to entrenched perspectives, framing the deity as a symbol of power and prosperity. This divergence of views, while rooted in the broader Tibetan controversy, morphs into a distinctly Mongolian issue upon transplantation, further emphasising the unique contours of Mongolian religious and national identity.

In navigating the complexities of the Dorje Shugden community's place within Mongolian society, this research has endeavoured to provide a nuanced understanding of how religious practices, nationalism, and the quest for autonomy converge to shape a distinct religious identity. As Mongolia continues to grapple with the legacy of Tibetan Buddhism and its own nationalistic aspirations, the Dorje Shugden community stands as a testament to the dynamic interplay between tradition, identity, and the forces of modernity. Future research should delve deeper into the implications of this religious and nationalistic fervour, exploring its impact on Mongolia's religious landscape and its broader societal implications.

This exploration opens avenues for further inquiry into the resilience of religious traditions in the face of external pressures and the role of nationalism in shaping religious communities' identities. As Mongolia carves out its path on the global stage, the story of the Dorje Shugden community and its quest for a distinctly Mongolian Buddhism will undoubtedly continue to resonate, offering rich insights into the enduring power of faith, identity, and the human spirit's indomitable quest for self-determination.

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Улаанбаатар хот.

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Content Creation and Platform Development for Creating a Good Society in Lakhok Community, Thailand

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate strategies for developing collaboration between a university and communities through digital platforms that recognize the good deeds of community members. The study employed a qualitative research approach, utilizing in-depth interviews, brainstorming sessions, and focus groups. Data was collected from volunteer groups in the Lak Hok Municipality, Pathum Thani Province. The developed platform includes a website, Facebook page, and LINE Official Account to facilitate collaboration between the community and the university in promoting a culture of good deeds. The platform was tested with a sample of residents in the Lak Hok Municipality, divided into two groups: Group 1: Students, staff, and the general public with a volunteer spirit and a commitment to good deeds. Group 2: Small and large businesses in the Lak Hok Municipality that support good deeds. In-depth interviews were also conducted with stakeholders involved in the development of the digital platform. The research findings will be discussed in the next section. The research findings indicate that all three platforms can be effectively utilized to encourage individuals to join volunteer groups and engage in good deeds. The voluntary initiatives undertaken by volunteers fostered collaboration between the university and the community. The "Lak Hok Spirit" Line Official Account serves as a catalyst for creating a society of kindness, selflessness, and mutual support. This transformation was evident in the altered behaviors of community members, including their engagement with news, sharing of experiences, mutual care, acts of kindness, and volunteer work.

Keywords: Volunteer, Digital Platform, User Experience, Good Society

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Introduction

The Lakhok Spirit initiative emphasizes self-improvement and personal well-being, fostering a balanced approach to physical, mental, emotional, and social health. This balanced approach lead to positive thinking, good deeds, honesty, and integrity. It also encouraged kindness and support towards neighbors and others, fostering a spirit of mutual aid and community engagement (Kohlberg, 1964). The Lakhok Spirit project aimed to create a platform within the Lak Hok community that fosters a sense of online community and connects individuals through technology and digital platforms. Features aligned with everyday activities were developed to promote and enhance the quality of life for Lak Hok residents and visitors. The project's platform consisted of three main components: Website Platform: A central hub for community information. Facebook Fanpage: A platform for sharing news, updates, and volunteer opportunities. LINE Official Account (LINE OA: Lakhok Spirit): A direct communication channel for community members. The platform was initially tested within the Lak Hok community to encourage participation in various activities and record acts of kindness. Participants earned "Reward Coins" for their good deeds, which could be redeemed for benefits from local businesses. The three platforms were redesigned with a new identity and user experience (UX) to ensure ease of access, modernity, and usefulness. The user interface (UI) was aesthetically pleasing and facilitate seamless interaction between users and the system. Overall, the Lakhok Spirit project sought to foster a sense of community and promote positive values through digital platforms and community engagement.

The three platforms developed for this project served as gateways to showcase the unique identities of Lak Hok which were a neighborhood bordering the bustling metropolis of Bangkok, a gateway welcoming visitors to Pathum Thani, a city of education, a repository of rich cultural heritage, and a diverse and vibrant community. The project aimed to encourage Lak Hok residents to actively participate in the project and utilize the various platforms in their daily lives. It was envisioned that these platforms would become a hub for connecting individuals, supporting and encouraging good deeds within the community, and fostering a spirit of volunteerism. The project believed that these platforms will foster a culture of giving, sharing kindness, and spreading happiness. The accumulated good deeds would not go unnoticed; they could be translated into tangible acts of support through various platform-based activities, such as earning Reward Coins and redeeming them for rewards from local businesses. Ultimately, these activities would serve as catalysts for building a strong and resilient social fabric within the community, laying the foundation for sustainable social capital (Bucher et al., 2021).

This study aimed to achieve two primary objectives: to investigate strategies for fostering collaboration between the university and the community through digital platforms that incentivize and celebrate good deeds, and to develop digital platforms that motivate and recognize acts of kindness among community members. The findings of this research were intended to serve as a roadmap for community management, promoting a society of kindness, selflessness, and mutual aid within the community. The Lak Hok Spirit platform, a computer-based system with user-to-user and user-to-system interfaces, data collection, and management capabilities, served as the foundation for this initiative.

The Concept of Volunteerism, Motivation, User Experience, Innovation Adoption and Technology Use

The Concept of Volunteerism: Volunteerism is a civic virtue that contributes to a strong and resilient society capable of addressing its challenges. It encompasses citizens' awareness of societal issues, their desire to help their communities, their belief in their own abilities, and their collective action to address problems in accordance with established guidelines. This approach fosters responsible citizenship, characterized by an understanding of both rights and responsibilities, as informed by social theory, developmental psychology-based theories of personal morality, and Buddhist principles. Volunteerism, characterized by a strong sense of civic duty, stems from an individual's recognition of their own worth and their belief in their ability to make a positive impact on society. This commitment extends to various spheres, including social assistance (helping people and animals), environmental protection, energy conservation, and more (Aggeldis et al., 2016). Volunteers are not driven by self-interest but rather by a desire to make a difference and contribute to positive change. They embody a positive and proactive mindset, actively seeking opportunities to participate and contribute to societal betterment. In essence, volunteers exhibit a genuine willingness to assist others, demonstrating a profound sense of civic responsibility and compassion (Bandura, 1977).

The Concept of Motivation: Motivation is an internal driving force or stimulus that prompts individuals to engage in desired behaviors to fulfill their needs. It encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsically motivated individuals exhibit a genuine willingness to engage in activities, driven by a desire to achieve their goals and personal satisfaction.

The Concept of User Experience (UX): User Experience (UX) encompasses the overall experience a user has when interacting with a product, service, or system. It extends beyond the digital realm, encompassing all aspects of the user's journey, from initial awareness to ongoing use. UX design aims to create meaningful and positive experiences that enhance user satisfaction, loyalty, and overall success.

Concepts and Theories on Innovation Adoption and Technology Use: Rogers & Shoemaker (1971) define consumer acceptance and use of IT (Information Technology) as the mental process of individuals that begins with awareness of a new innovation or technology and culminates in the open adoption and use of that technology.

Adoption is a mental process (Process) that occurs within an individual, starting with hearing about the technology 1 and ending with its acceptance and use. This process is similar to the process of learning and decision-making (Decision Making). The innovation adoption decision-making process is divided into 5 steps: *Stage 1*: Awareness (Knowledge) The Awareness stage is the initial step towards innovation adoption or rejection. It involves gaining familiarity with the innovation and its relevance to one's profession or activities. While the information may be incomplete at this stage, it can trigger curiosity if the innovation aligns with existing practices or addresses relevant challenges. This curiosity can lead to further exploration and potential adoption *Stage 2*: Persuasion (Interest) In the Persuasion stage, individuals transition from initial awareness to a heightened interest in the innovation. They actively seek out more information, demonstrating a growing engagement with the technology. This stage involves a deeper exploration of the innovation's details, potential benefits, and applicability to their needs. *Stage 3*: Decision (Evaluation) The Decision stage marks a critical point where individuals weigh the pros and cons of adopting the innovation. They carefully evaluate the potential benefits and drawbacks, considering the

impact on their existing practices and potential challenges. This stage is distinguished by the need for reinforcement, seeking external validation or confirmation of their decision. *Stage 4*: Implementation (Trial) The Implementation stage involves actual testing of the innovation in a real-world setting. Individuals typically start with a small-scale trial to assess the innovation's effectiveness and alignment with their expectations. This stage is characterized by a focused search for specific information related to the innovation's application and potential challenges. *Stage 5*: Confirmation (Adoption) The Confirmation stage marks the final step in the adoption process, where individuals fully accept and integrate the innovation into their practices. This decision is based on the positive outcomes and perceived benefits experienced during the trial stage. However, the emergence of new information that contradicts existing assumptions or expectations can potentially lead to a rejection of the innovation.

This research aimed to develop content and a platform to foster a community of good deeds in Lak Hok Municipality. The focus was on the process of conducting volunteer activities through an online platform to establish guidelines for promoting good deeds within the Lak Hok community (Lakhok Spirit). The platform aimed to create an atmosphere and relationship where everyone in Lak Hok would be connected through technology that aligns with everyday activities. Data collection methods include in-depth interviews which was conducted with volunteer groups in Lak Hok Municipality, Pathum Thani Province, brainstorming sessions was held to gather ideas and suggestions from volunteer groups, and the focus group discussions which was conducted to explore experiences related to volunteer activities and the proposed platform.

University and Community Collaboration

This research explored guidelines for fostering collaboration between universities and communities through a digital platform that incentivized and recognized good deeds. The researcher initially experimented with three platforms for the first volunteer project at Rangsit University's community vaccination center: Website Platform, the central hub for community information. Facebook Fanpage Platform and LINE Official Platform: LINE OA: Lakhok Spirit, the central hub for news and volunteer activities. The study identified three groups of participants: the Volunteers (individuals who contribute to the community and can earn Reward Coins), Administrators (Admins can award Spirit Coins to volunteers), and Businessmen (those who want to support the project and volunteers). The project attracted a significant number of volunteers, including students, staff, and residents of Lak Hok Municipality, Pathum Thani Province. This inspired Rangsit University to develop guidelines for a livable community that emphasizes self-improvement and promotes personal well-being in terms of physical, mental, emotional, and social balance. The university believes that self-improvement leads to positive thinking, good deeds, and honesty. True good deeds should benefit others, fostering a spirit of mutual support and interdependence. The use of the platforms in this activity was limited to disseminating information to volunteers participating in daily activities. The research team conducted daily outreach during the 168-days operation of the vaccination center.

The introduction of the three platforms to volunteers was achieved through an exhibition titled "Lakhok Spirit," which showcased the functions and roles of each platform. The project launched by Rangsit University presented the platforms as a model for serving as a medium for information dissemination, public relations, content sharing, news, and announcements in a publicly accessible format, connecting the educational institution and Lak Hok

Municipality, Pathum Thani Province. The researcher planned to open up opportunities for students, staff, and the general public to participate by organizing activities and projects to invite volunteers to join forces for good deeds. The Lakhok Spirit platform could be used to connect activities and projects to motivate those with a desire to volunteer. The researcher analyzed that volunteers developed positive thinking and a sense of participation, leading to positive changes. In other words, those with volunteer behavior and public spirit tend to help others, which aligns with the research objective of exploring ways to foster collaboration between universities and communities through digital platforms that incentivize and recognize good deeds. The researcher believed that creating volunteer activities and projects would promote good deeds under the Lakhok Spirit concept, which aimed to establish in this community as a place of mutual support, coordination, and shared commitment.

Development of a Digital Platform

The researcher experimented with creating a Line Official Account (Line OA) named "Lakhok Spirit" with the intention of using technology and digital platforms to promote good deeds and provide incentives in an engaging manner. The researcher utilized the Line application and piloted the concept and process at the vaccination center, targeting volunteers who wanted to receive something in return for their assistance and encouraging community participation in various activities and projects. By promoting vaccination services to the community, the researcher aimed to incentivize volunteers to participate in the desired behavior of getting vaccinated. The experiment involved disseminating information on the platform, which instilled confidence in volunteers to avail of the services and showcased the positive impact of volunteer work. The researcher concluded that developing the platform as a communication tool and incentive to recognize good deeds within the community would have a positive impact on community development efforts.

The research found that it could be beneficial if students registered for activities and projects of various faculties and colleges and utilize the Line OA, such as organizing events, inviting volunteers, and accumulating reward coins for good deeds. Volunteers could receive coins and accumulate them as merit medals through the LINE Official Account (LINE OA) platform, serving as a Lakhok Spirit (Lakhok Spirit) model. The advantages include a widespread reach because almost every phone runs on Android or iOS operating systems, and most people can install the Line app, making it easy to receive motivational information for good deeds. In addition, it promotes effective communication. Volunteers can receive information and interact through chatbot and broadcast messages, a suitable approach for modern communication (Dieteren, 2011). It also increases volunteer engagement. The platform encourages volunteers to register and participate in volunteer activities. It promotes a positive attitude towards technology among the Lak Hok Municipality community. Community Building: It connects community members to participate in shared experiences and record their good deeds to earn Spirit Coins, which can be redeemed for benefits from local businesses (Hart et al., 2015).

The researcher also developed a system to address errors encountered by volunteers, admins, and businesses. All these groups can view their accumulated coins in real-time, and admins can manage the back-end system, including adding Spirit Coins to members and displaying their score levels to encourage further good deeds. The system also includes business information, including visual reality displays, discounts, and Google Map locations. Users can contact admins for system support and membership management. The researcher acknowledged that further research is needed based on the results of expanded volunteer

activities and projects to refine the platform and explore more suitable approaches for community engagement, information dissemination, and activity formats that motivate participation. The ultimate goal is to establish guidelines for fostering a community of good deeds, selflessness, and mutual support, driven by changes in community members' awareness, experience sharing, care for one another, volunteerism, and ultimately, elevating their civic consciousness to contribute positively to their community, society, and nation (Weihrich and Koontz, 1993).

Testing and Refining the Digital Platform

Following the creation and development of the three digital platforms, the researcher conducted testing and refinement of both the system and the platforms' overall appearance. For the website (www.rsu.ac.th/lakhok), the researcher presented the project information under the name "Lakhok Spirit" through the project's main website under the "Lak Hok Development Center" project. Initially, on the website, Lakhok Spirit was one of the menus called "Society" to publicize the project and invite students, staff, community members, and interested citizens to visit and scan the QR Code to register as project members. There were steps for applying for membership to the project for those interested to follow. In addition, it was also linked to various playlist to the YouTube channel.

For the LINE Official Account Lakhok Spirit, the researcher refined the User Experience (UX) for LINE OA: Lakhok Spirit, focusing on visual design, accessibility, and user interaction. To enhance the user experience on the LINE Official Account (LINE OA) Lakhok Spirit, the researcher implemented several visual design improvements, redesigned menu icons and layouts for better aesthetics and usability, with better logo to solidify brand identity. The enhanced user experience on the LINE Official Account (LINE OA) Lakhok Spirit offers distinct functionalities for different user groups. Volunteers can view their profiles, Spirit Coin balance, and transaction history. Businessmen can manage their store information including visual reality displays, discounts, location (Google Map), and point redemption terms. Admins can access member data, engage in direct communication, update information, promote offers, and recommend stores. The LINE Official Account (LINE OA) Lakhok Spirit was designed with the following overall principles in mind: modernity (aligning with contemporary design trends and user expectations), real-world applicability (designed for practical everyday use), accessibility (catering to users with diverse abilities and needs), ease of use (featuring straightforward registration, navigation, and problem-solving), and self-service support (empowering users to resolve basic issues independently).

For the Facebook Fanpage, to promote community collaboration, the Facebook fanpage received a visual and content makeover. The visuals now emphasize Lak Hok's community identity and showcase collaboration between residents and Lakhok Spirit, depicting Lak Hok as a thriving and interdependent community. Content enhancements highlight volunteer groups and participating businesses, pin important news for maximum visibility, and share inspirational stories of residents doing good deeds. This enhanced Facebook fanpage aims to foster a sense of community, promote collaboration, and inspire positive action among residents.

The evaluation of the digital platforms showed positive impacts in several areas. The use of the Lakhok Spirit digital platform increased project awareness and participation among target groups in Lak Hok Municipality, Pathum Thani. This was achieved through various means of information sharing: print media, exhibitions, launch events, social media, and community

outreach activities. The Lakhok Spirit digital platform promoted collaboration between Rangsit University and the Lak Hok community. This collaboration resulted in a stronger community identity, exemplified by joint research for social good, the development of community development standards, increased interconnectedness between community activities, and the development of demand and supply within the community, ultimately strengthening ties between the university and the community and improving overall development outcomes. The Lakhok Spirit digital platform streamlined user experience by leveraging technology familiar to students, faculty, and the community. While the platform caters to the tech-savvy community, those without smartphones might require alternative access methods to fully benefit from the Lakhok Spirit project.

Conclusion

In summary, this research project investigated the development of the Lakhok Spirit digital platform and associated content. This platform aimed to cultivate a culture of volunteerism within the Lak Hok Municipality by motivating and engaging volunteers in community service activities. The platform facilitated volunteer involvement in the "Lak Hok Volunteer Center for COVID-19 Coordination and Monitoring" project led by Rangsit University, which provided support to residents in Lak Hok and Muang Ek Districts with assistance from the Provincial Administrative Organization of Pathum Thani and Lak Hok Municipality. The Lakhok community has roughly 7,000-8,000 families, and the project aimed to establish a volunteer network offering support to residents across various roles, such as screening, hospital contact, consultation, ambulance transportation for patients, and food support during quarantine. The project found that volunteers demonstrated a strong sense of willingness and dedication to helping others, motivated by a desire to contribute to the community without personal gain. This aligns with volunteerism theories that emphasize the importance of a civic-minded citizenry actively engaged in addressing societal issues, having faith in their collective capabilities, and working together to find solutions, ultimately fostering a more robust and resilient community.

This research project investigated the Lakhok Spirit digital platform and associated content, designed to cultivate a culture of volunteerism within the Lakhok Municipality. The platform aimed to motivate and engage residents by connecting them to community service activities. It consisted of three key components: a central information website, a Facebook Fanpage for news and volunteer opportunities, and a LINE Official Account for direct communication. Piloted in the Lakhok community, the platform facilitated volunteer experiences by connecting residents and enabling them to track their contributions with "Reward Coins" redeemable for local business discounts. These user-friendly platforms fostered a sense of community and provided convenient access to information, connection with others, and contribution tracking. Ultimately, the project aimed to create a sustainable model for promoting volunteerism and social cohesion. By providing a platform for engagement and recognition, it encouraged individuals to contribute to their community and build a stronger society. The researcher believes the Lakhok Spirit platform can be adapted by other communities seeking to promote volunteerism and social engagement, fostering a culture of giving and positive change.

To maximize the benefits of this study, it is recommended that community members in Lak Hok access the LAKHOK SPIRIT website (www.rsu.ac.th/lakhok) and utilize its resources. The website offers a wealth of information, including news, announcements, public sharing of knowledge and content, and community updates. This readily available information can

guide residents in their daily lives, providing insights into Lak Hok Spirit, local resources, housing, job opportunities, well-being, and education. In addition, the community members can connect with each other through the Lakhok Spirit Facebook fanpage (https://www.facebook.com/LakhokSpirit). This platform provides a space for volunteers, entrepreneurs, businesses, and other interested individuals to exchange experiences, offer mutual support, and collaborate on community initiatives. The fanpage, under the Lakhok Spirit project, shares news, announcements, and information about upcoming events, fostering community awareness and engagement. The project aims to strengthen relationships among community members, businesses, and relevant organizations. Those community members who join the LINE Official Account (LINE OA) Lakhok Spirit can receive news and updates through regular broadcasts. Additionally, they can earn Spirit Coins by participating in community activities and redeem these coins for discounts on services from participating local businesses. Unlike traditional loyalty programs, Spirit Coins have no expiration date, allowing members to redeem them at their convenience. This encourages community engagement, fosters a sense of connection, and promotes economic support for local businesses.

Acknowledgements

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The Intersection of Visual Culture, Politics, and Eating Disorders in Turkish Media:
A Case Study on Hayat and Elele Magazines

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Abstract

In this research paper, I aim to explore the intersection of visual culture, advertising, and eating disorders, specifically focusing on Turkish media and magazine culture viewed through a feminist lens. I will examine how visual culture in Turkey perpetuates unrealistic body standards and contributes to eating disorders with a case study focusing on Hayat and Elele magazines. I will also discuss how feminist theory provides insights into these dynamics, drawing on academic research. Aside from feminist theory, I will be grounding my research on multiple theories, such as intersectionality, affect theory, objectification theory, and social comparison theory. Additionally, I will share some of the archival material I collected and some of my field notes to support my research.

Keywords: Eating Disorders, Feminist Theory, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Visual Culture

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Introduction

Women's lifestyle magazines create identities and collective meanings, influencing everyday practices and social and cultural environments. In the rapidly changing world, the roles and social positionality of women have transformed through media outlets such as women's magazines. In the weekly publication of women's magazines, women are oriented towards consuming desired images and products in accordance with their appearance and personality through diet programs that target patriarchal ideal beauty standards. This phenomenon has drawn the attention of social science researchers and some academics. It is claimed that "The impact of women's and lifestyle magazines on the body, beauty images, and the development of eating disorders in women is significant." This advertisement revenue in magazines such as Elele and Hayat has allowed the formation of a media sector that has controlled, through the articulation of food, diet, and the ideal body, to create many women's lifestyles and needs and then offer solutions. In doing so, it produces subjectivity and, as such, has become an important way of conveying the media's power to affect women's relationship with their bodies and their eating patterns. Thus, looking into how these diet columns in women's magazines in Turkey offers a perspective on the historical construction of how patriarchal strategies have been shaped and constructed, especially after the political changes in the country with the election of Neoliberal president Turgut Özal.

In this research, I aim to bring a broader understanding of eating disorders as a symptom of the gender regime and its strategies reflected in magazines and advertisements while looking at eating disorders not simply as a mental illness diagnosis linked to eating patterns but as a form of disciplining and punishing the female body that is mostly seen as self-inflicted. I try to create a multi-disciplinary baseline, looking at ideologies and attitudes towards the female body through examples of visual culture in a historical context.

Throuhout this research paper, I will focus on Hayat and Elele magazine's diet columns as well as other articles focusing on weight loss and their connection with the development of eating disorders and/or disordered eating patterns. With a focus on issues printed after Turkey had undergone the effects of neoliberal politics in the 1980s, this research also critically aims to approach the relationship between the economy, politics, capitalism, and the media messages in women's magazines. One of the main factors contributing to changes in the role of women in identity construction is the content presented in these magazines, which are strategically organized and influenced by dominant discourses of patriarchal forces. Through diet, celebrity interviews, makeup, sex, recipe pages, fashion, house, horoscope, and "problem-solving" columns, these magazines serve as tools for the gender regime, attributing to the control over the female body, desires, and appetites.

Defining Eating Disorders

First, to introduce a background to current knowledge presented to us by psychological studies, we can look at the DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychological Association), which is recognized worldwide to diagnose mental disorders by medical professionals and used by psychology scholars. There are three specified eating disorders listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychological Association: Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and Binge Eating Disorder (Moore & Mycek, 2014).

Historical Context

Understanding the history of eating disorders involves exploring the historical view of the female body and desire. Misogyny's power mechanisms are rooted in desire, evident since the 17th Century, with Puritanism restricting female sexual desire. This led to disciplined eating behaviors and restricted relationships with food. In the 19th Century, women were limited to eating for nutrition and avoiding spicy foods due to their perceived impact on sexual desire. The 20th Century introduced restrictions on both pleasure from sex and food, unsuitable for late capitalism's consumption demands. As the suppression of all desires led to reduced consumption, the methodology evolved alongside the rise of capitalist movements such as commodity fetishism. This phenomenon has redefined the female body as a commodity, shifting from oppression to reorientation. Consequently, the concept of controlled hedonism has surfaced through advertising, aiming not to stifle but to stimulate, direct, and regulate desires (Turner, 2008). Women's magazines are perceived as manifestations of commodity fetishism, promoting the notion that beauty, fashion, physique, nutrition, intimacy, and domestic bliss can be attained through the products and lifestyle choices they endorse. These values are upheld as indispensable for women to command significance within society.

The reflections of this phenomenon are evident in the evolving visual culture of Turkey, which commenced in the 1970s and became notably pronounced following the 1984 elections when the Neo-Liberal politician Turgut Özal assumed the presidency. Thus, starting in the 20th century, the female physique transitioned into a commodified entity, with control, discipline, and labor invested in its construction, which served as emblematic of power and value within society. This phenomenon of commodification, stemming from capitalism, ascribed social significance to the slender female form (Gilman, 1999). Attaining a slender physique was deemed as the sole pathway for women to cultivate a sound psyche, thereby gaining societal acceptance and evolving into a 'high-value woman.' Subsequent to Özal's election, issues of the Hayat magazine consistently feature sections spotlighting empowered, emancipated, and accomplished women under the rubric "Young and Successful Women,' accompanied by segments delineating Hollywood dietary regimens.

In the 1980s, Turkey entered a brand-new era in both economy and politics. Economic trends direct societies' diets the same way they direct people's lives. Foods are like physical and sensory representations of cultural and natural features of societies, and at the same time, the dietary practices of these societies reflect constantly changing views in terms of nature-culture relationships. There is a permanent order in which nature and culture exist within people's diets. Meals display familiarity, stability, power, and relationships, which we see reflected in the "recipe" columns in these magazines. It's possible to say that Hayat and Elele magazines especially aimed to bring "modernity" into their readers' kitchens in their diet pages. How were body and diet approached by those magazines, under which promises they targeted women? Or rather, did these diet programs serve to transform the female body into a prospective, flexible, and active subject favored by neoliberal politics through the growth of the "liberal, autonomous individual" and ideal "consuming subjects"?

It is almost normal to feed the capitalist production, and it is an essential part of the patriarchal system itself. The selected programs are designed from head to toe, from hair to makeup, from fashion to sports, to diet lists. Indeed, in a society based on product consumption, new trends of body-based commodification, development, and propaganda emerged. The media organs like magazines, whose task is to show what is happening in the social and economic dimensions of society, are, therefore, great tools for feeding the market.

At the time, the magazines, especially Hayat, targeted all the people, regardless of their level of political understanding, religious beliefs, and ideological rules, who came across music, sports, art, personal and sexual life, and all this with an impetuous package. As a result, appearance becomes a product that is humiliated and used by commercials and magazine columns.

Theoretical Frameworks

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory shifts the lens beyond the individual in recognizing the effects that culture can have on how women perceive their bodies and the changes in their relationship with their bodies outside of the direct relationship of mental illnesses and trauma. One of the many examples is the Beauty Myth by Naomi Wolf, where she analyses the patterns of self-consciousness and self-hatred caused by the "impossible to reach" beauty ideals as a control mechanism of the male-dominated ideologies and breaks down the patriarchal forces that shape those ideals (Wolf, 1995).

Feminists stress the importance of early sexual experience and propose that reproductive power can be suppressed through disturbed nutrition. However, most feminists argue that eating patterns are not only produced for control and power but also symbolize emotional and bodily coming into existence. According to Martin and George in the field, people eat as a method for dealing with separate issues like sexuality conflicts, identity problems, search for control, and emotional pain. They also argue that the excessive interest in the physical being has strengthened the categorization of human experience in relation to the body, and this attractiveness has become an obsession of self-neglect and denial.

Social Comparison Theory

The Social Comparison Theory originated from Festinger in 1954. Wood later expanded the theory in 1987, suggesting that comparing oneself with celebrities and media figures boosts self-image.

Most individuals encounter unrealistic, thin images of women in the mass media through persuasive images more than they physically encounter women in real life. People who are more exposed to the mass media by passively exposing themselves to them, and because of the already discussed persuasive influences, are more influenced by persuasive images than those who do not actively expose themselves to the mass media. Individuals become dissatisfied with the perceptions of their bodies through comparing themselves with these idealized body types (something they are aware is unachievable) and feel that if they could attain the idealized body type, they would have a better life and a better -polished image. Currently, the mass media becomes the gateway to a new world through advertisements for slimming products. Individuals who are dissatisfied with their body and feel obligated to obtain a beautiful body develop an aesthetic inclination.

Objectification Theory

Objectification theory in feminism highlights the impact of societal norms on individuals' mental and physical well-being. Fredrickson and Roberts view objectification as reducing individuals to physical appearance and judging them based on beauty standards. This theory

suggests that women, often objectified by men, internalize this experience, leading to mental health issues. It focuses on two main processes: 'other-objectification,' where women strive to conform to cultural beauty ideals, affecting mental health, and 'self-objectification,' where women view themselves as objects and prioritize physical attractiveness (Frederickson & Robers, 1997).

Affect Theory

Affect theory, from a feminist perspective, interrogates the intricate relationship between emotion, power structures, and social dynamics. Rooted in the exploration of how affective forces shape individual experiences and societal formations, feminist scholars delve into the nuanced ways emotions are produced, circulated, and politicized within various contexts. At its core, affect theory challenges traditional understandings of emotion as purely internal, emphasizing instead the relational and embodied nature of affective experiences (Ahmed, 2004). From this standpoint, emotions are not static states but rather dynamic forces that are inherently tied to social, political, and cultural contexts. Feminist scholars employ affect theory to scrutinize the ways in which gendered power relations intersect with affective experiences, influencing everything from intimate relationships to broader social structures (Hemmings, 2005). This lens allows for a deeper understanding of how emotions are mobilized to reinforce or resist patriarchal norms (Hochschild, 1983), offering insights into the lived experiences of individuals marginalized by gender hierarchies. By centering affect in feminist analysis, scholars aim to illuminate the complex interplay between emotions, subjectivity, and social change (Clough, 2007), ultimately contributing to more nuanced understandings of gendered experiences.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a concept central to feminist theory, acknowledges that social identities such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability intersect and mutually constitute each other, shaping individuals' experiences of privilege and oppression. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality emphasizes the interconnected nature of multiple forms of discrimination and inequality, challenging traditional feminist frameworks that often prioritize white, middle-class, heterosexual experiences (Crenshaw, 1991).

Literature Review

There is a never-ending pressure against individuals to look a certain, predetermined way, and this pressure is at the center of body image troubles for all age and gender groups. However, the societal pressure towards body size and weight is historically targeted at women, making this a gendered issue. Roberta Pollack Seid touches on the history behind thin privilege and the societal pressure towards fatness, as well as mainstream movements of the 1960s and, by extension, the increasing size discrimination that changed how women perceive their bodies (Seid, 1989). These "developments" caused us to see our bodies as things to be improved and worked on, promoting the idea of a perfect body, which in most cases is almost impossible to achieve without going to extremes. While most people would say their need to alter their body or their dislike towards it is an internal issue, research shows that being exposed to the visual culture around thinness and beauty ideals is linked to increasing body dissatisfaction in both women and men, hence the development of disordered eating (Fernandez, Pritchard, 2012). Through internalizing such value systems, we begin developing this misconception of "self-worth" linked to our appearance. Susie Orbach

additionally invites us to see the effects of forced visual culture on people and how it's much larger and broader than we realize, embedded in our society, and our personalities (Orbach).

Payton refers to all this advertised thin privilege, and the attempts to push women to discipline their bodies quite clearly as a "war against women's bodies" and an "assault on the adult female form," using a metaphor by Wolf. (Payton, 2012) Unfortunately, we are surrounded by a visual culture that serves the same cause, and body shaming is embedded into it. These images are the weapons used in what Payton refers to as war against women. While these magazine pages, advertisements, diet programs and images of thin models are presented as motivators for women to become healthier and happier, they are "far from benign," and they feed body hatred. (Orbach, 2009) Discussing body hatred and how it is consumed unconsciously through media is critical, as research shows a direct relationship between media consumption and eating disorder symptoms. (Stice et al. 1994) This argument goes to prove my point in terms of personal being political; while eating disorders are seen as the extreme effects of these interventions, they are the perfect examples of how far patriarchy can go to preserve its power over women. This ongoing visual and verbal attack targeting the female body has a history that goes back to 1930s advertisements and has continued its streak until today, while changing its form throughout the years.

Numerous scholars view this approach as a political tactic for regulating women's bodies. Simone de Beauvoir eloquently suggests that doubting one's body equates to doubting oneself (Beauvoir, 2016). To be effective, this strategy requires internalization. Various factors like diet culture, the pursuit of a slim body, and notions of empowerment, choice, and willpower contribute to this internalization on a subconscious level. Media messages often prompt women to enhance their bodies (Orbach, 2009). The question arises: How do these mechanisms facilitate the widespread acceptance of societal ideals?

Mechanisms of Influence

1. Exposure to idealized images in Turkish media leads individuals, especially youth, to perceive these standards as achievable and essential for success and acceptance. Cultivation theory posits that continuous media exposure molds viewers' reality perceptions (Gerbner, 1998).

2. Advertisements and magazines frequently prompt people to compare themselves with the models they showcase, fostering body dissatisfaction due to unattainable beauty standards. Festinger's (1954) theory elucidates how individuals assess their worth based on comparisons with media representations.

3. Over time, people may adopt the beauty standards from ads, believing their value relies on meeting these ideals. This can drive actions to change their bodies. Objectification theory suggests women learn to see themselves as if through others' eyes (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Understanding the Turkish Context

Turkish ads and magazines frequently depict women as beauty objects, linking their value to looks. This reinforcement of objectification leads to body image issues and eating disorders. Nussbaum (1999) defines objectification as viewing a person, particularly women, as lacking agency and subjectivity. Patriarchal beauty standards in Turkish media prioritize women's

looks over other qualities, enforcing harmful stereotypes and unrealistic norms. Despite promoting choice and empowerment, media still align with traditional beauty ideals, known as 'postfeminist sensibility' per Gill (2007). The focus intensified post-1984 with Turkey's Neo-Liberal president's election, showcasing empowered, self-disciplined women in magazines, which I will discuss in detail in the Case Study section of this paper and provide examples.

Previous Research in Turkey

Studies conducted in Turkey have shown that exposure to media images and the consumption of magazine content in Turkey is associated with increased body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms.

The historical significance of Hayat and Elele magazines in shaping Turkish culture and media consumption patterns is well-documented. Hayat, founded in 1956 by Şevket Rado, played a pivotal role in reflecting and influencing modern Turkish culture during its peak years. As Bozdoğan (2001) highlights, Hayat catered to the aspirations of the urban middle class by showcasing Western lifestyles and modern cultural elements, thus contributing to the cultural modernization of Turkey. Toprak (2008) underscores Hayat's role in popularizing Western norms and values, thereby accelerating the integration of Western cultural practices in Turkey. The magazine provided its readers with insights into global trends in fashion, cinema, and the arts, positioning itself as a critical medium for modern cultural dissemination. Despite its cessation in the early 1990s due to the advent of television and changing media preferences, Hayat left a lasting impact on Turkish society by fostering a modern cultural outlook and influencing the public discourse on various social and political issues (Sancar, 2007).

In contrast, Elele, launched in 1976 by Ercan Arıklı, focused specifically on the evolving needs and interests of Turkish women. Çelik (2014) describes Elele as a pioneering platform for addressing women's issues, balancing traditional roles with contemporary lifestyles, and advocating for gender equality and women's rights. The magazine tackled a wide range of topics from fashion and beauty to health and social issues, aligning itself closely with the aspirations and challenges of modern Turkish women. Arıklı (2001) highlights the magazine's successful adaptation to digital media, allowing it to maintain its influence into the modern era. This adaptability contrasts with the decline of traditional print media, as exemplified by Hayat. Research by Erdoğan (2013) and Kaya (2010) indicates that Elele and similar women's magazines have significantly impacted body image perceptions and eating behaviors among Turkish women. These studies reveal that the portrayal of Western beauty standards in Elele contributes to increased body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms, reflecting broader trends identified by Ata et al. (2007) and Doğan (2011) in their examinations of media's influence on body image. Elele's ongoing relevance underscores its ability to adapt and continue addressing contemporary women's concerns, contrasting with the more traditional media approaches exemplified by Hayat.

Case Study, Hayat and Elele Magazines

Magazines, which prepare content with the target audience's interests and are defined as a mass media element that brings individuals to the main purpose of consumption, can be accepted as the most important media element that brings together various market goods. Women, on the other hand, allocate the information presented in these magazines to meet

their needs, solve their problems, and bridge their "inadequacies". From this perspective, individuals are faced with a greedy diet and exercise culture in these magazines. Thus, I was motivated to investigate women's magazines in Turkey, focusing on issues printed in the 1980s, because of the previous insight I provided into neoliberal politics' impact on media and its deep connection to capitalist trends around the female body.

At first, I was interested in Kadınca magazine. However, upon further research I realized it was a rather feminist publication compared to other magazines of the time such as Hayat and Elele magazine. One of the limitations I faced in this research was the lack of archival material. While more feminist publications such as Kadınca magazine, or openly feminist magazines such as Pazartesi had a wide collection under Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi, popular culture and lifestyle magazines like Elele and Hayat could only be found in second-hand book shops. In my short "field trip" I went to the biggest passage of second hand book shops in İstanbul, in Kadıköy. There I could only find one store with Elele magazine issues. And to my luck, they had a collectioners binded "book" of Hayat magazine containing the issues printed after Özal's election. I skimmed through all the issues of Elele magazine they had, electing the one's printed after 1980's. During my field, we had a conversation with the owner. He provided with me with some information on how these magazines were not conserved at all and the only way they could attain them was when they scavenged abandoned apartments. Additionally I attained the three edition copy of the Turkey Ad Archive, which similarly mentioned the same issues with lack of preservation over these archival materials. In conclusion, it wasn't easy to collect material for this research but fortunately I found enough to work with.

Hayat magazine is a rather well-rounded publication that does not only target female readers. Both local and political politics are part of the issues, as well as a section dedicated to health problems offering solutions. Hayat is highly influenced by political ideologies of the time, highlighting the ideal "modern Turkish woman" profile as a liberated, empowered, autonomous woman, who is in charge of her career and her body. By contrast, Elele often draws on family values and motherhood. Aditionally, Elele strictly focuses on topics such as reproductive health for women, childcare, diets, and celebrities. Elele also differentiates itself from Hayat by providing a side publication focusing on adolescent girls, where most of the weight-loss content is located.

Figure 1, 2: Genç ve Başarılı Kadınlar (Young and Succesful Women) and
The Cover page, Hayat Magazine, 1984

In the Hayat magazine case, we see clear reflections of neoliberal politics in the sections dedicated to "Young and Succesful Women." However, by contrast, these articles are followed by Hollywood Diets, which is the obvious selling point as the cover only mentions the diet promising weight loss.

Elele, on the other hand, takes it a step further by providing exercise programs, not only diet lists, targeting a large age group of women, from adolescents to post-partum women. Articles dissecting the female body into parts and offering solutions to "alleged" problems.

Figure 3, 4, 5: "It's trendy to lose weight by gaining muscles now",
"be ready for summer", Elele Magazine

On the side-issue of Elele magazine, called Genç Kız (Young Girl), there are columns dedicated to questions from the readers. As previous research suggests, we see that young readers are highly self-conscious about their bodies.

Figure 6: "Can I lose weight by eating fruit?", "Yes! Without compromising your healht!"

The figure above showcases a question by a teenage reader regarding eating only fruit to lose weight. The answer reassures the reader by saying eating only fruit once a week is the easiest

and healthiest way to lose weight. Elele even gives tips on enduring the starvation and fatigue of eating only fruit by adding one to two carrots to the diet(!) As we can see in this example, Elele preys on impressionable teenage girls by advertising unhealthy eating patterns.

The problems begin when a naive reader starts asking herself questions: "if she can, why can't I? Is she more determined? More disciplined? Does she love herself more? What's wrong with me? What can I do to be more like her?" Readers twist or endure. They accept deprivation, psychological hunger, decreased energy and fatigue. Through advertising this type of weight loss advice, a mental health condition can be transformed into the latest trendy diet plan followed by celebrities in Hollywood. The pervasive diet culture has led to the acceptance and integration of unhealthy practices like starvation and using laxative teas, which are now labeled as "intermittent fasting," 'cleansing,' or 'detoxing.'

Elele not only preys on adolescent girls but also the traditional family values of Turkey. An interesting article caught my eye on one of the issues called "When My Mom Gains Weight." Where children aged between 6 to 12 were interviewed. Aside from the insulting caricature in the article, the answers provided evidence into the influence of these magazines in women's body image and even possibly causing disordered eating patterns, as well as the reflections of such patterns in the family environment.

Figure 7: "Annem Kilo Alınca…" (When My Mom Gains Weight), Elele Magazine

I will provide translations of some responses from the interviews in this article:

"My mom is a sucker for skinny. She constantly weighs and measures herself."

"Unfortunately, my mother is a bit of a chubby woman. My father sometimes tells her you can tell a woman's youth by her body. Then , she suddenly stops eating and drinking. Then she becomes weak and gets sick." "There is a scale on our dining table. My mother weighs everything she eats, even the bread, and records the calories she will consume on the piece of paper next to her."

While Hayat magazine is no longer active, Elele magazine, to this day continues its tradition, by giving out 170 page diet booklets as gifts with their newest issue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, women's magazines in Turkey, play a significant role in understanding how the ideologies adopt media strategies to construct beauty and social ideals for women and contributing to the development of eating disorders. From a feminist perspective, these media representations perpetuate patriarchal standards that objectify women and prioritize appearance over other attributes. The historical context shows a shift from repression to controlled hedonism, where the female body becomes a commodity symbolizing societal value. Feminist theory provides a critical lens through which we can understand the broader cultural impacts on body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. Studies have shown that exposure to media images in Turkey is associated with increased body dissatisfaction and eating disorder symptoms, highlighting the need for diverse and realistic representations of women's bodies.

As we move forward, it is crucial to continue challenging the harmful portrayals of women in media and advocate for a more inclusive and realistic representation of all body types. By raising awareness and promoting media literacy, we can help mitigate the negative impacts of visual culture on body image and reduce the prevalence of eating disorders. Let us work together to create a society where we can work on preventing the development of these life-altering disorders as a protection for the next generations.

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Globalizing Indonesian Artists: Western Audiences' Perceived Coolness for Breaking Into the Global Popular Music Market

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Abstract

The 2019 "trigger cities" surge in music streaming from urban Southeast Asian and Latin American users has propelled emerging artists into global recognition. This study examines global popular music power dynamics, once Western-dominated, using cultural hybridity to explore how Indonesian artists maintain global media representation with local-driven music. It examines omnivorous music taste and 'coolness' in hybrid music, focusing on Western perceptions of Indonesian artists. A 2 x 2 experiment with 240 U.S. and U.K. young adults evaluated Indonesian songs and images, highlighting U.S. media's role in shaping perceptions. This research advocates leveraging U.S. media to enhance non-Western artists' image.

Keywords: Cultural Hybridity, Popular Music, Perceived Coolness, Non-Western Artists, U.S. Media

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Introduction

In 2019, high streaming numbers found on global music streaming services Spotify and Youtube were reported coming from Southeast Asian and Latin American metropolitan areas by music data analytics platform Chartmetric, naming those the "trigger cities" (Joven, 2019a). These cities contribute to the global popularity of emerging artists (Tompkins et al., 2021) such as Lauv (Joven, 2019a; Leight, 2020), who is based in the U.S. and initially distributed by independent distributor AWAL, with songs in top Spotify playlists of several *trigger-city* countries. However, findings on why non-Western audiences in *trigger-city* countries stream emerging artists more than Western audiences, such as those in the U.S., are understudied, besides the underrepresented non-Western artists marketed in the *trigger cities*. What remains a knowledge gap is the purpose of "trigger cities" marketing in proliferating artists distributed by Western-based labels for audiences described as having a "preference for Western culture" (Stellar Trigger Marketing, n.d.).

Whether algorithms carry the politics (Freeman, 2019) in recommending the emerging Western label artists' songs to users in *trigger cities*, reporting non-Western *fans* as 'eager to consume new music' (Yuen, 2022) raises spirits of inquiry in Western music listeners. It is also vital to understand Western music streaming users' openness to new songs and artists, as countries like the U.S. share larger music streaming revenue worldwide, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry[1] than the *trigger-city* countries do. This study examines how Westerners' music taste can significantly contribute to the global popularity of artists from *trigger-city* countries who, by embracing the Westerners' cultural taste as perceived by urban consumers, are distributed by U.S.-based record labels. Without exalting Western music consumers, this research covers three research questions (RQs): (1) How suitable—mainly likable—are Indonesian artists' music to Western audiences' taste? (2) How do audiences perceive Indonesian artists' image to be popular worldwide? (3) How can Indonesian artists be perceived as *cool* by the global music market's largest revenue contributors?

Indonesia is selected as one of the *trigger-city* countries in this research, where Spotify categorized Jakarta, Indonesia's capital city, as a "home to [several] music streaming *trigger cities*, [influencing] the global music streams and trends" (Joven, 2019a; Schwartz, 2019). The experiment survey was assigned to U.S. and U.K. audiences aged 18 to 40, where 240 respondents were randomized to evaluate one of four artist concepts with one of two previewed songs and media illustrations of the artist's image. Using 'perceived coolness' that Warren and Campbell studied for upcoming rock artists (2014, p. 552), the experiment analysis discussed in this study addresses cultural hybridity through established Western media deriving from Guldin (2021)'s 'market-receptive' approach. The significant positive impact of the artist's image on a U.S.-based global mass media, Billboard Music, allows this study to deliver novel standpoints on the perceived coolness associated with whether an artist seems authentic. This study contributes to the literature of power dynamics between popular music and its hybrid nature manifested in the Indonesian artist concepts that adopt the U.S. media, attracting the global music market's largest audiences, and the scholarly research related to the *trigger cities*.

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[1] The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) is a non-governmental entity responsible for collecting global sales data of recorded music (IFPI, n.d.; Laing, 2010)

Theoretical Framework

The U.S. Popular Music Dominance

Popular music, inherently associated with the United States (U.S.) music industry as an integral aspect of its identity, involves the distribution of recorded sounds or songs to mass audiences (Tagg, 1982), thereby creating value for the records based on widespread appeal. Western popular music has greatly influenced the production and distribution of music into phonorecords—physical objects embodying the sound recording (Bennett, 2017)—as the technology was expanded worldwide in the late sixties by U.S. and U.K. record companies (Manuel, 1988). The mass commodification of music can be comprehended using the logic of Ritzer's McDonaldization on recording companies established in the U.S. and the U.K. (Hesmondhalgh, 1995), where phonorecords are traded through representative companies in many other countries. Essentially, McDonaldization (Ritzer, 2021) refers to the strategy employed by U.S.-based corporations to standardize a product—initially exemplified by the American fast-food chain McDonald's—among American society and others worldwide. In popular music, McDonaldization is evident through the reproduction of recording technology and the distribution and consumption cycle, involving many audiences to listen to the same song(s) facilitated by media institutions like radio, perpetuating familiarity through frequent plays (Russell, 1987).

McDonaldization is often associated with cultural imperialism (Ritzer & Malone, 2000) as the U.S. pop culture streams homogenous products with a particular system or custom to consume to developed nations as well, such as France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Shuker, 2001). Since the music industry history started in the U.S., followed by the U.K. making a "significant artistic contribution to an Anglo-American popular music hegemony" (Shuker, 2001, p. 30), big record labels had commercialized artists in the international market (Hesmondhalgh, 1996). Essentially, the *global* circuit in globalization disseminates a culture originating in the West to the rest of the world for consumption within the local cultural context (Bennett, 2015; Tomlinson, 1991). While popular music involves a two-way appropriation process where artists and fans adapt to each other's cultures and generate a new one (Touzani et al., 2016), consisting of hybrid global-local identities, it tends to exert greater influence on non-U.S. markets.

In Indonesia, national popular music encompasses diverse genres of rock, rap, jazz, disco, pop Indonesia, *keroncong*, *dangdut*, and *qasidah* spoken in Bahasa and sometimes English (Barendregt & van Zanten, 2002), blending Western and Eastern influences to create a *fusion* of modern and traditional elements. In a distinct case, rising Indonesian rappers Ramengvrl and Rich Brian are identified as 'hybrid' (Taylor, 1997), as the two are distributed by U.S. record labels EMPIRE (Yannuar et al., 2023) and 88rising (Xilin, 2021) respectively for Western-standard hip-hop music to represent Asians. Familiar or mainstream music is typically likable (Dai et al., 2022) to many audiences from diverse social and geographical backgrounds, yet it is not the case with Indonesian popular genres to Westerners, despite Indonesia's high population globally (Wallach, 2003). Furthermore, expecting authenticity from non-Western artists implicates a double standard, as likable music is "a successful imitation that listeners find similar to something likable" (Dai et al., 2022, p. 72), wherein this case is Western music influences in most Indonesian popular genres.

In investigating the role of hybridity within the McDonaldization of popular music, this study seeks to address (RQ1) how well non-Western artists' music, particularly from Indonesia,

aligns with the Western audiences' taste in terms of being likable. To assess whether hybridity suits familiarity better in listening to Indonesian popular music,

Hypothesis 1: Indonesian artists are likable if their song's theme is relevant to global pop culture.

Conversely, to assess whether sounding native is expected from Indonesian popular music,

Hypothesis 2: Indonesian artists are likable if their music features their native culture.

Cultural Hybridity as a Response to the Trigger Cities Marketing

Music data analytics platform Chartmetric published a report on the high music streaming numbers from users in large Southeast Asian and Latin American cities called the *trigger cities* (Joven, 2019a; Keegan, 2022; Leight, 2020; Tompkins et al., 2021). Record labels or independent digital music aggregators mostly based in the U.S. distribute emerging artists, such as Lauv (Joven, 2019a), Joji (Stellar Trigger Marketing, n.d.), Gatton (Keegan, 2022), and many more whose genres are of popular music. Chartmetric emphasized a significant observation in one of its findings that popular genres continue to be exceptionally liked by these non-Western audiences, especially in Southeast Asia (Joven, 2019b; Kanwal, 2021). Furthermore, these non-Western audiences' likeness to popular genres leads to high Spotify monthly listeners of popstars distributed by Western labels, with Jakarta leading among eight out of ten artists in Chartmetric's June 2019 data, reflecting recent Spotify statistics of emerging global artists (see **Table 1)**. Despite the lack of research on whether Spotify recommends *trigger-city* users particular artists or the 'Western-savvy' audiences (Joven, 2019b) initiatively explore those artists, the non-West positions Western music higher than local music consumption for global pop culture (Li, 2020).

Emerging Global Artists	Area of Listeners
Stacey Ryan *Canadian pop singer* Island Records (North America)	1. Jakarta, ID (1,060,831 listeners) 2. Bandung, ID (389,064 listeners) 3. Surabaya, ID (316,752 listeners)
Lauv *American pop singer* Virgin Music Group (United States)	1. Jakarta, ID (541,428 listeners) 2. Quezon City, PH (299,172 listeners) 3. Kuala Lumpur, MY (269,526 listeners)
Joji *Japanese-Australian singer/rapper* 88rising (United States)	1. Jakarta, ID (1,061,872 listeners) 2. Los Angeles, US (426,911 listeners) 3. Mexico City, MX (417,286 listeners)

Table 1. Area of listeners of emerging global artists from Spotify – March, 2023

Weiss (2014) studied how her students, familiar to Western music standard, misunderstood authenticity in world music, while the viral song of Indonesian music group Weird Genius on social media TikTok emphasized traditional Indonesian music modification (Pramana & Aryesta, 2022). In Weird Genius' song, "Lathi", the electronic dance music (EDM) song distributed by American electronic music label Astralwerks (Ritchie, 2020) incorporated the traditional Indonesian music elements as 'authentic' in the popular music production. Global artists often utilize popular music influences and the English language to reach worldwide audience, aside from being distributed by Western labels, while also leveraging image and

engaging in 'trans-media endeavors' (Guldin, 2021, p. 946) to be on various entertainment media. Therefore, when non-U.S. artists receive coverage from established media, such as Billboard, which has been reporting on the U.S. entertainment industry since the 1890s (Anand, 2005; Dowd, 2013), it elevates their reputations. Today, TikTok allows local artists to reach global exposure by making their music go viral, and "Lathi" was a case of enhancing Indonesian identity branding (Pramana & Aryesta, 2022) by hybridizing EDM and pop music with Indonesia's *gamelan* (Anggraheni et al., 2022).

As new identities, things, and ideas from the interaction of two or more cultures challenges the state of authenticity in any popular music, Guldin (2021) highlighted the 'market-receptive hybridity' and 'market-resistant hybridity' (p. 941) in promoting hybridity in popular music. While the 'market-receptive' approach uplifts Western influences, the 'market-resistant' approach does not imply that non-Western artists are presented more authentically, as they can benefit from global media and U.S. record labels in maintaining image with the music of their native cultures. TikTok's algorithms can propel artists to become viral when their songs are liked by many users, with this 'organic' growth often regarded as a marketing approach (Coulter, 2022, p. 145). Practically, established artists have been strategizing for TikTok videos to seem accidental, as having industry 'intermediaries' (Corciolani et al., 2020, p. 478) on global media makes those artists' image seem less authentic (Corciolani et al., 2020). Therefore, this study analyzes (RQ2) how audiences perceive non-Western artists' image, particularly from Indonesia, that can be popular worldwide, as learning from the emerging Western label artists popular from social media because of *trigger-city* audiences,

> *Hypothesis 3: Indonesian artists can be popular worldwide if they are viral on TikTok.*

To demonstrate whether reputable mass media can boost Indonesian artists' image fairly,

> *Hypothesis 4: Indonesian artists can be popular worldwide if featured on U.S.-based global music media.*

Omnivorous Music Taste in the Digital Realm

One of the approaches to see cultural hybridity more critically in this phenomenon is understanding the taste of Indonesian audiences, including artists, adjusted to the dominant foreign music influences (Seneviratne, 2012; Wallach, 2003), especially from the West. The study of omnivorousness (Rossman & Peterson, 2015) has been explored on the shifting elite Americans' music taste towards a wide range of popular genres (Peterson & Kern, 1996; Peterson & Simkus, 1992), attributing a sense of higher social status to consuming various genres. Meanwhile, middle-class Indonesians in the New Order embodied a capitalism image termed *gedongan*—the urban-progressive and higher-socioeconomic people (Barendregt, 2014; Weintraub, 2010)—as they were 'culturally elevated' with Western rock and pop (Baulch, 2016, p. 99). Several non-Western artists, including Joji in **Table 1**, who gained global recognition through U.S. media, such as Billboard (Kim, 2021), are acculturated with Western music, as shown by Joji's shift from a Japanese *Youtuber* after moving to the U.S. (Eames, 2022) to becoming a U.S. artist. Non-Western artists often categorize the varying degrees of foreign influence to produce commercial music (Hill-Cantey, 2013), such as K-pop artists relying on global streaming services for primary music revenue and being influenced by the dominant American popular music production (Hajji, 2021).

Departing from Rossman and Peterson's (2015) taste study, this research focuses on the interaction between non-Western popular music artists and the global music market through digital platforms with Western audiences' taste reflected on their perception of being 'cool' (Barna, 2018). Being *cool* has been linked to authentic taste (Abolhasani et al., 2017; Michael, 2015), especially for the 'Other' artists (Weinzierl & Muggleton, 2006), as illustrated by Barna (2018) how elite Westerners regard hip-hop or ethnic music 'cool' for "articulating subaltern voices" (p. 257). Xilin's (2021) analysis of the Asian representation on the U.S.-centric global media highlighted *coolness* as "Asians have always been considered uncool in Western society" (2021, p. 3); thus, 88rising's approach towards hip-hop, the most-streamed genre on Spotify U.S. (Ingham, 2021). Rich Brian entered the global music industry through 88rising, which positions him as the premier Indonesian artist to represent Asian-American culture on American media outlets, while other Indonesian artists attracted international audiences by Indonesia's cultural elements (Hendiawan & Barlian, 2021; Novak, 2018). This study's last inquiry assesses (RQ3) how the global music market can perceive Indonesian artists as *cool*, building on the notion of eclectic or omnivorous taste that Barna (2018) identified among people of higher social status. Understanding that elements of Western culture, including music, remain largely perceived as cool by worldwide audiences,

> *Hypothesis 5: Indonesian artists highly adapted to Western music production and marketing are perceived as 'cool' by others.*

To demonstrate whether being authentic to one's culture makes artists seem cool,

> *Hypothesis 6: Indonesian artists with native music style and persona are perceived as 'cool' by others.*

Methodology

Understanding the resonance of Indonesian artists' songs with Western audiences bridges the gap between familiarity with Western music and the expectation of authentic non-Western music, with the artists' image influencing audience considerations of diverse identities through Western media or organic social media trends. In this study, an experiment was conducted to evaluate artist concepts with different indicators and the relationships between a concept and each indicator (Bryman, 2016; Coleman, 2019; Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). While the experimental design is known to discover causation (Coleman, 2019), the correlations between artist concepts and the indicators are strengthened by analyzing the changes in perceiving the song separately from the artist's image on either global mass media or social media. Essentially, the experiment explored the intersection between Western influences and non-Western traits on Indonesian artists' songs—distributed and possibly produced by Western-based labels—and media representations of the artists' image in approaching authenticity on publications.

The evaluation started with the song by assessing its likable quality, measured using the five-star likeability rating by Lynn et al. (2016), followed by the artist's image on a particular media and ultimately, the overall coolness of the song and its artist. As for the perception of the artist's image on a particular media, the experiment utilized the firm-created and user-generated social media communication measures from Schivinski and Dabrowski (2014) on the U.S.-based Billboard Music and social media TikTok. This study primarily focuses on the perceived coolness from Warren and Campbell's (2014) 7-point scales of cool/uncool evaluation on the upcoming bands' autonomy, adjusted to a song and the artist separately for

audiences and other people according to them. As experimental research "involves the manipulation of one or more independent variables" (Rogers & Révész, 2020, p. 133), each existing song preview and the artist's image edited as if on Billboard Music or TikTok are the independent variables (Wimmer & Dominick, 2013). An overarching conceptual model of this experiment builds up to being perceived as cool as follows:
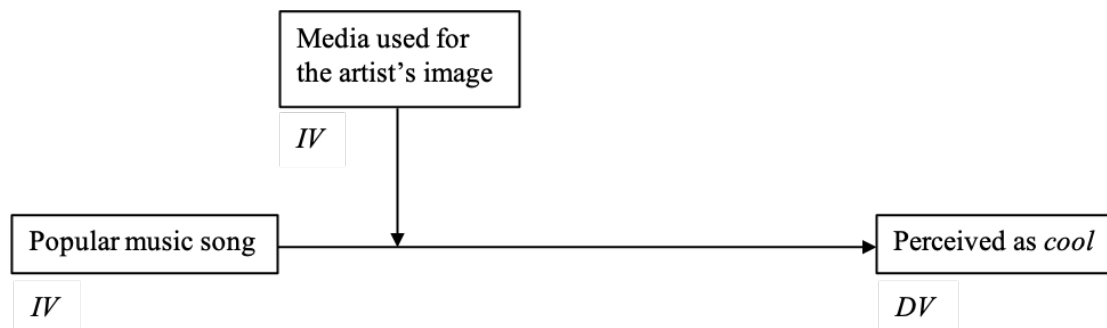
Figure 1. Overarching model of the methodology

Perceived coolness has been measured for its level in prior different context (Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012; Rahman, 2013; Sundar et al., 2014), and aligning with Warren and Campbell's (2014) study, this experiment focuses on the quality of perceived coolness for a music artist.

Sampling does not represent the entire population, as it was allocated to young adults aged 18-40 who grew up in the U.S. and U.K., as these are the Western audiences primarily targeted by the global music industry. In maintaining randomization to avoid homogenous social background, such as students with a particular educational level, the data collection used Prolific, an online platform known for academic research, especially experiments (McEwan, 2020; Peer et al., 2017). Randomizing 240 respondents to choose one of four quotas for one of two different songs and images assesses hypotheses more unbiasedly; hence, a factorial design (Abbuhl et al., 2013; Coleman, 2019) was applied for two independent variables—song and image—each in two levels. Samples were distributed into four quotas in **Table 2** to suffice respective treatment representations of one song and media that portrays an image of the artist.

$N_{Total}= 240$		**Popular music song**	
		Strong Western music influences	Appropriated native-sounding music
Media used for the artist's image	Featured on Billboard Music	*Western*Billboard: n= 60*	*Native*Billboard: n= 60*
	Viral on TikTok	*Western*TikTok: n= 60*	*Native*TikTok: n= 60*

Table 2. Sample distribution

Design

Each of the two factors, a song and its artist, has two levels—the strength of Western influences in both songs and the media of the artist's image, whether on Billboard Music or more organically viral on TikTok—hence, the '2 x 2 design' (Abbuhl et al., 2013, p. 121).

Respondents randomly chose one out of four cells, whether previewing a song with stronger Western influences and whether seeing the artist on Billboard Music, making the study a *between-subjects* 2 x 2 design that prevents experiencing both levels of each factor (Coleman, 2019). Half of the respondents previewed a 20-second chorus of a rap song in English, and other 120 respondents previewed a 25-second transition of an electronic dance music (EDM) song to *sinden*, a female Javanese singing in Indonesia's *gamelan* music. Respondents might have heard the songs, "Ming Ling" by Indonesian rapper Ramengvrl and "Lathi" by Indonesian EDM group Weird Genius, respectively distributed by U.S. record labels Empire Distribution (Spinelli, 2019) and Astralwerks (Ritchie, 2020). For the artist's "media", 120 respondents were shown a photoshoot of an Indonesian woman as if on Billboard Music, and the remaining respondents were shown a screenshot of the woman's TikTok video as if viral on the *For You* page with high likes, comments, and shares (Mak, 2020).

Using survey platform Qualtrics, assignments were created by replicating each question as tasks or assignments (Weber, 2021), taking advantage of Qualtrics' feature that enables the setting of a quota of 60 respondents assigned to each of the four cells. Respondents previewed one of the songs as they were asked about their perceived coolness of the song from 1= very not cool to 7= very cool, and on the following page, respondents were asked about their likeability of the song from 1= "I hate it" to 5= "I love it". In the following task, respondents were shown one of the pictures of the artist and asked their perceived coolness of the artist on either Billboard Music or TikTok, followed by four statements about the artist's image on the shown media with 7-point agreement/disagreement scales. To compare the perceived coolness between a song and its artist, both were shown altogether in the last section, followed by 7-point scales of perceived coolness for other people according to respondents. Essentially, respondents evaluated a song and its artist's media imagery like a Qualtrics survey on Prolific, the online research platform for data collection.

Results and Discussions

Data Analysis

This experiment study assigned a task with five main questions originally completed with 296 responses using Prolific from May 29 – 31, 2023, with 56 responses were excluded due to missing demographic information, resulting in 240 analyzed responses. The average age of respondents is μ= 29.54 with a standard deviation of σ= 6.37, indicating that 68% or two-thirds of respondents fall within the age range of 23.17 to 35.91 years old. Performing the Chi-square test, the p-value (0.302) of the difference between the U.S. and U.K. sample sizes is greater than a significance level of 0.05, implying no significant difference between the two sample sizes, despite the U.S. sample is 6.66% higher than the U.K. sample. Therefore, in "isolating the effect of personality" (Gutiérrez et al., 2005, p. 1568) among diverse respondents in the regression analysis, it is necessary to control for age, residence base, and gender constantly.

	Total N= 240	U.S. N= 128	U.K. N= 112
Age			
18-25	29.58 *71*	17.08 *41*	12.5 *30*
26-35	48.33 *116*	23.75 *57*	24.58 *59*
36-45	21.67 *52*	12.5 *30*	9.17 *22*
46-above	0.42 *1*	0 *0*	0.42 *1*
	100	53.33	46.67
Gender			
Female	50.42 *121*	24.58 *59*	25.83 *62*
Male	46.67 *112*	26.67 *64*	20 *48*
Non-binary	2.5 *6*	2.08 *5*	0.42 *1*
Rather not say	0.42 *1*	0 *0*	0.42 *1*
	100	53.33	46.67

Table 3. The demographics of 240 respondents

The strength of relationships between the three measures and each independent variable was tested, starting with the likeability among 'Song 1' (M= 3.03, SD= 0.907) for those previewed Ramengvrl's "Ming Ling" and 'Song 2' (M= 3.27, SD= 0.867) for those previewed Weird Genius' "Lathi", which is notably low. The four perceived media communication statements show a significant mean difference (p-value= 8.891e-05), where Billboard Music (M= 5.079, SD= 0.921) is higher than TikTok (M= 4.542, SD= 1.153). While the perceived coolness of 'Song 1' and 'Song 2', as well as Billboard Music and TikTok indicates insignificant mean differences, the perceived coolness of both song and media for other people according to respondents significantly differs from each concept. 'Concept 3', a combination of being exposed to 'Song 2' (M= 4.458, SD= 0.747) and the artist's image on Billboard Music (M= 4.917, SD= 0.892), has a higher mean (M= 5.183) and a significant difference from other concepts' means (p-value= 1.856123e-38). This analysis aligns with the perceived coolness of 'Song 2' and Billboard Music respectively with higher mean scores than 'Song 1' (M= 4.283, SD= 0.634) and TikTok (M= 4.425, SD= 0.893), indicating the need for regression analysis (see **Table 4**) to elaborate which artist concept works.

	Likeability	**Image**	**Coolness: song**	**Coolness: image**	**Coolness: for others**
Intercept	3.037 *** (0.167)	4.337 *** (0.195)	4.035 *** (0.275)	3.885 *** (0.25)	4.289 *** (0.242)
native	0.15 (0.173)	0.026 (0.202)	0.259 (0.285)	0.205 (0.259)	0.379 (0.25)
billboard	-0.131 (0.169)	0.517 ** (0.198)	-0.061 (0.279)	0.685 ** (0.254)	0.561 * (0.245)
native*billboard	0.167 (0.262)	-0.02 (0.307)	-0.174 (0.432)	-0.423 (0.393)	-0.261 (0.38)
Gender(Female)	0.096 (0.116)	0.224 (0.136)	0.253 (0.192)	0.363 * (0.174)	0.273 (0.168)
Age(18-25)	0.082 (0.128)	0.012 (0.15)	0.091 (0.212)	0.165 (0.192)	-0.16 (0.186)
Residence(U.S.)	-0.02 (0.132)	0.17 (0.155)	0.234 (0.218)	0.364 . (0.198)	0.17 (0.192)
R^2	0.025	0.078	0.017	0.069	0.057

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1
(): Std. error

Table 4. Artist concept(s) regression analysis

In testing the previewed songs and illustrated media for the artist's exposure, 'Concept 3' and 'Concept 4' are coded as a reference category for both concepts using 'Song 2' (*native*), meanwhile 'Concept 1' and 'Concept 3' are also a reference category for Billboard Music (*billboard*). Gender, age groups, and residence base are the independent variables considered covariates that account for potential influences on the relationship between *native* and *billboard* as the predictors and the five measures as the dependent variables (Menard, 2010; Schumacker, 2016). Identified as female, age 18-25, and the U.S. are also set as the reference category of each covariate, where the three are the base level in each category compared to the other levels (Menard, 2010), such as the U.K. in the residence base. Understanding how independent variables construct each dependent variable,

$$Y = \beta_0 + (\beta_1 * native) + (\beta_2 * billboard) + (\beta_3 * \text{gender female}) + (\beta_4 * \text{age 18-25}) +$$
$$(\beta_5 * \text{residence base in the U.S.}) + (\beta_6 * (native * billboard)) + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$

This data assesses the representation of each song and media illustrated for the artist's image, although none of these independent variables significantly affect the perceived coolness and likeability of the songs, even with *native*, as a song was the first treatment rated by respondents. Interestingly, *billboard* ($\beta = 0.685$, p-value= 0.007), gender ($\beta = 0.363$, p-value= 0.038), and residence base ($\beta = 0.364$, p-value= 0.067) have statistically significant positive effects on the perceived coolness rated for the illustrated media. *Billboard* has a significant positive effect on the perceived coolness of the artist ($\beta = 0.685$, p-value= 0.007), the media communication for the artist's image ($\beta = 0.517$, p-value= 0.01), and the perceived coolness for other people according to respondents ($\beta = 0.561$, p-value= 0.023). While the interaction between *native* and *billboard* lacks a statistically significant effect on the dependent

variables, *billboard* consistently shows significance on the three artist's image-related ratings, indicating that between song and image, the latter is viable in this setting.

The results above determine how each measure works in this study, starting with likeability, implying that the Indonesian artist's song, whether with more music elements from their native culture (H2) or themes related to the global pop culture (H1), cannot be justified as likable. Even when respondents rated the perceived coolness for song before the likeability rating, not only is 'Song 2' unable to be perceived as cool with a higher mean score than 'Song 1', but both songs are also not skewed to the *not cool* (scale 1-3). Consequently, H1 and H2 cannot suffice to prove whether a song strongly influenced by Western popular music or more hybrid with the artist's native culture is likable/unlikable. On the media illustrated for the artist's image, rating the four-statement leads to how Indonesian artists can be seen as accepted by respondents' perception of the media, which U.S. music media Billboard Music (H4) is perceived to be more effective than going viral on TikTok (H3). The two mean scores also significantly differ as the p-value is less than 0.001 level, which in other words, most 'Concept 1' and 'Concept 3' respondents perceived the artist's image more positively on Billboard Music. With H4 statistically supporting the artist of getting featured on the U.S. music media, the perceived coolness and media communication measures result in compatibility to the context of the artist's image on Billboard Music.

Evaluating the perceived coolness of other people according to respondents has more components due to the direct interaction between the two treatments, each treatment, and comparison to other perceived coolness measures, affirming its complexity as the ultimate measure. Based on the interaction between *billboard* and the non-*native* (reversed reference category) and *native* and the non-*billboard*, there is no significant effect on the dependent variable. This implies that whether adapting to Western music production and marketing well (H5) or having native music style and persona (H6), cannot be proven to be perceived as cool, despite 'Concept 3' combining traditional Indonesian music in 'Song 2' with Western marketing *via* Billboard Music. However, embracing Western marketing—using Billboard Music to illustrate the artist's image—has a significant positive effect on the perceived coolness rating for other people according to respondents, aligning with the perceived coolness of the artist's image on Billboard Music. This analysis concludes that, although H6 cannot be measured with the perceived coolness, H5 gives a partial opportunity for Indonesian artists to be perceived as cool by implementing Western-based marketing, such as getting featured on Billboard Music.

General Discussion

Being likable for particular segments' music taste is challenged by various context, such as individual *versus* public preferences (Russell, 1987), familiarity (Dai et al., 2022; Russell, 1987), which can be based on song similarities, play frequencies, or other relevancies, and many others. While liking music involves subjective personal introspection (Larsen et al., 2012; Shankar, 2000), music taste is mainly formed by cultural and social factors (Hird & North, 2021; Lonsdale, 2021; Persson, 2021), indicating that audiences can unintentionally compromise their honest likeability for an assumed collective consideration to evaluate the song neither good nor bad. Whether the Western-based respondents avoid cultural conflict from disliking the song, most respondents consistently rated 4 out of 7 for perceived coolness and 3 out of 5 ("It's OK") for likeability. This neutral state challenges familiarity, being irrelevant to whether both songs are likable or unlikable, which opposes to how previously unknown music is enjoyable to play back (Lepa et al., 2020) and the overplay of a song that

can satiate interest (Rolison & Edworthy, 2012). With no prevailing explanation for the insignificant liking towards a rap song with Asian context in global pop culture and an EDM pop song infused with traditional Indonesian music, Indonesian artists can be likable for other facets of popular music beyond their songs.

Perceiving an artist's image based on the media involves authenticity, with non-Western artists are often expected to embody the "happy native" image (Taylor, 1997, p. 19), although the market-resistant hybridity does not define being authentic for promoting domicile ties (Guldin, 2021). H4 has shown that the "highly regulated star image created by traditional media" (Click et al., 2013, p. 366) boosts Indonesian artists' global popularity *via* Billboard Music, while H3 has proven TikTok's insignificance despite its association with *authenticity* for music promotions (CD Baby, 2022). Most respondents rated 5 out of 7 for the artist's appearance on Billboard Music through four statements on how it is satisfying, meeting expectations, attractive, and better than going viral on TikTok, confirming the social media ineffective despite its more organic approach (Coulter, 2022). This state redefines our perception of media irrelevant to artist's authenticity, as selecting any media to deliver artists' authentic value is intentional for their brand identity (Gouitcheche, 2018), while confirming that media presence matters for popularity (Budzinski & Pannicke, 2022). Therefore, the non-Western Indonesian artists can enhance their popularity worldwide by cultivating their image through global mass/traditional media, aside from social media, that suits their personality in strategizing any ways to present their authentic selves.

While the U.S. and U.K. are the top two markets with the highest global music streaming revenues in 2021, especially the U.S. (43%) (IFPI, 2022), this study cannot rely on Westerners' perceived coolness based on how the elites view the 'subaltern voices' as *cool* (Barna, 2018, p. 257). This study does not capture social status from respondent demographics and non-Western popular music such as K-pop has become a global consumption (Jin & Yi, 2020; Yoon et al., 2020), parallel to *trigger-city* audiences boosting the popularity of emerging Western-based artists. However, perceived coolness approaches the intention-behavior gap in adopting apps (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2022) without purchase—hence the willingness to try (Cesareo & Pastore, 2014) that does not guarantee likings—and the similarity of the word 'cool' with "I like it" (Warren & Campbell, 2014). Most respondents exposed to the artist illustration on Billboard Music consistently rated 5 out of 7 for the perceived coolness for others according to respondents, reflecting the similarly high rating on the perceived coolness of the artist, especially for U.S.-based female respondents. Therefore, the Western (music) marketing is the only effective factor of H5, as Western media largely propagates things about non-Western music (Chou, 2020) and the global reach of Billboard Music makes it a kind of 'cosmopolitan cool' (Elkins, 2019, p. 380) for multicultural audiences. The significantly positive results on Billboard Music highlight the logic of Western media—rather than markets—that holds the power to cultivate audiences in multicultural countries and other nations influenced by its dominating values in the global flow.

The discussion concludes that artists' image is vital in popular music and established media becomes the vessel to deliver their popularity to global attention, hence the presence of hybridity through U.S.-based global media that uplifts Indonesian artists as seen as most Western artists. Cultural hybridity in the aspect of trans-media endeavors only amplifies Guldin (2021)'s 'market-receptive' approach that involves global media to attract mass markets, contrasting the state of selling out, which contributes to the loss of artists' non-ubiquitous image (Bridson et al., 2017). Being featured on U.S.-based global media, such as

Billboard Music, illustrates how artists from *trigger-city* countries, wherein this study is Indonesia, can gain interests from the main target of the publications to gradually attract broader markets beyond the artists' origin countries. While commercial products are often considered antithetical to authenticity (Anthony & Joshi, 2017) and lifestyle brands linked to independent music—including artists—obtain the 'cool' vibe (Hesmondhalgh & Meier, 2015), Indonesian artists should tap into global media coverages. Ultimately, this study re-establishes the non-Western Indonesian artists' image that does not need to be culturally authentic to develop popularity and perceived coolness, as global commercial or mass media would rather help achieve the desired level of publicity for most popular music artists.

Conclusion

Implications

This study adds to scholarly research on the *trigger cities* phenomenon after Tompkins et al. (2021)'s cross-national comparative experiment and artist concepts related to selling out as opposed to authenticity (Bridson et al., 2017), music for self-representation (Larsen et al., 2009), and self-management (Hughes et al., 2013). Popular music studies still need more non-Western context that challenges the state of cultural hybridity, as authenticity is not expected to determine marketability when artists' image on global media publications, such as Billboard Music, is perceived as cool. Indonesian artists, especially those distributed by multinational record labels and independent aggregators, can try strategize media marketing on global brands by partnering with U.S.-based publicity agencies or Asia Pacific publications to reach neighboring *trigger-city* markets. While any *trigger-city* artists can practice this approach and/or other global 'platforms' including social media, the key of this study is leveraging the culturally hybrid popular music with the influential Western framework without diminishing artists' native or local identities.

Further Research Directions

Future study designs should randomize samples to audiences in *trigger-city* countries and other Western countries for a more inclusive cross-cultural comparative analysis, evaluate other aspects of popular music besides song and media of the artist's image, and devise marketability-related measures beyond perceived coolness. Two alternatives for the song and media of the artist's image treatments are either adding song and media options or asking respondents their awareness of the previewed song and its artist and perceived authenticity before and after the exposure to the artist's media imagery. Overall, this research requires a different method to strengthen the perceived coolness scales and other reliable measures to reflect audiences' taste in their actual behavior when streaming and engaging with non-Western artists online. Therefore, a follow-up qualitative research (Morgan, 2013) with interviews will suffice the overarching conceptual model of Indonesian artist concept evaluation and interview results can improve each measure to mitigate respondents' avoidance towards culturally sensitive matters. The next study investigates popular music aspects to engage audiences in *trigger cities*, Western markets, and other regions, and how being culturally authentic and leveraging Western influences globalize artists.

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Laughter, Pregnancy, and Subjectivity: A Corporeal Feminist Interpretation of Ali Wong's Standup Comedy

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the standup comedian Ali Wong and her three Netflix specials, *Baby Cobra*, *Hard Knock Wife*, and *Don Wong*. Taking a corporeal feminist approach, this paper sets out to analyze pregnancy, the central topic in Wong's comedy, and its relation to her subjectivity. It is argued that pregnancy, as an authentic female experience alongside childbirth and breastfeeding, enables Wong to challenge and thereby subvert the prevalent narratives of motherhood and sexuality, articulating a female autonomous voice. From the disciplinary body in *Baby Cobra* to the misshapen body in *Hard Knock Wife* to the sexualized body in *Don Wong*, the three comedy specials both witness and reveal a gradual and subtle enhancement of her subjectivity. With this regard, pregnancy as a unique female experience does not deprive her sense of self but fuels it.

Keywords: Ali Wong, Standup Comedy, Feminist Humor, Pregnancy

Introduction

Standup comedy, a spoken and comic performance by a single individual that addresses the audience directly, won popularity rapidly in the late 1970s, "coincident with the emergence of cable television, particularly HBO" (Brodie, 2014, p.12). The academia was slow to recognize its value at first and it remained a "relatively undervalued genre" (Mintz, 1985, p.71) compared with comic literature and film comedy. In recent years, however, with the rise of streaming service platforms such as Netflix, standup comedy has expanded its access to many online viewers, transcending time and space. Standup comedians thereby become famous with the clips of their performances posted or reposted on social media. The scholarship on standup comedy has surged ever since.

Among many standup comedians, Ali Wong stands out as a high-profile comic, actress, and writer who has skyrocketed to fame with three standup comedy specials released on Netflix. An Asian American woman, a mother, and a breadwinner of her household, Ali Wong both perpetuates and breaks stereotypes of Asian women. Her Netflix standup specials, *Baby Cobra* (2016), *Hard Knock Wife* (2018), and *Don Wong* (2022), are primarily autobiographic and observational, recounting her marriage, pregnancy, childbearing, and breastfeeding experiences with raunchy characterization and vulgar diction. Notably, Ali Wong performs the previous two specials seven and a half months pregnant while bouncing around the stage energetically, which attracts and simultaneously worries the audience.

Scholars pay acute attention to Ali Wong's standup comedy both thematically and narratologically. Sharon Tran labels Wong's comedy as cringe humor, whereas Lockyer and Benedictis place it under the framework of pregnant standup comedy. By thematic analysis, they point out how Wong's works negotiate with and even disrupt the mainstream representation of femininity and motherhood. On the other hand, Wong's humor strategies or narrative techniques are scrutinized to evince that she "intentionally challenge[s] gendered cultural norms" (O'Keefe 46). Insightful and illuminating though they are, these studies might be too comprehensive to notice a recurring theme that threads Wong's three specials. What distinguishes Ali Wong from many other hilarious female comics—Chelsea Handler, Iliza Shlesinger, and Taylor Tomlinson—is that Wong always deals with the postpartum misshapen body and female genitalia unabashedly and unapologetically. Fraught with indecent and abject descriptions of excretions and childbirth, her Netflix specials present a female body that defies cultural expectations of proper femininity and repudiates the perfect image of women in neoliberal capitalism discourse.

This paper, therefore, focuses on Wong's jokes about the female body, especially the pregnant body, and deals with the three specials in chronological order. Taking a corporeal feminist view, this paper will disentangle the complex dynamic of pregnancy, sexuality, and subjectivity. Corporeal feminism rises coincidently with the "body turn" in many disciplines[1]. The female body is double obscured in Western metaphysics, which emphasizes mind over body and male over female, and the "body turn" places the female body front and center. For instance, Grosz, the corporeal feminist precursor scholar, theorizes the sexually differentiated specificity of bodies and analyzes philosophically the corporeality of the female body. Recognizing the corpus of feminist work that theorizes the female body, this paper engages with such practices that draw on the concrete specificities of bodies (Grosz, 1994). By textual

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[1] For example, Witz has discussed the corporeal turn in sociology, drawing extensively from Crossley, Falk, and Synott, among many other sociologists. The stress on corporeality fills out the absent, more-than-fleshy sociality of women traditionally repressed within sociological discourse.

analysis of Ali Wong's transcripts and investigation of reports on her professional success, this paper endeavors to argue that Wong weaponizes pregnancy as a bodily experience and a commercial label of her standup comedy to negotiate with the public discourse on pregnancy yet devoid of female voices and gain female subjectivity.

The Disciplined Body in *Baby Cobra*

Wong's first standup special *Baby Cobra* was released on Mother's Day in 2016, which garnered her a new fan base. As a pregnant woman in her third trimester on the stage, Wong alternated jokes about her previous dating experience with hipsters to trapping her Harvard Business School husband, deliriously filthy and funny jokes woven into a tacit feminist accusation of the double standard of parenting. She begins her comedy with aging anxiety, humorously highlights her marriage with her husband, and directs her cringe humor toward the disciplinary mechanisms of corporate culture on women. This paper interprets these parts as the grumble of a woman disciplined by conventional social norms in her workplace and in the marriage market.

To begin with, Wong expresses her aging anxiety as a thirty-three woman. She acknowledges her jealousy when encountering eighteen-year-old young girls "because of their metabolism… they could just eat like shit, and then they take a shit and have a six-pace, right?" Ageism, the discrimination or prejudice based on a person's age, disproportionately affects women in that they are expected to stay young and beautiful by society. Wong's anxiety stems from a variety of societal, medical, and cultural discourses that women could hardly get rid of. As women age, they lose societal value and visibility, career opportunities, and optimal time for pregnancy. Ali Wong got pregnant at 33, an age which is not technically high risk to bear children, but she could feel bodily changes. She also admits that she turns to hormone pills to regulate her progesterone levels and makes love to her husband according to a rigid schedule. Wong's experience as a thirtysomething woman who attempts to get pregnant reveals the permeation of medical discourse into her body, or in her own words, "it gets very clinical." When medical and scientific discourse dictates people's lives and serves as an important reference in the decision-making process, individuals live up to those standards to ensure controllable and desirable consequences. Therefore, bodies, female bodies in particular, are under scrutiny and discipline.

In addition to medical discourse, Wong also complains about the corporate culture that seeks to regulate the body to ridiculous extremes. She ironically glorifies the housewives who can afford leisure time on the toilet and do not have to rush to finish wiping their buttholes compared with other unfortunate women in the office. Even the toilet paper, labeled as "communist toilet paper," is designed to be ineffective for wiping the excrement in an effort to minimize the cost of company supplies. She remarks, "You can never finish wiping at work because you always feel rushed 'cause you're paranoid that your co-worker's gonna recognize your shoes underneath the stall. And you're like, 'Oh, no! Courtney's listening. She's waiting. She's timing me.'" The dramatic representation of people's mentality reflects how corporate culture pursues efficiency regardless of the physiological reactions of employees. Moreover, it discloses the embarrassment and humiliation employees might encounter at work—they are afraid of being recognized and timed by colleagues, which mitigates their authority among co-workers and substages their elegant white-collar workers' image. The toxic culture, combined with the notion that women should not behave unrulily, keeps haunting and bombarding women, disciplining them to withhold normal bodily changes.

Furthermore, Wong recounts her love story with her husband, who is also an Asian American but a graduate of Harvard Business School with a perceived promising future. She says fearlessly that she has deliberately trapped her husband because of his "earning potential", indicating that women internalize the rules of husband-hunting, permanently occupied with judging and evaluating. In order to marry him, Wong pretends to be virtuous and submissive, keeping the perfect body shape and a decent manner. She compares her body to "a secret body" that rejects promiscuous men, but in fact, it is a "public park". In order to show her chastity and proper femininity, she does not kiss him until the fifth date and packs his lunch every single day not out of a good heart but out of financial investment. After her husband gets used to it and proposes to her, Wong stops dieting and does not manage her body shape anymore. Through her description, Wong perpetuates the notion that heterosexual marriage is invariably a prerequisite for women to enjoy a better life. In this sense, women voluntarily objectify themselves and display the qualities of a docile housewife. Stuck in a system where marriage is regarded as a shortcut to early retirement, women also need to compete against each other scrupulously to secure a satisfied husband. Although she reverses this joke by discovering that the Harvard Business School graduate is $70,000 in debt, Wong still showcases that women are disciplined to make efforts to marry wealthily and are prone to prioritizing marriage over a career in most cases.

As Kate Millett (1971) contends in *Sexual Politics*, women, "as non-persons without legal standing, were permitted no actual economic existence as they could neither own nor earn in their own right" (p. 48), thus financially depending on men. Good-looking and submissive women are privileged in both the job market and the marriage market. It is further attributed to the patriarchal system that reduces women to one-dimensional characters and evaluates them on the metric of appearance. Consequently, women are inculcated with this idea of pleasing men and disciplined to perform femininity in their daily lives. John Berger (1990) has once observed that "men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at" (p. 41), perfectly illustrating how women are socially constructed to value their appearances. In *Baby Cobra*, Wong presents herself lightheartedly as a woman who falls victim to the standards our society imposes on women. Tripartite disciplinary mechanisms are identified in this comedy special, divulging that she, at this point in her life, has not been empowered to fight against the system and has not wielded her female autonomy.

The Misshapen Body in *Hard Knock Wife*

The second Netflix special *Hard Knock Wife* was again released on Mother's Day two years later, which delves deeper into pregnancy, parturition, and motherhood, as Wong has experienced childbirth and is now pregnant with her second baby. She boldly makes jokes about urinating, various sexual acts, and the dirtiest of all, childbirth. At first glance, the second special is nothing more revolutionary than the previous one, oscillating around topics like marriage and parenting. A closer examination suggests that one thing distinguishing *Hard Knock Wife* from *Baby Cobra* is her treatment of the postpartum body in a raunchy and profane way. This paper will analyze the parts that deal with pregnancy and breastfeeding experiences and claim that, in Wong's case, pregnancy precipitates a profound shift in her subjectivity. In other words, pregnancy enables Wong to challenge the discursive authority that tends to beautify motherhood.

Wong picturizes her stay-at-home life after giving birth to a baby girl. Far away from the dainty and tranquil life she had imagined for herself, pregnancy, birthing, and parenting

exhaust Wong and occupy her whole life. The suffering, hardships, and alienation pregnant women might undergo have almost been erased and substituted with "the atmosphere of approval" in a society that "narrows women's possibilities to motherhood" (Young, 1984, p.53). However, Wong rejects this narrative that circumscribes women into the aura of motherhood, deglamorizes it, and voices the authentic experience of it. In *Hard Knock Wife*, she elaborates on how brutal breastfeeding is, asserting that "breastfeeding is this savage ritual that just reminds you that your body is a cafeteria now", which breaks the stereotypical scene where a mother bonds physically and emotionally with the child through breastfeeding. The simile reminds readers of a market-driven relationship between the mother and the child, suggesting that motherly supply should not be taken for granted. By emphasizing the utility of "the most visible sign of a woman's femininity, the signal of her sexuality" (Young, 2005, p.78), Wong ruthlessly pricks the bubble that embodies sexual fantasy in the phallic culture.

Besides this, Wong narrates her visit to one of her best friends who has struggled for 72 hours for a natural delivery but ends up with an emergency C-section. Upon their meeting, Wong is surprised by the fact that the "grueling labor renders her friend's female genitalia unrecognizable" (Tran, 2022, p.628) which resembles "two hanging dicks side by side" in Wong's words, interpreted by Tran as Wong's "defying the sanctified image of motherhood" (Tran, 2022, p.628). Ali Wong becomes a detached observer in this case to dramatize her friend's suffering that epitomizes women's sacrifice in childbirth. When it comes to her own body, she mentions an encounter with other mothers who recommended stealing free diapers from the hospital. The diapers are for her postpartum pussy through which the baby's "house" exits. As a result, Wong has to walk around "with a top knot, giant diaper, nipples bleeding, like a defeated sumo wrestler." Her description presses us to consider the sharp contrast between a woman's real-life experience and the general accounts of pregnancy, the latter one replete with glory and approval. In this sense, Wong presents the authentically misshapen bodies destroyed by childbirth and breastfeeding that are usually shielded from public discourse because it does not conform to the gender expectations of proper femininity.

Additionally, the experience of pregnancy blurs the dichotomy constructed between nature and nurture, between body and mind, and between the intuition of a mother and knowledge acquired by learning. Wong has joined a mom's group in Los Angeles that aims to help new mothers out of confusion and potential trouble by imparting their experiences. She does so not out of interest or fun but an urgency to survival: "You just gotta hook up with a crew to survive," evincing the necessity of absorbing other mothers' experiences in raising children. Similarly, Wong relates to her insistence on mother milk instead of formula and the prentice manner of breastfeeding. She rejects the whitewashed and highly commercialized "local, organic, free-range, farm-to-mouth" slogan but states she chooses to breastfeed because it is free. The free feeding turns out to be not free "because you have to buy all of these pillows and pumps to support your breastfeeding, and then you might get a clogged duct… And then you have to call a lactation consultant." Wong's reversal of this joke manifests how consumerism penetrates women's lives, coaxing women into buying and listening to various instructions. Nonetheless, Wong ignores the disciplinary narratives and turns to her own intuition, a token of articulating her own ideas.

It is generally acknowledged that pregnancy does not belong to the woman herself, for she serves as a primary "container" or is treated as a clinical "observable process coming under scientific scrutiny" or seen as a temporary "condition" (Young, 1984, p.45). Discourses on pregnancy and motherhood often surround medical science and deprioritize the experience of women. Bartlett (2002) notices this authority shift when she probes into breastfeeding in the

context of the professionalized sector of experts and attributes it to "the masculinization and institutionalization of midwifery" (p.376). The expulsion of women in delivery practice can be traced back to the 16th century when the witch-hunting movement was on the rise[2]. Gradually, women have been deprived of the authority and control over pregnancy and childbirth. Women seldom participate in the production of narratives that document their experience except for rare occasions where autobiographies and diaries are permittable.

Cixous (1976) made a manifesto in "The Laugh of the Medusa" to appeal to women's writing: "Women must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing" (p.875). She regards women's writing about women as "the invention of a new insurgent writing" (p.880), which helps women return to their bodies and seize the occasion to speak. Inarguably, Ali Wong's comic performance belongs to women's writing, in which women's bodies are heard. By poking fun at the anguished but obscure experience of women, Wong successfully challenges female representation in public discourse and articulates her own version of childbirth and breastfeeding. Compared with the disciplined body presented in *Baby Cobra,* though battered and misshapen, the postpartum body in *Hard Knock Wife* showcases Wong's efforts to strive for discursive power and control over her life. In this light, this section concludes that through the experience of pregnancy, Wong dismisses the tripartite disciplinary mechanisms mentioned previously and starts to embrace her subjectivity.

The Sexualized Body in *Don Wong*

The third comic special *Don Wong* keeps with Ali Wong's usual raunchy style. It features her life changes brought by her meteoric rise to stardom and continues to discuss the double standard between men and women. Her rise in social status and professional fame, however, renders *Don Wong* a comic performance overtly political, audacious, and even devilish. She takes a step further to address one overarching idea—she intends to cheat her husband and seek extramarital affairs. The explicit expression of sexuality perpetuates the stereotype that Asian American women are sexually active, but juxtaposed with her identity as a mother, it also elicits a cringe. This section will focus on her choice of obscene and taboo topics, such as infidelity and sexual pleasure, and demonstrate that her jokes not only criticize the separation of motherhood and sexuality but also shed light on the intersectional dynamic of gender and class. Many critics (Jones, 2022; VanArendonk, 2022; Wong, 2002) would agree that Wong has arrived at the peak of her career with this special, and this paper considers it as validating her female subjectivity as well.

Western metaphysics is established through oppositional categorizations, and by no means could women escape the yoke of being located in a dichotomy. The dichotomy of motherhood and sexuality mirrors other binary oppositions like good/evil and pure/impure. Young clearly explains that mother love is "entirely defleshed, spiritual" (2005, p.86), whereas fleshy eroticism is despicable and bad. A mother should be self-sacrificing and purge sexual desire that can be dangerously tempting. Therefore, the separation of motherhood and sexuality ensures that the mother is constantly giving unconditionally instead of wanting or desiring. Ali Wong seems to overlook the rigid confinement and presents herself as a hypersexual mother. She has performed oral sex, imitated male masturbating, and showed women faking orgasms on the stage. She declaratively exclaims that she wants to cheat on

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[2] This idea is indebted to the book *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* by Silvia Federici. She illuminates that the fact that women were prosecuted and executed for infanticide in 16th and 17th-century Europe led to the marginalization of midwives, causing women to lose control over procreation.

her husband and fuck other men. In *Hard Knock Wife*, Wong even fantasizes about a male mammy who is young, sexy, and caring, and in *Don Wong*, she warns her fans not to be disappointed if "the TMZ video of [her] face getting fire-hosed by Michael B. Jordan" would be disseminated. As Young concludes that "one of the subversive things feminism can do is affirm this undecidability of motherhood and sexuality" (2005, p.88), Wong's self-affirmation of sexuality subverts the misogynist dichotomy that regulates women's sexuality, embodying different facets of "mothers."

In *Hard Knock Wife,* Wong ironically responds to the question of what her husband thinks of her scatological jokes on stage by saying that she is fearless because the mortgage and the baby have handcuffed them together. The same logic applies here: she is even more fearless, talking about cheating on her husband not only because they are bonded together but also because Ali Wong turns out to be the breadwinner of the household. The underlying principle seems to be that those who earn more talk louder in a family. Normally, men are expected to be breadwinners and dominate the decision-making process. With the gender role reversal in Wong's family, she now enjoys the right to take control of everything and is able to boss around.

As is exemplified in *Don Wong*, Wong starts to unveil the truth, which is seldom articulated and promulgated in our society. One important declaration she makes in *Don Wong* is "no more faking orgasms", bringing to light the thorny question of equal pleasure. Wong illustrates the differences in sexual pleasure perceived by different sexes: "Very difficult to make a woman, especially a new woman, cum … There [are] too many factors … The lighting, the temperature, the news. You can't be all up in your head about the global supply chain being backed up." Yet women would rather pretend to be enjoying themselves than offend men by exposing the truth. Wong's performance elucidates the power imbalance between men and women and the male control over sexual discourse. Women tend to prioritize men's feelings over their own, protecting men's self-esteem. When she achieves financial independence, Wong is asked again how she manages not to make her husband "feel smaller". The typical attitude confirms the stereotypical subjugation of women. However, Wong chooses to smash the myth of masculinity instead of perpetuating it by calling out the truth, the testimony that millions of women would give—men do not fulfill a sexually satisfying job.

The power imbalance in terms of careers also looms large in Wong's comic special. She compares "fan pussy" (female fanbase) with "fan dick" (male fanbase) and condemns that men receive too many tangible benefits with too little achievement. In other words, men can reap obscene rewards from their fanbase, which reflects the rampant occupational sexism in our society. Alongside the disparity in the quality of the fanbase, Wong admits that women are normally underpaid in the job market and make much more effort to accomplish work. She has been too busy with work to go to the toilet and has to go to the hospital to check her body. By contrast, her husband is relieved from the "pressure to provide" and can sit on the toilet serenely to avoid "family responsibilities". Wong's narrative effectively discloses the hardship of the mother who struggles in the workplace and their efforts to balance family and career, thus censuring men for reaping more than they sow.

In *Don Wong*, Ali Wong emanates a powerful air that grounds her ability to speak. The rise in career path bestows her more opportunities to observe the structural problems and call out the injustice. She boldly deals with taboo topics and debunks the glorification of masculinity. The previous two comic specials which concentrate on her pregnancy have stabilized her

reputation in the field of standup comedy and paved the way for her expansion to movie-filming in the entertainment industry. Symbolically, the third one witnesses another change in Wong's autonomy and subjectivity: Wong presents a disciplined body in *Baby Cobra*, subject to various discourses; with real-life experience in pregnancy and child-rearing, Wong discovers a misshapen body that has been shunned in mainstream narrative and unmasks the postpartum body in *Hard Knock Wife*; and in *Don Wong*, building on the commercial success, Wong sexualizes her body and in this way is capable of addressing more questions that have been plaguing women in general. With each comic special being released, the female body changes, and her subjectivity is enhanced. Pregnancy does not split or alienate her from her body but enables her to gain autonomy both monetarily and spiritually.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has discussed Ali Wong's three Netflix specials from the perspective of corporeal feminism. Given that pregnancy is the recurring theme that threads Wong's comic performances, this paper deems the three Netflix specials as her autobiography-like documents that depict her life in three stages: *Baby Cobra* as pre-pregnancy, *Hard Knock Wife* as pregnancy, and *Don Wong* as post-pregnancy. With this regard, three bodies are identified in respective specials, and Wong's autonomous awareness is proven to be strengthened. In *Baby Cobra*, Wong experiences aging anxiety and body dissatisfaction, presenting a disciplined body suffocated by tripartite mechanisms permeating her private life and the workplace. She has unconsciously internalized the disciplinary discourses and surrenders to them. As she experiences more, from pregnancy to childbirth to breastfeeding, Wong realizes the gulf between the mainstream celebrated narratives about motherhood and her authentic experiences. In *Hard Knock Wife*, therefore, Wong subverts the former by presenting a misshapen body that bears C-section scars and is merely reduced to the baby's cafeteria. It shall be seen as her effort to negotiate the unrealistic representation of motherhood in the public sphere thanks to her pregnancy-related experiences. Ultimately, in *Don Wong*, the special filmed after Wong obtained a flourishing career, Wong addresses her sexuality and harshly reproaches double standards and gender inequality on a wider scale. She sexualizes her body and demands equal pleasure besides equal pay. It is entirely safe to argue that pregnancy as a thematic content in her comedy and as an authentic experience of her own enables Wong to achieve an autonomous life free from any disciplinary discourses and symbolically helps her to gain female subjectivity. This paper shall conclude by quoting Cixous again: "In body. –More so than men who are coaxed toward social success, toward sublimation, women are body. More body, hence more writing" (p.886). Such is the manifesto that more body, more writing, more writing, more voice, more voice, more discursive authority.

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Unveiling the Invisible Cocoon:
Learning Experiences of Chinese International Students in a UK University

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Abstract

This research explored the impact of Chinese international students' cultural values on their study in the UK. It was designed to reveal patterns in the challenges and experiences encountered by Chinese international students as they adapted to the English-speaking academic environment in the UK over time; and look into the relationships between these experiences and their Chinese cultural values. This longitudinal study was an academic-year-long investigation of academic experiences of Chinese international students studying postgraduate taught programs across three different Schools in a UK university, from January 2022 to August 2022. Both qualitative and quantitative researches were conducted during two data collection periods, including two rounds of semi-structured questionnaires with Likert scales and open-ended questions; and in-depth semi-structured interviews of selected survey participants. The findings highlighted distinctive features of the academic experiences of Chinese international students in the UK. Discussions and analyses revealed the influence of Chinese cultural values on their thinking processes and group dynamics. These influences, often unnoticed by both UK educators and Chinese students, were described as an "invisible cocoon," leading to mutual misunderstandings. The research aimed to raise awareness among both international students and their educators to enhance the overall quality of teaching and learning experiences in the UK.

Keywords: Cultural Values, International Students, Academic Experiences in the UK

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Purpose

I was initially interested to find out how Chinese international students' cultural value could impact their study in the UK, especially when they used English as a tool to learn in higher education institutions. Therefore, this longitudinal research was designed with a dual purpose. Firstly, it aimed to reveal how Chinese international students' study experiences changed as they adapted to the English-speaking academic environment in the UK. Secondly, through this exploration of transformation, I identified patterns in the challenges and experiences encountered by Chinese international students over time, while also looking into the relationships between these experiences and their Chinese cultural values.

1.2 Research Methodology

For this research, I employed purposive sampling to select Chinese international students enrolled in a full-time postgraduate taught program across three distinct schools: Social Sciences, Architecture, and Journalism and Media, all within a particular university in the UK.

Both qualitative and quantitative research were conducted during two data collection periods: first, after three months of the international students' arrival in the UK and following nine months of their study in the UK. To gather quantitative data, semi-structured questionnaires with Likert scales and open-ended questions were employed. Furthermore, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with select survey participants at both data collection periods, maintaining consistency within the sample groups.

In total, 81 valid questionnaires were collected at Time 1, while 45 were gathered at Time 2. During Time 1, 14 interviews were conducted, each lasting a minimum of 45 minutes. In Time 2, another 13 follow-up interviews were carried out, with durations ranging from 15 to 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and subsequently transcribed for detailed analysis. Ethical considerations played a crucial role in this research, and to ensure compliance with data protection policies, the identities of all questionnaire and interview participants were protected for anonymity, and their responses were treated with utmost confidentiality.

The quantitative data obtained from the survey underwent descriptive analysis and bivariate analysis. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews was coded, and a constant comparative analysis method was employed to discern the patterns within the participants' experiences. Codes were compared within a single interview, between interview participants within the same School and from different Schools, to develop categories. The last comparison step was to compare codes and categories formed from data collected at two different data collection periods.

2. Research Findings: The Challenges and Experiences of Chinese International Students in the UK During the Academic Year of 2021–2022

In line with the research questions, this mixed-method longitudinal study compiled and analysed research findings to reflect the experiences of Chinese students. The results are presented across several sections, covering overall experiences, the most challenging learning

activities, a comparison of online and offline study experiences, a comparison between group and independent study experiences, and finally, the relationship between educators and students.

2.1 The Most Difficult Learning Activities

2.1.1 Reading as the Most Difficult Learning Activity

Differing from the previously published literature that emphasised the challenges Chinese students faced in English communication and academic writing when studying in UK universities, my research findings revealed that the foremost challenge was related to reading, specifically concerning the comprehension of academic papers and academic referencing in English. Notably, this struggle with reading did not appear to be directly tied to their English proficiency, suggesting that other factors may contribute to this difficulty.

Based on the results of the longitudinal surveys, it was evident that reading and academic referencing remained the most challenging aspects of learning for Chinese international students throughout their study in the UK.

In addition, the qualitative data revealed significant challenges related to academic referencing. Some participants viewed referencing as a redundant and inflexible practice. It became evident that the lack of understanding among Chinese international students about the necessity of references led them to perceive it as an unnecessary and burdensome requirement, inhibiting their creativity.

Also, it was noteworthy that participants with previous academic experience in the UK found it considerably easier to comprehend academic materials in English compared to their counterparts. This finding suggested that the challenges in reading and academic referencing for Chinese international students were not primarily related to limited language skills (Poyrazli, 2003), as indicated by previous researchers. As some interview participants pointed out, they still struggled to understand the material even if it was translated into Chinese.

2.1.2 Challenges in English Academic Writing

Another finding of this research was that the challenges associated with English academic writing for Chinese international students extended beyond mere clear and precise expression in English; they also encompassed understanding assignment requirements and application of academic thinking when composing essays.

The survey results revealed that Chinese international students regarded academic writing in English as the second most challenging learning activity during their studies in the UK, with the level of difficulty being influenced by their language proficiency. During their initial three months of studying in the UK, writing academic essays in English posed the biggest challenge, with over 30% of interview participants expressing difficulties in articulating their ideas clearly and precisely in their English academic writing. They faced issues related to sentence structure and vocabulary usage for conveying thoughts effectively in English.

a) Lack of Academic Reasoning and Critical Thinking in Writing

The findings from this longitudinal study also revealed that, in the context of academic writing in English, Chinese students underwent a noteworthy shift over time. They gradually transitioned from concentrating on the mechanics of expression to giving more consideration to the thought process and content inclusion in their writing. After nine months of immersion in the UK, writing academic essays no longer posed the most formidable challenge for the participants. This shift in focus suggested that as participants refined their English writing skills, they encountered more pronounced obstacles related to critical analysis and analytical reasoning in their academic writing.

b) Difficulties in Comprehending the Questions and Requirements of Writing Tasks

The quantitative findings obtained from the questionnaires not only highlighted the challenges participants faced in writing assignments in English but also revealed their difficulties in comprehending the questions and requirements of their writing tasks. Moreover, participants of the research unanimously expressed their struggles in understanding the English feedback provided by markers on their written work.

First, the results pointed out that Chinese international students encountered challenges not only in grasping the vocabulary and literal meaning of the assignment questions in English. Interview participants revealed that some topics contained cultural and social nuances that were difficult for them to grasp.

Furthermore, throughout their study in the UK, participants admitted that it was challenging for them to have a clear understanding of the expectations for their assignments and dissertations, or what a high-mark essay should entail. One of the interview participants who had failed her modules attributed her academic struggles primarily to a lack of understanding of the academic expectations.

Data collected from the surveys also indicated that within the first three months, most participants felt their papers were undermarked, which was not affected by their majors. Some participants struggled to understand their tutor's feedback, thinking they had expressed ideas clearly, yet received feedback that it was "not clear enough."

2.2 Comparison Between Online and Offline Learning

Among all the learning activities experienced by Chinese international students, online lectures ranked as the third most challenging aspect after reading and writing in English, throughout their 12 months of study in the UK. The primary difficulty they encountered was disrupting the lecturer to raise questions during online lectures. It was noteworthy that, regardless of English proficiency or previous experience studying in the UK, they perceived the same level of difficulty in interrupting to ask questions in English during online lectures.

However, after nine months of immersed study, Chinese international students showed improvement in their skills and ability to understand online lectures, with the most significant progress observed in online courses compared to academic writing and reading in English.

Additionally, I also noticed that when participants compared offline and online lectures, some advantages and disadvantages of the virtual classroom were mentioned, and both were linked

to the apprehension of revealing their low English proficiency, causing embarrassment. Also, one participant admitted her discomfort with online communication, preferring offline interactions due to a fear that tutors and lecturers might dislike her during online communications. In this context, it could be inferred that the Chinese international students' specific preferences for certain learning and teaching methods were not solely influenced by their English proficiency or previous study experience but rather by their cultural values.

2.3 Comparison Between Group Learning and Independent Study

Another fascinating discovery in this longitudinal research pertained to the inclination of Chinese students towards group study versus independent learning during their study in the UK. Apart from exploring Chinese students' preference for teacher assistance, this research also discovered their tendency to refrain from active participation in class due to a lack of understanding of non-Chinese students' perspectives and ideas.

For one thing, in the initial three months, Chinese students gravitated towards group learning and encountered fewer difficulties when working collaboratively. Most participants favoured group work for the benefits and support it offered. However, after six months, some participants expressed a growing comfort with independent learning. The primary reason for Chinese students preferring individual work was the challenge of reaching a consensus and aligning opinions.

Meanwhile, notably, the research finding also highlighted that language ability did contribute to a preference for collaborating with fellow Chinese classmates over classmates from other nations. Additionally, this research discovered that cultural values played an even more significant role in shaping this preference.

a) Language Barriers Hindered Effective Collaboration and Caused Isolation

Research findings of this research also indicated that over 60% of interview participants expressed a preference for collaborating with fellow Chinese classmates, attributing this choice primarily to language barriers with non-Chinese peers. This difficulty impeded their participation in group work and discussions with peers from different countries, and gradually contributed to a sense of isolation among the Chinese students.

During the initial interviews, nearly half of the participants acknowledged that communication difficulties arising from language barriers hindered effective collaboration with local British students. In the second interview, some participants reported increased confidence in collaborating on group projects with non-Chinese peers. However, others observed a widening gap between Chinese students and peers from other nationalities, primarily due to language proficiency, resulting in a sense of separation. Concerns were raised about non-Chinese students' more active participation in group discussions with English-speaking lectures, along with the restriction of opportunities for progress and development for Chinese counterparts as non-Chinese group members frequently assuming leadership roles due to their advanced language skills.

Another illustrative finding of the language gap between Chinese students and their non-Chinese peers was that over half of the participants noted a noticeable disparity when making presentations in English. They highlighted a clear gap between themselves and their

non-Chinese counterparts, attributing this difference to language proficiency and acknowledging that English was a second language for Chinese students.

b) Compromise for Group Success

As previously mentioned, some participants conveyed a reluctance to engage in group learning, attributing it to challenges in reaching a consensus and aligning opinions. Another significant factor influencing the preference of Chinese international students to work with their fellow Chinese peers was their readiness to compromise during group work. Overall, participants perceived their non-Chinese peers as more independent, indicating a diminished inclination to compromise in group work.

Interview participants disclosed that, although their British peers could bring diverse perspectives to group projects and discussions, they still preferred working with Chinese peers. This preference was not only due to the ease of communication but also because Chinese peers were more willing to compromise for overall achievement during group work. Participants shared experiences where Chinese group members actively contributed to achieving group success and engaged in close collaboration with each other. For example, they collaborated closely to complete projects, motivated other group members to maintain the group pace, and formed groups based on personal relationships.

c) The Role of the Spokesperson in Group

Another interesting discovery in the context of Chinese students engaging in group learning was their tendency to designate a "spokesperson," typically someone with stronger English skills, rather than those with better academic skills, to represent the group when communicating with group members from other nations or working on assignments. For instance, during group discussions, Chinese students would select a peer with better language skills to articulate the group's thoughts to members from other nations. Some participants explained that this practice arose from a lack of confidence in their own English language abilities and a desire to avoid exposing their shortcomings in front of other group members, especially those from China.

2.4 The Distinct Teacher-Student Relationship

The results of this longitudinal study also confirmed that, throughout their studies in the UK, Chinese international students preferred receiving clear guidance and feedback from tutors and lecturers, including explicit "right or wrong" feedback. Furthermore, they expressed surprise at the equitable and unbiased communication with tutors and lecturers in the UK.

a) Lack of Clear Instruction and "Right or Wrong" Feedback

Without clear course guidance and assessment instructions, interview participants found it challenging to grasp the focal points of the lectures. They indicated that lectures tended to overwhelm students with excessive information and inspiration, lacking clear instructional guidance and substantial knowledge points during the sessions.

At the same time, some participants expressed dissatisfaction and confusion when they did not receive detailed and explicitly "right or wrong" feedback from their tutors and supervisors. For example, a participant lamented that her dissertation supervisor did not provide explicit

feedback to determine the correctness of her work. Additionally, some participants studying Architecture faced confusion due to differing feedback and suggestions from various tutors for their design projects.

b) Equality in Communication With Lecturers and Tutors

On the other hand, in contrast to the hierarchical teacher-student relationship prevalent in China, almost all the interview participants stressed equality in their communication with lecturers and tutors in the UK. They described it as akin to "talking with friends" and devoid of any sense of distance or pressure. Several participants expressed feeling comfortable engaging directly with their lecturers and tutors during tutorials, highlighting the absence of reservations or concerns during these interactions.

Additionally, a few participants noted that lecturers and tutors in the UK tended to deliver feedback in a more impartial manner, devoid of personal emotions. For instance, they would not consider students' personal attitudes when providing feedback, a departure from the approach taken by teachers in China.

3. Analysing Research Findings: Unveiling "The Invisible Cocoon"

Based on the identified patterns in the experiences of Chinese international students in the UK, I further categorised their experiences into three groups according to the nature of each statement: *English language application*, *Understanding academic reasoning*, and their *Role in the group*. This classification helped to offer valuable insights into the cultural factors influencing their UK study experiences.

English language application	• **Slow reading speed** • **Use English to express clearly and precisely** • **Feel non-Chinese peers more skilled in presentations**
Understanding academic reasoning	• **Critical thinking and analytical reasoning:** **Experience confusion in academic writing (thinking)** **Lack clear/explicit instructions** **Understand English literature** • **Evidence-based academic research:** **Experience confusion in academic writing (elements and assessment requirements)** **Academic referencing**
Role in the group	• **Equitable and unbiased communication with tutors and lecturers** • **Compromise for group success** • **Expose weakness in public**

Figure 1: Nature of the challenges/different experiences during Chinese international students' study in the UK

As listed in above Figure 1, the first category, *English language application*, included challenges tied to language proficiency such as slow reading in English literature and struggles in effective expression, and a gap in English presentation skills compared to their non-Chinese peers was attributed to lower proficiency, as noted by the participants. The second category, *Understanding academic reasoning*, had two main sections. The first involved challenges with critical thinking and analytical reasoning, confusing academic writing and difficulties in grasping logic when reading English literature. This subsection also included the preference for clear instructions, indicating a lack of confidence in independent thinking. The second section focused on struggles with evidence-based research, particularly in academic referencing for meeting assessment criteria. The third category, *Role in the group*, highlighted challenges in personal positions within group settings, including communication with lecturers, tutors, group members, and the entire class. This aspect led to surprises in equitable communication, compromises for group success, and a fear of exposing weaknesses in public.

I referred to the impact of Chinese cultural values on Chinese international students' study in the UK as "the invisible cocoon," a concept often overlooked by educators in the UK and the students themselves. The following sections conclude and analyse the presence of this "cocoon" in their learning process, divided into two parts for discussion: the ways of thinking and the position within groups during learning activities.

3.1 Impact of Cultural Values On Thinking Processes During Learning Activities

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of cognitive development, individuals, to foster advanced cognitive abilities, are equipped with tools of intellectual adaptation nurtured from their own culture. Therefore, different cultural values lead to distinct thinking patterns for Chinese international students compared to students nurtured under Western cultural values.

3.1.1 Analytical Thinking Versus Synthetic Thinking

Based on this longitudinal study, Chinese students did not exhibit strong analytical thinking habits in educational settings. Instead, they demonstrated synthetic thinking skills nurtured by Chinese cultural values, leading to the fact that they did not fully comprehend the concept of evidence-based research and the analytical reasoning behind it.

The Chinese education system emphasises trust in the unquestionable authority of teachers rather than encouraging truth-seeking endeavours for students from a young age. Consequently, the Chinese international students, influenced by these cultural values, were equipped with different tools of intellectual adaptation compared to those in the UK. They tended to adopt a synthetic thinking approach, particularly in educational settings, preferring to collect and combine different ideas into a more complex whole, rather than breaking down information and examining each component. However, in British educational settings, where students are equipped with tools of intellectual adaptation to pursue truth and explore curiosity, enabling them to develop analytical thinking since childhood. This difference posed challenges for the Chinese students studying in the UK, as it demanded a certain level of understanding in evidence-based research (a process to obtain truth and knowledge from empirical evidence) and application of analytical thinking (the ability to demonstrate truth and step by step from the evidence gathered) in academic assessments.

3.1.2 Lack of Critical Thinking

As discussed earlier, influenced by hierarchical values, Chinese students tend to establish an unequal relationship with their MKOs (More Knowledge Others), viewing them as unquestionable authorities. Additionally, Chinese cultural values, which prioritize virtues over the pursuit of knowledge, also place teachers in authoritative roles within education settings. This authoritative stance guides students' thoughts and behaviour, emphasizing obedience over collaborative knowledge-seeking efforts. Consequently, for the Chinese international students, the tools of intellectual adaptation they received from Chinese culture hindered the cultivation of critical thinking in their learning process.

Compared to China, egalitarian societies like the UK encourage individuals to explore their ideas, recognizing each other as moral equals and fostering a pursuit of individual interest (Hofstede, 1991; Schwartz, 2006). Therefore, in such cultural context, British students are provided with tools of intellectual adaptation that promote critical thinking because they are encouraged to challenge these MKOs as they grow up.

Therefore, when Chinese students came to study in UK universities, where advanced cognitive abilities, especially critical thinking, were cultivated and expected at a higher level, they faced challenges in meeting these academic expectations. The primary difficulty was integrating critical thinking into their academic writing. Due to their previous study experiences, they were nurtured to perceive MKOs as unquestionable authorities, making it challenging for them to employ critical thinking skills in their cognitive processes, not to mention incorporate this approach into their academic writing.

3.1.3 Lack of Independent Thinking

Influenced by hierarchical cultural values, these students shape their learning skills predominantly through strong scaffolding with MKOs, primarily teachers, rather than fostering intersubjectivity. Consequently, during their learning within the ZPD, there is a gradual erosion of their ability to think independently. This process is illustrated vividly in Figure 2: Due to the unequal teacher-student relationship in China, knowledge is primarily transmitted through scaffolding. The hierarchical cultural value in China allows limited space for intersubjectivity, which allows both teachers and students to stand at the same level and generate knowledge through equal communication and discussion, gradually hindering the development of independent thinking in Chinese students. Compared to China, Western cultural values enable students to stand on an equal level with their MKOs, fostering learning within the ZPD through both scaffolding and intersubjectivity, thereby promoting the development of independent thinking in students.
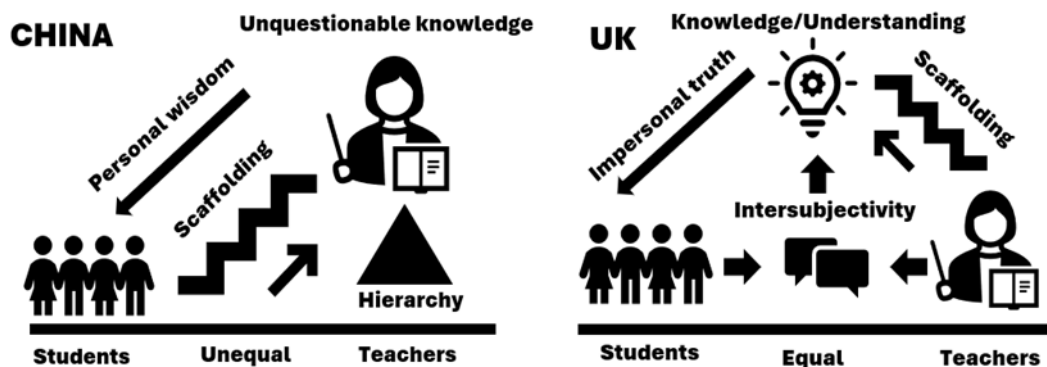
Figure 2: Learning process within the ZPD in educational settings in China and the UK

In addition, growing up in a culture emphasizing hierarchical values and fulfilling obligations, Chinese students prioritized fulfilling expectations from higher positions (teachers in this case). They perceived feedback more as a directive than guidance, impeding the cultivation of independent learning.

Another research finding indirectly demonstrated that Chinese students lacked independent learning skills, as they tended to prefer group learning over individual study upon their initial arrival to study abroad.

3.1.4 Lack of Reflective Thinking

The final thinking pattern potentially lacking among Chinese students was reflective thinking during their learning process. Previous studies note that Chinese students often lack training in reflective thinking and independent interpretation, a consequence of their prior experiences with rote learning in China (Turner, 2006). I attributed this deficiency in reflective thinking skills to their synthetic thinking pattern in learning and their tendency to prioritize outcomes over the learning process. Reflective thinking demands critical analysis and evaluation of one's thoughts, which is a challenging cognitive process for individuals with a synthetic thinking pattern. Consequently, in this research, the impact of Chinese values on their thinking patterns during academic experiences in the UK became "invisible." For example, one participant, who failed a design module due to a lack of references in a research project stating literature as the methodology, consistently believed her failure stemmed from a lack of logical reasoning rather than understanding the process to obtain empirical evidence.

3.2 Impact of Cultural Values on Individual's Position Within Groups in Educational Settings

The third category of Chinese students' experiences was titled *Role in the Group* because the statements under this category were indeed all related to Chinese students' positioning in group work during their studies in the UK and were less related to their academic and English language proficiency.

As Schwartz (2012) defines culture as an external force on each individual, shaped by their position in society, with cultural values characterizing groups and elucidating the motivational foundations of attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, the positioning of Chinese

students in groups during their studies in the UK was primarily influenced by their cultural values, particularly the hierarchical and collective cultural values.

3.2.1 Position Within Group Learning Activities

Based on the research findings, Chinese students, influenced by their collectivist cultural values, demonstrated two distinct phenomena in their engagement within group learning activities in UK universities: Firstly, they exhibited a preference for group learning with fellow Chinese classmates, prioritizing the success of the group over individual achievements. Secondly, there was a noticeable apprehension about revealing weaknesses in front of fellow peers.

Influenced by hierarchical cultural values, Chinese students initially lacked independent thinking skills when studying in the UK, leading to a preference for group learning. The collective cultural values in China, which view individuals as part of a collective framework (Schwartz, 1994), further contributed to this preference by emphasizing skills for group membership (Hofstede, 1991). Compared to China, British values prioritize individualism, reflecting in the educational approaches of the two countries, with the UK emphasizing individual problem-solving skills and adaptability, while China focuses more on fostering group cohesion and conformity. Individuals from collectivist societies prioritize in-group interdependence and goals, while those from individualist societies, like the UK, lean towards independence and individual goals (Hofstede, 1991). Moreover, as indicated by Lockett (1988) and Shi (2000), the Chinese cultural perspective on success leans towards a group orientation, valuing success as a collective endeavour rather than an individual accomplishment.

Hence, upon their initial arrival in the UK for study, due to the language and cultural difference, Chinese students tended to form groups with fellow Chinese classmates over students from other nations, seeking expected assistance and preferential treatment within the group. This inclination was not only due to smoother communication within the group but also from the greater willingness of Chinese peers to compromise for overall achievement compared to their non-Chinese counterparts. According to the research findings, Chinese students were willing to compromise for overall achievement during these group work, while their non-Chinese peers were more independent and prefer to work on their individual tasks. In addition, during group works, Chinese students, often unconsciously, exerted pressure on themselves and group members to accommodate opinions for group cohesion, reflecting their emphasis on collective goals over individual ones, in line with their collective cultural values.

In addition, research findings of this research also substantiated that Chinese students were afraid of exposing their weakness in a group setting, particularly low English proficiency rather than academic concerns. According to my interpretation, Chinese students' reluctance to reveal weaknesses stems from collectivist cultural values in China, where preserving face and maintaining social harmony are paramount. This reluctance was particularly evident among fellow Chinese peers in the UK, as exposing vulnerabilities may lead to a sense of humiliation and loss of face. Meanwhile, their fear of losing face often raised from revealing inadequacies in English proficiency rather than any shortcomings in academic abilities.

It was worth noting that, akin to the unaware thinking patterns ingrained in their learning process, the behaviours exhibited by Chinese international students in group learning activities were also carried out without intentional effort. Although research participants

observed distinctions in behaviour and preferences between themselves and their non-Chinese counterparts, they were not fully aware that their actions were guided by collective cultural values. As some participants articulated, Chinese students "naturally" formed groups with individuals of the same race, "naturally" collaborated for group success, "naturally" applied pressure on themselves and their group members for cohesion, and "naturally" sought to uphold their reputation in the presence of fellow Chinese individuals.

From my perspective, this phenomenon could also be considered as the "invisible cocoon," which constrained their freedom and autonomous expression within the group. More importantly, this "cocoon" was often imperceptible to peers from other nations, leading to mutual misunderstandings between the two groups. This, in turn, contributed to additional challenges when engaging in group work with international peers.

3.2.2 Position in Teacher-Student Communication

Data collected from this research implies that they highly appreciated an equal relationship with their teachers in one-on-one tutorials, perceiving that teachers deliver feedback in a more impartial manner without the impact of personal emotions.

Referring back to the earlier statement, Chinese students, influenced by hierarchical cultural values, expected an unequal position with tutors and lecturers due to the authoritative perception of teachers in China. However, during their UK study, all interview participants appreciated the unexpected equality in personal tutorials, describing them as friendly, direct, and pressure-free. This shift in communication dynamics deviated from their initial expectations, underscoring the impact of cultural values on their perception of teacher-student interactions.

Meanwhile, Chinese international students also observed impartial feedback and assessment from lecturers, contrasting their experiences in China where grades often depended on a teacher's personal preferences. This further underscored their familiarity with the unequal distribution of resources and rights in the Chinese educational system under the hierarchical cultural values.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this longitudinal research, it was evident that Chinese international students' experiences were significantly influenced by their Chinese cultural values. These cultural values shaped their thinking processes during learning and affected their interpersonal dynamics throughout their studies in the UK. This exploration provided a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons behind the challenges faced by Chinese students, which often went unnoticed by both the students and educators in higher education institutions. Recognizing these cultural influences helped develop more effective support systems and teaching strategies tailored to the unique needs of Chinese international students.

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The Nexus Between Archaeological Exploration and Heritage Contestation: Perspectives From Pizaga, Upper West Region of Ghana

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Abstract

This paper is centered on an ancient cultural landscape called Pizaga located in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The landscape is endowed with adequate traces of past human existence. It comprises a flat land and intriguing rock formations within which are a series of rock shelters. It is characterized by several surface configurations of potsherds, house mounds, mass of iron slag, and other archaeological features. However, the landscape is endangered by several destructive mechanisms. Currently, it is impacted by several indigenous agricultural practices, such as the felling of trees for farming and domestic uses and grazing of animals. To explore the landscape through an archaeological exploration as a means of salvaging its archaeological heritage from destruction, a conflict erupted between two communities (Kolon-Yiri and Tabiesi) over its ownership. However, to avoid escalated conflicts among the parties involved, the community-based research model aided a mitigation process that allowed for the conduct of the research. As research anchored on a multi-disciplinary approach, other methods were employed. These included the collection of oral accounts, preliminary archaeological investigations, and the use of ethnographic research tools and techniques including photography. Using these methods helped to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data for the research analyses. Through the archaeological exploration, the research helped to foster historical relationships and a greater understanding of shared ownership models that engender peaceful co-existence as well as positions the site at Pizaga in a temporal context, and this makes the study critical.

Keywords: Heritage Contestation, Archaeological Exploration, Community-Based Research

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Introduction

This paper is centered on an ancient settlement called Pizaga located in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Pizaga, based on its archaeological evidence, is established as a place that represents the history of human activities within a defined locality either for a particular identified period in the past or over several different decades. It is established that each of the two (2) different cultural features (the flat land and the intriguing rock formations) of the general landscape has its own intrinsic value. The narratives surrounding the two features clearly highlight the historic dynamism and the present diversity of the landscape. Not until an attempt to explore the site in January 2018, the entire cultural landscape was completely abandoned by its contemporary users causing its vulnerability. It was also unknown that two (2) communities (Kolon-Yiri & Tabiesi) were feuding over the site's ownership. With the escalation of the contestation over its ownership, access to the site for further archaeological exploration was problematic. To respond to this contestation, an immediate and effective approach was required. Hence, a mediation process was engineered through an application of a community-based model guided by the Stakeholder Theory. Indeed, this facilitated a smooth resolution of the conflict that aided the success of the research.

Contestations Over Heritage Assets

Indeed, Ghana, being the first country to attain independence in the sub-Saharan Africa in 1957, has over the years, experienced relative peace and security. In effect, the country has benefited from significant direct foreign investments and socioeconomic improvements (Nolan-Haley, 2014). Considering these however, there is the existence of various forms of contestations that lead to conflicts among several contemporary societies in Ghana. For instance, contestations over land ownership are often one of the primary causes of conflicts among several contemporary communities in the country. Given that the livelihoods of most indigenes of these communities depend on the quantum of land acquired, struggle for its control engages people at all levels or ranks of society (Havnevik et al. 2007). With the existence of land contestations, the measurement of sociocultural, economic and political power through direct ownership and control also exists (Kaberry, 1959). Moyo (2008) argues that conflicts over land among ethnic groups are mostly occasioned by unequal control because of its cultural and economic significance. In the post-independence era, conflicts over land ownership in Ghana has been a contentious and recurrent problem among several contemporary communities.

Proceeding from the premise that several archaeological heritage resources are situated on natural landscapes, the whole purpose of land ownership then becomes an issue in protecting the dignity of the individual owners of such assets, and aids in avoiding conflicts predominantly among contemporary users of the land. In recent times, the commodification of heritage assets has taken a centre stage in the practice of heritage. This is particularly so, when the heritage of a community or of a group of people tends to be an avenue for tourism development. Bugarin (2008) asserts that contemporary communities consider heritage patrimony as a source of moneymaking rather than paying much attention on the sociocultural considerations (cf. Ampofo Manu, 2019). Hoelscher (2011) contends that heritage has become a source of an essential economic gain and a foundation of personal and collective identity of an individual person or a group of persons. With the idea of commodification, several heritage assets or resources have been either forcefully or genuinely appropriated primarily for economic gains. In some instances, the reconfiguration of modern socio-political and economic boundaries of nations has also led to the reconfiguration of cultural boundaries of several present-day communities (Wanda, 2010 cf. Ampofo Manu, 2019). In effect, the reconfiguration of the

cultural boundaries has granted access to various communities to cross societal boundaries to commodify one's heritage for the purposes of monetary gains (Wanda, 2010). Notably, the reconfiguration of cultural boundaries has primarily led to varied degree of contestations among groups of relatives over tangible (physical) heritage resources particularly in cases where the significance of these resources is established or recognized. In several instances, the realization of the significance of a heritage asset ignites contestations among contemporary users. In the circumstances, several archaeological explorations that seek to salvage the archaeological heritage resources in these contested areas are mostly put on hold or completely halted.

It is worthy of note that the written cultural history about a people is reflected in the physically built cultural environments (such as landscapes) that the people create for themselves (Howe and Logan 2002) as well as the physical objects they make for themselves, and thus, are highly revered, well protected, preserved and properly managed for posterity. The neglect or disregard of these landscapes or physical objects as representations of identities and cultural values of past human societies by contemporary communities leads to a larger extent, the destruction of archaeological heritage resources. In effect, communities' identities and memories are completely lost. Similarly, any natural disaster or "any activity for land management can destroy, forever, not only the physical remains but any archaeological information present in the environmental context" (Barceló, 2004:1). For this reason, there is the need for everyone to, as a matter of urgency, ensure the protection and preservation of recognized archaeological heritage resources particularly when these resources help in reconstructing the memory of the history of humanity.

In recent times, heritage as an academic discipline acknowledges the need for archaeological heritage resources to be well protected and properly managed through an immediate and effective approach. Fundamentally, the identification and documentation of these resources are essential even though this approach is a more complex subject that requires a holistic study (Rautenbach et. al., 2015). By documenting the identified archaeological heritage resources in a defined cultural landscape, we (as heritage practitioners) are assured of the appropriate measures to be executed in ensuring their preservation and proper management. Notably, the identification and documentation of archaeological heritage resources are mostly, and successfully done through archaeological explorations. Nonetheless, attempts to conduct such explorations usually lead to a series of contestations that if not properly managed may lead to unwarranted conflicts among several different opposing parties. For instance, a communication gap in the understanding of the researcher's work if not properly addressed could lead to a strong dissonance between the researcher and other members of the community where the project is to be executed.

Similarly, developmental projects executed by either a state or private agency are usually hit by various forms of contestations. In effect, these projects are completely halted or delayed. For instance, the construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Black Volta River at Bui Gorge in present-day Bono region in Ghana resulted in a conflict between the Bui Power Authority (the state agency) and three (3) affected communities namely, Bui, Akanyakrom and Dokokyina (Apoh & Gavua, 2016) in 2007. Members of these communities contended that their prestigious individual heritages regarded as the "souls" of their ancestors will be impacted by the construction of the dam. They further argued that to neglect and witness the destruction of their heritages by being besieged by the flood waters of the dam would lead to a desecration of their deities (Apoh & Gavua, 2016). Hence, they called for proper measures to be put in place in ensuring the safety of their valuable heritage assets by providing adequate "provisions for

the relocation of the Ñsoulsì of their communities, including deities and ancestral remains" (Gava et.al., 2015:2).

In resolving the emerging conflict, the Bui Power Authority engaged the services of archaeologists to intervene in order not to halt the power-generating process and project schedule (Apoh & Gavua, 2016). Hence, through a negotiation with the Bui Power Authority, a team of archaeologists from the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies of the University of Ghana led by Professor Kodjo Gavua conducted an archaeological exploration (through identification and documentation) within the catchment area of the project (of which the three (3) communities fall within) in 2009 and 2010. This was primarily to salvage the archaeological heritage resources from destruction. The team also facilitated a negotiation with the Bui Power Authority that led to the relocation of the ancestral remains as well as shrines of deities and other features identified as vital heritage properties by elders of the communities in 2011 (Apoh & Gavua, 2016).

In a recent development in Ghana, some twelve (12) communities to be affected by a lithium exploration company, Atlantic Lithium Company, in the Mfantseman Municipality and Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District of the Central Region raised some issues of contestation over the said project (Ghana News, Agency, February 2024). These communities although consent to the execution of the project, however, on the grounds of culture and traditions, they charged the Atlantic Lithium Company to protect and preserve some indigenous water sources and mangroves that had, for several centuries, served as sacred finds in reconnaissance, hence the project should be halted. In a private conversation with an indigene (name withheld) of Ewoyaa upon our visit to the community, he intimated that they are happy for such a project to be executed in the area as it could create jobs for the local people in the affected communities, however, he pleaded for the preservation of the spiritual sanctity of the gods, goddesses and other resting places of their ancestors within the catchment area.

Interested in the stories being told through archaeological data, and with a primary aim of salvaging archaeological heritage resources from destruction, archaeologists and other researchers in the heritage industry institute measures that ensure archaeological explorations in contested areas. The constitution and encouragement of collaborative measures in research and practice yield several positive and practical results (Ataley, 2012; Gavua &Nutor, 2013; Gblerkpor & Nkumbaan, 2014; Swanepoel, 2010 cf. Ampofo Manu, 2019). Thus, in the practice of archaeology, collaborative approaches make the discipline culturally, economically and politically relevant (Gavua & Nutor, 2013 cf. Ampofo Manu, 2019). Largely, archaeology as a field of study, has, and continues to play major role in negotiating and resolving heritage-related conflicts among contemporary communities (Schmidt 2014b, cf: Apoh & Gavua, 2016).

Dealing With Contestations in Archaeological Exploration

The stakeholder theory has ultimately become a dominant discourse in most academic research (Mitchell et al. 2007; Pesqueux & Damak-Ayadi 2005 cf. Khanyile, 2018). The theory is a multi-disciplinary approach that draws on social sciences such as sociology, and applies literature on systems theory, corporate planning, social responsibility and organisational studies (Mainardes et al., 2012). It is managerial (Freeman et. al.,2004 cf. Khanyile, 2018) and can be articulated by asking varied questions. Being multi-disciplinary in nature, it employs creative holism borrowed from systems theory that relies on a multi-disciplinary approach to conceptualize and contextualize research (Khanyile, 2018). Contrary to the application of this theory, some scholars argue that the theory mostly includes a string of normative elements that

assume that the interests of all legitimate stakeholders have intrinsic value, and that no set of interests is assumed to dominate (Clarkson, 1995; cf. Khanyile, 2018). However, Doh & Quigley (2014) contend that the theory assumes a network of connections and linkages particularly between agencies and their constituencies. In this regard, the theory becomes a useful tool for establishing a good rapport and ethical relationships between a researcher and the stakeholders in a given research area. Khanyile (2018) asserts that the application of this theory helps in addressing fundamental questions systematically. Therefore, researchers are encouraged to have an asymmetrical dialogue with relevant stakeholders within communities before embarking on any research (Jongbloed et al., 2008). The multitude of stakeholders with whom a researcher must engage implies that an effective strategy for understanding and managing stakeholder relationships is essential, and this has a significant impact on the success of the research (Jongbloed et al., 2008).

The application of this theory in archaeological exploration requires the identification of key stakeholders. These stakeholders are individual persons or group(s) who can affect or are affected by the activities that take place within their sociocultural settings and, who are equally the architects of those settings, hence, they play critical roles in decision-making, establishing and implementing policies (Freeman, 1984; 1994; Bryson, 2004; Duckworth & Moore, 2010; cf. Khanyile, 2018). Effective collaboration among stakeholders is key, and this helps bring together different kinds of human resources and competencies that may assist in implementing projects, programmes, activities and research (Louw & Venter, 2013). Therefore, there is the need to factor in the people within the community when executing any activity such as academic-based research. This is the only avenue to have multiple voices that will enrich the outcome of the research (Bugarin, 2009).

The engagement of stakeholders in research serves as a key and powerful tool in mediating contestations over heritage assets among contemporary communities. Hence, guided by the Stakeholders Theory, different stakeholders were engaged *before, during* and *after* the archaeological exploration in Pizaga. The political administrators (i.e., The District Chief Executives for Nadowli-Kaleo and Daffiama-Bussie-Issa District Assemblies, the Members of Parliament for Nadowli-Kaleo and Dafiamma-Bussie-Issa Constituencies), the elders of the traditional authorities as well as other opinion leaders including youth leaders of the two (2) communities (Kolon-Yiri and Tabiesi) were contacted. There were sectional meetings held with members of the two communities. Some other members including traders, farmers, and among others were also contacted. All of these were ethically done to allow for the successful and positive conduct of research in Pizaga.

Practically, the engagement of the stakeholders was effectively and efficiently executed through the Community-based model. For the mediation process, the application of this model was categorised into two (2) separate modules namely, *Community-based Entry Strategy* and *Community-Based Engagement strategy*. While the community-based entry strategy allowed and facilitated the mediation process through the respective key stakeholders such leaders of the two (2) communities, the Community-based engagement strategy facilitated the mediation process through other stakeholders such as the youth in the respective communities. The two (2) models offered an opportunity for all parties involved in the mediation process to have their voices or concerns heard. These models created an avenue for instituting community mediation.

Community mediation, as tool for community conflict resolution, is a human resource that facilitates the restructuring of the social fabric, serving as a universal public service involving

various sectors within a specific geographical area (Sauceda & Gorjón, 2015). Typically, it is a conflict resolution process where opposing parties work together to reach a consensus without becoming adversaries to potential solutions (Piedra, 2017). Community mediation is seen within the objectives of sustainable development concerning equitable access to peace and justice. It plays a significant role because it is a civic tool through which members of society can address their differences and manage conflicts that arise in both private and public domains. Additionally, it enables participation in the construction of the society to which they belong (Velázques, 2019). The application of the two (2) models restored peace and security among the two (2) communities feuding over the ownership of Pizaga. In effect, the conflict resolution allowed for the conduct of archaeological exploration in Pizaga.

Conclusion

The archaeological exploration in Pizaga was eminent following the narratives of the migratory story of the Guomo people (a sub-lineage of the Dagaaba of the Upper West Region of Ghana) of Kolon-Yiri. This group of relatives claim Pizaga as the original settlement of the entire Guomo lineage, and further intimated that the site was the first permanent settlement of their ancestors before migrating to present-day Kolon-Yiri. The attempt to explore the site in January 2018 to complement the narratives erupted a contestation between the Guomo of Kolon-yiri and the Manyala of Tabiesi over the site's ownership. As a result of the contestation between the communities, access to the ancient settlement for archaeological exploration was problematic. However, with a keen interest in contributing to existing knowledge of the archaeology of the Upper West Region of Ghana, and with primary aim of salvaging the archaeological heritage resources of Pizaga, appropriate measures that could foster a mitigation process were instituted, and these allowed for the archaeological exploration in January 2023. It is of worthy to note that researchers in archaeological explorations are primarily not to be seen as mediators in conflicts among indigenous communities over heritage assets. However, to effectively address the challenges and to avoid escalated conflicts among communities feuding over ownership of a heritage resource or asset, researchers are expected to initiate appropriate measures in addressing same that would allow for the conduct of their research. Such measures include the application of the community-based research model guided by the Stakeholders Theory which fundamentally serves as avenues for community mediation. To conclude, these models facilitate a smooth mitigation process, and allow for archaeological exploration of a contested heritage. The archaeological exploration in Pizaga has helped to foster historical relationships and facilitated a greater understanding of shared ownership models that engender peaceful co-existence among parties involved in heritage contestations. Generally. The research positions Pizaga in a temporal context, and this made the study critical.

Acknowledgement

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Steam Learning in Virtual Reality for Cultural Heritage Promotion in Shek O, Hong Kong: Substitute or Complement for On-Site Field Trip?

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Abstract

This research focuses on utilizing a STEAM educational technique, specifically a VR website, to enhance the learning of cultural heritage in Shek O, Hong Kong. Shek O is a traditional village of cultural significance, attracting tourists and recognized as a heritage site. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the VR tool in terms of knowledge enrichment about Shek O's cultural heritage, attitudinal changes towards the site, and usability of the platform. The study included 50 local secondary school students who played the VR website before visiting the site (experimental group), while another 114 students solely engaged in VR learning without visiting the site (control group). Overall, the evaluation of the VR tool indicated above-average scores in terms of knowledge enrichment, attitudinal changes, and usability of the platform. However, when comparing the mean scores between the two groups, the results revealed that the group that experienced VR and visited the site achieved significantly higher scores in terms of knowledge enrichment, attitudinal changes, and perceived usability of the platform than those who did not visit the site. These findings suggest that combining VR with an on-site field trip can directly and positively influence user perception, while enhancing knowledge enrichment and attitudinal changes towards the cultural heritage of the site. These findings have meaningful implications for educators in utilizing VR for students' effective learning outcome.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Youth, Fieldtrip, STEAM Education, Cultural Preservation

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Introduction

With the emergence of advanced communication technology and e-learning, the availability of diverse media content, such as games, has revolutionized the learning experience for young learners. Game-based learning in cultural heritage education and tourism, as evidenced by studies such as Kalbaska & Cantoni (2022), has gained significant traction. A key outcome of e-learning is the heightened interest it generates among students, as highlighted by Shi et al. (2022) and Wronowski et al. (2020). In addition to various media content, the use of virtual environments has been extensively discussed in the literature. Scholars such as Lawson & Meyer (2024) and Liu et al. (2020) have explored the benefits of virtual environments in education. However, there is a knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of combined e-learning approaches with on-site school fieldtrip. To bridge this gap, Chan et al. (2020) and Yu et al. (2021) conducted separate studies to investigate how the use of specific media content only, such as gaming, can enhance educational outcomes.

Game-based learning is often integrated into e-learning, which is defined as the use of diverse ICT and electronic devices in teaching (Maatuk et al., 2022). Within e-learning, the utilization of multi- and hyper-media provides limitless opportunities for learning. By integrating images, sounds, and videos with textual elements, it creates more engaging experiences and enables the inclusion of original documents, references to other sources, and the orchestration of multiple voices and perspectives (Kalbaska & Cantoni, 2022). Among the various e-learning tools, VR encompasses a range of technologies that offer immersive and interactive three-dimensional (3D) virtual environments, either based on reality or a fictional scenario (Mikropoulos & Natsis, 2011). VR allows for the creation of (hyper-) personalized learning experiences that are tailored to the explicit decisions, performances, and learning behaviors of individual participants. Moreover, non-immersive VR environments, predominantly displayed on conventional flat screens, can be arranged by designers to enhance the collective participation of participants within the same arena (Huang et al., 2021). In recent years, VR has been increasingly utilized in classrooms across various educational levels, from kindergarten to higher education (Merchant et al., 2014). This adoption has been particularly amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic when traditional educational methods were swiftly replaced by e-learning due to the risks associated with social gatherings in educational institutions (Maatuk et al., 2022).

One of the potential educational outcomes of VR is the simulation of on-site experiences (Gielstra et al., 2024), which can serve as a substitute for field trips. Field trips are considered essential components of education; however, their availability is often limited by geographical factors, as well as time and cost constraints (Jong, 2014). In reality, only a few students are granted the opportunity to participate in local field trips, and even fewer in non-local ones. With a simulated virtual environment, more students could be involved and benefit from receiving instructions from their teachers. Additionally, a wider range of destinations and sites for tourism teaching could be covered with less effort and constraints, such as weather. These are just a few advantages of utilizing VR to simulate on-site experiences in education.

This article investigates the extent to which e-learning techniques with VR can assist in education through virtual tours, potentially enhancing students' understanding of geography, culture, and cultural conservation in specific locations. The paper specifically focuses on indicators such as knowledge transfer, attitudinal influence, and platform usability to demonstrate the educational function of VR techniques in e-learning. To empirically

demonstrate the study, this paper refers to an ongoing VR development project related to e-learning and Shek O, a classic heritage fishing village in Hong Kong with over a hundred years of development history. The paper presents major observations on student users who participated in VR sessions and compares two groups: one with field trip experience and one without. The study aims to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of cultural heritage learning through STEAM education and (2) compare the knowledge enrichment on cultural preservation of Shek O, attitudinal changes on cultural heritage of Shek O, and perceived usability of the VR platform between the two groups, with one group visiting the site after the VR demonstration and the other group not visiting the site after the VR demonstration.

Literature Review

Learning Cultural Conservation From On-Site Experience

The conventional and unidirectional learning setting, such as one-way, one-instructor-to-many-learner, has received significant criticism for its ineffectiveness in teaching knowledge related to real-life geographical and cultural contexts, as this knowledge requires high involvement and interaction from students (Bikar et al., 2022; Burlingame, 2023; Yang et al., 2024). Many scholars focus on students' incentives as the key element of learning and aim to discuss the effectiveness of pedagogical approaches to enhance active learning (LaDue et al., 2022; Yang & Chen, 2022). However, the limitations of the classroom setting remain a significant constraint when learning practical experiences about real-world cultural and geographical situations. Therefore, some scholars argue that learning would fulfill the need for practical experience, especially for practitioners training in the industry (Cini et al., 2015). Internships and field trips, generally referred to as on-site experiences, are widely chosen in pedagogy as they can cater to the specific needs of studying geographical, cultural, and heritage settings, which often involve community-based topics and experiences (Kelner & Sanders, 2009). Students who participate in on-site experiences often view them as "eye-opening experiences beyond the learning modules of university-based theoretical viewpoints" (Ting & Cheng, 2017). When conditions and resources are sufficient, additional practicum or skill-based learning opportunities can also be provided (Howard, 2011). Previous studies have demonstrated that this type of learning experience can lead to attitudinal and behavioral changes in students (Kim et al., 2015), and these effects can be maximized through reflexive examination of students' experiences in post-experience assessments (Ting & Cheng, 2017).

Students who have engaged in hands-on experiences often describe them as enlightening encounters that go beyond the theoretical perspectives taught in university settings (Ting & Cheng, 2017). When adequate conditions and resources are available, it is possible to offer more opportunities for practical training or skill-based learning (Howard, 2011). Previous research has demonstrated that this type of learning experience leads to changes in students' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Kim et al., 2015; Ting & Cheng, 2017). To maximize the benefits, educators should encourage students to critically reflect on their experiences after the practical training (Ting & Cheng, 2017).

Interestingly, cultural intimacy is also identified as a major outcome of on-site experiences when visiting cultural heritage sites, particularly in the context of cultural tourism or cultural preservation (Richards, 2018). On-site experiences allow visitors to fully immerse themselves in and learn about the community-based culture, enabling them to understand the significant value of a place based on their firsthand experiences. This immersive experience can provide a sense of depth and purposefulness to visitors' cultural motivation and acceptance

(McKercher & Du Cros, 2014). On-site experiences can have direct and indirect impacts on both visitors and the local community. For example, a study by Vong & Ung (2012) found that tourists experiencing heritage places in Macau could learn about Macau's history and culture through on-site heritage interpretation. As more visitors come to recognize the community as a valuable spot worthy of cultural preservation, it can even improve local people's attitudes towards preserving the cultural heritage (Jimura, 2011). These outcomes align with the factors listed by Loulanski & Loulanski (2011), highlighting how on-site experiences can facilitate local involvement and education among various stakeholders.

Learning Cultural Preservation From VR

While academic discussions on cultural preservation have shifted towards debates on the definition and authorization of "intangible cultural heritage" (e.g., Frey & Steiner, 2011; Van Dijk & Kirk, 2007), there is also a focus on how modern digital innovations can assist in heritage conservation and cultural tourism. Several studies have explored the use of digital tools and technological advancements in this regard (e.g., Bapiri et al., 2020; Fusté-Forné, 2019; Singh, 2020). Some studies discuss how new digital tools can help recreate a similar experiential feeling compared to on-site visits, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic when physical on-site visits are no longer feasible (e.g., Lew et al., 2020). With the aid of technological advancements, new digital tools, such as VR techniques, have successfully simulated on-site experiences.

VR is increasingly being utilized in geography education, generating interest in its application. Shih et al. (2020) developed a mobile VR interface for exploring the cultural elements of Lukang in Taiwan, contributing to heritage preservation and cultural sustainability. Barbara (2022) implemented an immersive VR learning experience for 11 to 12-year-old history students, focusing on the intangible cultural heritage of the Maltese Neolithic hypogeum. Feedback surveys indicated positive responses regarding authenticity, ease of navigation, learning outcomes, and classroom utility. These findings align with Checa & Bustillo's (2019) study, where undergraduate students found VR effective for learning about the cultural heritage and history of Briviesca. However, Daniela & Aierken (2020) noted that while VR has the potential to revolutionize education by enabling experiences that are not feasible in the real world, it is crucial to prioritize educational objectives in VR learning. While VR offers a wide range of possibilities, there is a need to strike a balance and ensure that the focus remains on meaningful learning rather than being solely captivated by the technology itself. Studies, such as Li et al. (2020), have noted that some Hong Kong students may become overly excited about VR technologies, which could potentially be counterproductive to their learning outcomes.

The innovation of VR in cultural heritage education reopens the discussion on e-learning: Can VR help young audiences have enriched or even create virtual on-site experiences? And is the effectiveness of the VR experience similar to real-life experiences? The first question seems to be supported by a series of academic research. Online technology is often developed to overcome educational limitations, especially when the subjects involve real-life examples in geography and environment-related content (Howard, 2011). Many studies have also revealed that students are more enthusiastic about and satisfied with collaborative learning using advanced technology (e.g., DeLozier & Rhodes, 2017; McNally et al., 2017). In terms of VR techniques for cultural heritage education and tourism, scenario-based simulations have been added to visualize key elements in real-world conditions and field trips within V-learning-based platforms and classroom lectures (e.g., Cini et al., 2015; Kelner & Sanders,

2009; Ting & Cheng, 2017). Such platforms can be beneficial for teaching, particularly in institutes with limited resources to arrange field trips and practical experiences (Howard, 2011).

The integration of VR in cultural heritage learning has sparked discussions about its potential impact on e-learning. Scholars have explored whether VR can provide young audiences with enriched or simulated on-site experiences and whether the effectiveness of VR experiences is comparable to real-life experiences (Schott, 2017). Research suggests that online technologies are often used to address educational limitations, especially in subjects involving real-life examples in geography and environment-related content (Sedlák et al., 2022). Studies have also demonstrated that students exhibit greater interest in and satisfaction with collaborative learning using advanced technology (DeLozier & Rhodes, 2017; Herbert et al., 2017). In the context of cultural heritage education, VR techniques, such as scenario-based simulations, have been employed to visualize key elements in real-world conditions and field trips within virtual learning platforms and classroom settings (Cini et al., 2015; Herbert et al., 2017). This approach has proven beneficial for teaching, particularly in institutions with limited resources to organize physical field trips and practical experiences (Mavridis et al., 2017). These findings support the notion that VR can offer young learners virtual on-site experiences that are immersive and comparable to real-life experiences, enhancing their engagement and understanding of cultural heritage.

However, the second question regarding the comparison of "real/virtual on-site experience" remains uncertain. While it is often recommended to compare the learning experience and effectiveness between traditional classroom learning and e-learning (DeLozier & Rhodes, 2017), there is limited research that directly compares e-learning to on-site learning experiences. Instead, some studies have focused on evaluating the risks and reliability of virtual platforms, as the informality of learning instruments may cause anxiety among students (Howard, 2011). However, some studies explore different indicators to measure the effectiveness of learning from on-site experiences, such as the development of a broader global consciousness and a better understanding of cultural diversity (e.g., Raptis et al., 2018). Despite a relatively limited literature, there has been debate among scholars, whether the VR fieldtrip can serve as a substitute or complement to the on-site fieldtrip (e.g., Spicer & Stratford, 2001; Patiar et al., 2017). Hence, there is still a significant gap in empirical evidence regarding whether virtual STEAM will replace or complement on-site fieldtrip in relation to students' learning of cultural conservation.

Based on the aforementioned studies, this project aims to address two research questions and hypotheses. The research questions are as follows: (1) What is the effectiveness of STEAM education in enhancing students' performance in cultural preservation? and (2) How do the learning outcomes of students who engage in STEAM educational outcomes differ between those who attended the site and those who did not? The corresponding hypotheses for these research questions are as follows:

H_1: There is an above-average feedback on students' perception of the effectiveness of STEAM education in enhancing students' learning in cultural preservation.

H_2: Students who have experienced STEAM education coupled with on-site visits demonstrate higher effectiveness of STEAM education compared to those who have only received STEAM education without the on-site experience.

Methodology

Based on the above discussion, the study aims to (1) evaluate the effectiveness of student in STEAM education of (i) knowledge enrichment, (ii) attitudinal changes and (iii) usability of the VR platform as part of the perceived learning outcomes. The study also shed light on (2) comparing the users' ratings with or without additional on-site experience, which could see whether VR platform could assist or even replace the on-site experience in understanding cultural preservation.

There are numerous cultural spots being preserved in different ways across Hong Kong. For example, Gallagher (2021) discussed the adaptive reuse of the historic Tai O Police Station in Hong Kong. Museums like the Hong Kong Heritage Museum have played a crucial role in showcasing Hong Kong's cultural heritage to the wider public (Henderson, 2001). With the advancement of technology, there has been an increasing use of technologies in preserving local cultural heritage, particularly in the promotion of education through VR for students.

Shek O, a fishing village in Hong Kong, has undergone development for over a century, particularly during the British colonial rule. As part of our study, we have developed a VR experience that allows users to virtually explore Shek O and gain a deeper understanding of its cultural heritage. Shek O serves as an exemplary case of heritage tourism, where on-site experiences play a significant role in promoting heritage conservation. In this context, tourism acts as a catalyst, actively contributing to the preservation of the heritage site. Scholars like Lussetyowati (2015) envision various benefits, including revenue generation, arising from such conservation efforts. To support the conservation of Shek O, we have engaged volunteers from the local community who are knowledgeable about the cultural heritage of Shek O. During school visits, these volunteers introduce the VR experience to the audience and share insights about Shek O's cultural heritage. The audience is provided with the opportunity to interact with the VR, which presents a map of Shek O. Users can virtually navigate the village, clicking on various points of interest to listen to stories shared by local residents pertaining to the cultural heritage of specific sites across Shek O.

Due to budget constraints, the study invited two schools to participate in the VR-learning program focusing on the cultural heritage of Shek O. One school was assigned to take part in a site visit to Shek O after the students had the opportunity to experience the VR as part of their curriculum. The target group for this experimental group consisted of 50 participants. The other school, serving as the control group, had students watch a VR demonstration only in a classroom setting. The control group consisted of 114 participants. All participants were aged between 10 and 15 and belonged to the two participating schools.

We conducted a survey using the same set of survey questions for both the experimental and control groups. The survey utilized a Likert scale ranging from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) to assess the participants' responses regarding their learning outcomes. The survey included questions that aimed to measure the participants' agreement on the following aspects of the VR learning experience: i) knowledge enrichment, ii) attitude changes, and iii) usability of the VR platform. In educational research, student performance is often evaluated based on independent variables related to knowledge, attitude, and behavior (Chan et al., 2020). Hence, we conducted a comparison of the mean values on the eight survey items between the control and experimental groups. This comparison allowed us to assess whether the VR platform resulted in differences in learning outcomes. Our study takes a modified approach by focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of the learning experience within a cross-sectional

timeframe, rather than examining long-term changes in student behavior. The primary objective is to evaluate the satisfaction and effectiveness of the learning experience using VR, considering three independent variables.

The first independent variable focuses on evaluating the extent to which students' knowledge is enriched through the use of VR learning in an urban tourism scenario. Previous studies provide insights into this aspect. Liu et al. (2020) conducted a study that demonstrated significant improvement in examination scores among students who utilized an advanced technology platform, indicating the potential for substantial knowledge acquisition. Li et al. (2022) conducted a study specifically examining the relationship between groups of Chinese university geography students who used VR and those who did not use VR in understanding geography academic terms in English language. The results indicated that the experimental group, which utilized VR, demonstrated superior performance compared to the control group in terms of incidental vocabulary acquisition.

The second independent variable focuses on evaluating the impact of VR learning on students' attitudes and affective learning outcomes (Shephard, 2008). Nikolaou et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review that demonstrated the positive effects of VR on attitude change among users or learners. The majority of the studies included in the review reported that the use of VR enhanced social attitude change compared to groups that did not utilize VR. Existing studies, such as Menzel et al. (2014), have also highlighted the positive impact of VR on attitude change, which students who were exposed to VR experiences aimed at understanding social issues like poverty showed higher scores in positive attitude change towards the poor compared to the control groups.

The last independent variable in this study focuses on the usability of the VR platform. Webster (2016) emphasized that while digital platforms can enhance learning immersion, interaction, and motivation, they cannot fully replace an instructor in the classroom. Usability and achieving specific goals are important considerations for innovative educational models (Alhamad et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2017). Contextualizing knowledge extraction within a local setting is crucial for a quality learning experience (Efstathiou et al., 2018). These studies underscored the impact of the design quality of e-learning platforms on overall satisfaction with the learning experience.

Results

The results are presented in two parts. Firstly, we conducted a descriptive analysis of the survey responses. The items in the survey were numbered, and they aimed to assess the respondents' agreement regarding various aspects of the VR learning experience. These included: 1) enhancing understanding of Shek O culture. 2) improving knowledge of Shek O geography, 3) cultivating cultural interest towards Shek O, 4) Increasing willingness to visit Shek O, 5) perceiving VR as a means to preserve Shek O culture, 6) evaluating the effectiveness of VR documentation of Shek O, 7) assessing the potential for publishing Shek O content derived from VR and 8) exploring the role of VR in sparking cultural interest. Items 1-2 focused on knowledge enrichment, aiming to measure the extent to which the VR experience improved the respondents' understanding of Shek O's cultural and geographical aspects. Items 3-4 and 8 delved into attitude changes, seeking to gauge the impact of VR on fostering cultural interest and influencing the willingness to visit Shek O. Lastly, items 6-7 examined the usability of VR technology, assessing its effectiveness in documenting Shek O and the potential for publishing the content generated through VR.

The findings from the analysis indicate that item 1, 8, and 6 obtained the highest scores, ranking first, second, and third with values of 4.0427, 4.0061, and 3.9939, respectively. However, no significant differences were observed in the mean scores among the remaining items. Nevertheless, the overall results demonstrate that all the items across the three criteria scored above the average score of three. This suggests that VR effectively meets the perceived learning outcomes of the students.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Item no.	Items	Mean score^	Standard Deviation
1	Shek O Culture	4.0427	0.9023
2	Shek O Geography	3.8232	1.06210
3	Shek O Cultural Interest	3.9512	1.0497
4	Visit Shek O	3.8293	1.1275
5	Shek O Cultural Preservation	4.0061	1.0242
6	Shek O Documentation	3.9939	0.9688
7	Shek O Publication	3.9207	1.0331
8	VR Cultural Interest	3.8841	1.1533

*Range is from one (lowest score that the respondents agree) to five (highest score)

However, when comparing the control and experimental groups, the results indicate significant differences between the two groups. Across all eight items, the experimental group consistently achieved higher scores compared to the control group. Notably, the experimental group obtained the highest scores for items 1, 4, and 8, with respective scores of 4.4800, 4.5400, and 4.500. On the other hand, the control group achieved the highest, second highest, and third highest scores for items 1, 6, and 5, respectively. These findings highlight that, in all aspects, the experimental group exhibited superior self-perceived learning outcomes compared to the control group, which only watched the VR demonstration.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics between the experimental and control groups

Item no.	Items	Group	Mean score^	Standard Deviation
1	Shek O Culture	Control	3.8509	0.9707
		Experimental	4.4800	0.5047
2	Shek O Geography	Control	3.6842	1.1546
		Experimental	4.1400	0.7287
3	Shek O Cultural Interest	Control	3.7456	1.1195
		Experimental	4.4200	0.6728
4	Visit Shek O	Control	3.5175	1.1767
		Experimental	4.5400	0.5425
5	Shek O Cultural Preservation	Control	3.7895	1.0515
		Experimental	4.5000	0.7627
6	Shek O Documentation	Control	3.7895	1.0260
		Experimental	4.4600	0.6131
7	Shek O Publication	Control	3.6842	1.0834
		Experimental	4.4600	0.6456
8	VR Cultural Interest	Control	3.5965	1.22452
		Experimental	4.5400	0.5789

*Range is from one (lowest score that the respondents agree) to five (highest score)

Discussion

Generally speaking, in line with previous studies (e.g., Mavridis et al., 2017), our findings suggest that VR can be a valuable tool for teaching students about specific sites, particularly when schools face limitations in terms of resources and the ability to conduct field trips. By utilizing VR technologies, schools can virtually transport their students, overcoming the constraints of time and space, and allowing them to explore and learn in a virtual environment. This approach is particularly beneficial for subjects that involve real-life examples in geography and content related to the environment (Sedlák et al., 2022). The use of VR offers students the opportunity to interact with virtual environments, facilitating cognitive engagement with learning materials and improving comprehension of complex and abstract concepts through immersive and interactive scenarios (Lin et al., 2024). In the context of enhancing students' understanding of the geography and culture of Shek O, these findings highlight the potential of VR to provide an enriching and immersive learning experience.

The users' positive attitude changes towards Shek O can be attributed to the immersive nature of VR, which evokes a heightened sense of realism and engagement. When users are immersed in virtual environments, they develop more favorable attitudes towards the destinations depicted in VR. Consequently, these positive attitudes significantly influence users' intention to visit the showcased destinations (Tussyadiah et al., 2018). Regarding the usability of VR, learners are able to effortlessly navigate and interact with virtual environments, leading to increased engagement and improved understanding. The presence of intuitive controls, concise instructions, and seamless interactions within the VR environment allows learners to focus on the educational content, overcoming any challenges posed by technical intricacies (Özgen et al., 2021; Ramadhan et al., 2022). This is evident in the findings, as the items falling under the usability criterion have scored similarly to the other items related to knowledge acquisition and attitude change. Yet, students who went on the on-site field trip to Shek O, and who generally perceived better knowledge acquisition and attitude change towards Shek O cultural heritage from this learning activity, would also perceive that the VR technology being complemented with the field trip can help them improve their educational outcomes.

However, our results indicate notable differences in learning outcomes when comparing the group that only experienced the VR demonstration with the group that had both the VR demonstration and an actual visit to Shek O. The latter group achieved better scores in all aspects of learning outcomes. The virtual field trip through STEAM education, as perceived by students in previous studies, may not serve as a substitute for the on-site field trip. Instead, the virtual field trip can complement the on-site experience (Spicer & Stratford, 2001). By utilizing hypermedia programs, students have the opportunity to explore the site at their own pace, gaining better familiarity and enabling them to delve deeper into previously covered material, ultimately filling any gaps in their understanding. This approach enhances the value of on-site field trips by allowing students to maximize their overall experience and make it more rewarding (Patiar et al., 2017; Spicer & Stratford, 2001).

However, those who only utilized the virtual field trip may lack the interactive experience and direct contact with the site that the group visiting Shek O in person would have. The latter group would have the opportunity to navigate through different locations in the real world, providing a more comprehensive sensory experience involving all five senses. Virtual visits may not fully immerse students in real-life contexts, as certain topics may present

obstacles for students to fully engage their senses, as highlighted in other studies (e.g., Leininger-Frézal & Sprenger, 2022). This lack of complete sensory immersion in virtual visits could contribute to the control group scoring lower in terms of perceived knowledge acquisition and attitude change. They may perceive that VR cannot deliver better educational outcomes compared to the on-site setting.

Conclusion

Overall, our findings clearly indicate that incorporating virtual field trips alongside traditional on-site field trips would be the most effective approach for enhancing students' learning outcomes. Virtual field trips offer distinct advantages in terms of accessibility, flexibility, and exposure to diverse environments. However, they cannot entirely substitute the immersive and tangible experiences provided by on-site fieldtrips. Therefore, educators should consider utilizing VR as a complement prior to arranging on-site field trips, ensuring that students can achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Nonetheless, our study does have certain limitations. Firstly, there is an uneven distribution of students between the control and experimental groups, which is beyond our control as the groups are derived from different schools that agreed to participate with varying numbers of students. This introduces the possibility of baseline differences in student characteristics between the two groups, potentially affecting the statistical power of our analysis. Future research should aim to achieve a more balanced representation of students in both groups to ensure better comparability and statistical power. The second limitation is the reliance on self-report measures through surveys, which may result in a discrepancy between actual behavior and self-reported responses. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of VR and on-site field trips in education, future research could consider incorporating interviews with relevant stakeholders. Thirdly, our study design is cross-sectional, limiting our ability to establish causality. To address this limitation, future studies could incorporate pre- and post-field trip survey assessments to examine better the changes in learning outcomes among participants over time. Nevertheless, this study serves as an initial exploration into the impacts of VR on the learning outcomes of field trips. It provides a starting point for further research in this area.

Acknowledgement

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Issues and Strategies for Ensuring Justice for Indigenous Peoples as a Vulnerable Group in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aimed to provide an overview of various legal issues and injustices faced by indigenous peoples as a vulnerable group in Indonesia. Various problems such as conflicts over customary rights, and land or forest claims between companies and indigenous peoples have marginalized the position of indigenous peoples. This study attempted to propose concepts and strategies that can promote justice for indigenous peoples in Indonesia. It employed a normative juridical research method focusing on literature review with case studies and legal comparison approaches, along with data analysis using deductive methods to draw conclusions that depict various forms of justice-related issues faced by customary law communities in Indonesia, as well as strategies and solutions proposed in this study. The study concluded that indigenous peoples in Indonesia still face various legal, human rights, and other injustices. Hence, consistent efforts and solution-oriented strategies are needed to protect the rights of indigenous peoples. This paper concluded, firstly, the importance of promoting the legal recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, including the enactment of the draft Law on the recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights. Secondly, there is a need for the Indonesian government to actively involve representatives of indigenous peoples' institutions in investment policies aligned with the principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), drawing comparisons from several countries. Lastly, the necessity of empowering indigenous peoples through a paralegal concept aimed at building capacity and knowledge among indigenous peoples in Indonesia.

Keywords: Strategy, Justice, Human Rights, Indigenous Peoples, Vulnerable Groups

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1. Introduction

Indonesia, with its cultural and ethnic diversity, harbors a wealth of indigenous peoples scattered across various regions. Indigenous peoples or in the Indonesian language is known as 'masyarakat adat' (Nyoman Widastra, Ngurah Anom Kumbara, Bagus Wirawan, & Gede Mudana, 2020), play a significant role in preserving the diversity and cultural heritage of the nation (Salim, 2016). However, behind this beauty and uniqueness lies a dark layer overshadowed by injustices against the rights of indigenous peoples. In Indonesia, data shows that indigenous peoples are among vulnerable groups at high risk of human rights violations (Kaendo, Gabriella, Angellina, & Maryam, 2022).

Indigenous peoples are considered vulnerable and at higher risk than other groups for human rights violations, mainly due to their frequent interaction and victimization in the exploitation of natural resources, as seen in Indonesia. Additionally, disparities in opinions and legal understandings regarding Indigenous Peoples contribute to this vulnerability (Yuliantoro, 2015). Various data and facts indicate that the promised implementation of legal norms often fails to reflect justice, hindered by numerous factors.

Quoted from the Amnesty International website, the current situation regarding the fulfillment of indigenous peoples' rights in Indonesia faces serious challenges, as nearly 48 million people inhabit forest areas in Indonesia, among whom approximately 800 thousand indigenous peoples live in impoverished conditions. Poverty is caused not only by overlapping claims and inequalities in resource ownership but also by poorly formulated regulations regarding the recognition of indigenous territories. In the context of development, often carried out without involving indigenous peoples, this leads to the usurpation of indigenous territories, resulting in the loss of homes, farmland, and livelihoods (Amnesty International, 2020).

The issue of justice for indigenous peoples in Indonesia is complex and profound, reflecting significant challenges faced by this vulnerable group. Limited access to justice for various vulnerable groups paints a picture akin to the tip of the iceberg phenomenon, where the existing facts do not match the numerous cases that remain unrecorded or even uncovered. This also leads to many victims whose root problems remain undetected (Huang, n.d.).

Indigenous peoples in Indonesia, as part of vulnerable groups, face a number of issues such as violations and discrimination. Available data depicts that indigenous peoples, especially in resource-rich areas, often encounter conflicts over land and natural resource rights. Development projects and the exploitation of natural resources carried out without consideration for indigenous peoples and their rights have the potential to encroach upon their ancestral lands (Muazzin, 2014), threatening cultural identities and resulting in drastic changes in traditional lifestyles that have been preserved for centuries (Ariyadi, Hasan, & Muzainah, 2022).

Another exacerbating problem is the lack of representation of indigenous peoples during policy formulation and decision-making processes regarding development in Indonesia. Although efforts have been made to involve indigenous peoples in decision-making, in reality, their rights are often ignored or even confronted with structural barriers that are difficult to overcome. Inequality in political participation poses a significant obstacle for indigenous peoples in defending their rights (Karawaheno, 2022).

Furthermore, the issue of protecting Human Rights for indigenous peoples, such as violations of the right to education as a fundamental right, land rights, and cultural rights, often occurs without accountability. Physical violence, threats, and intimidation against members of indigenous peoples fighting for their rights are escalating, creating instability and insecurity in the environment for this group (J. Sembiring, 2018). The concept of the rule of law embraced by Indonesia should serve as a strong foundation for protecting Human Rights (HR) and ensuring the guarantee of HR protection as a fundamental core element (Katong, Junaedy, & Sendow, 2023). However, despite the clear mandate of HR protection in the constitution and legislation, the reality on the ground often does not align.

In this context, it is important to seek holistic solutions that address the root causes of problems and provide effective protection concepts for indigenous peoples through comprehensive studies. By delving deeper, it is hoped that a more complete understanding of the issues of justice for indigenous peoples and their rights can be obtained. It is also hoped that effective solutions and strategies can be formulated to create a fair, inclusive, and sustainable environment for all Indonesian citizens, without exception for indigenous peoples as an inseparable part of Indonesia's cultural and social diversity.

2. Method

This study employed the juridical-normative methodology, which includes examination and analysis of legal frameworks related to the existing issues (Tan, 2021). The research was conducted to solve legal problems through the identification of legal issues, legal reasoning, problem analysis, and problem resolution (Efendi & Ibrahim, 2021). The data for this research were collected through a systematic approach to national and international legal sources. This approach was chosen as a process of tracing and understanding rules, laws, and doctrines to respond to the encountered issues (Benuf & Azhar, 2020). Normative legal research, also known as library research, utilizes techniques of legal and case approach (Ali, 2021). Primary sources include laws, regulations, and court decisions, while secondary sources encompass working papers, literature, regulatory reviews, and comprehensive analysis of the latest statistical data regarding real-world situations. Data collected from the research were systematically collected and classified based on their subject matter, then analyzed qualitatively, referring to the quality of truth (Hayati & Ali, 2021).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Legal Issues of Indigenous Peoples as a Vulnerable Group in Indonesia

The concept of indigenous peoples, according to Murtadha Muthahari, refers to a group of people connected by shared traditions, systems, conventions, and laws, resulting in collective living (Muhhamad, 2018). The entity of indigenous peoples as a vulnerable group also places them in a weak legal position. Human Rights Reference, as cited by Iskandar Husein, included vulnerable groups such as the destitute, refugees, minorities, migrant workers, indigenous peoples, women, and children (Huang, n.d.).

Various policies and regulations in Indonesia, such as laws and various implementing regulations at the regional level, inadvertently legitimize environmental destruction (Elza Syarif, 2014). For example, these policies legitimize various mining permits and plantations such as palm oil, and in practice, result in the confiscation of public land (Setiyo Permadi, Rahman, & Zulkarnain, 2023).

The marginalized position of indigenous peoples weakens their bargaining power, as seen when they face forced eviction. There are many examples of forced evictions of indigenous peoples leading to conflicts between communities, the government, and businesses or investors, such as in Central Kalimantan Province, Indonesia (Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria, 2020). One such case is the forced eviction and criminalization of the Penyang Village and Tanah Putih Village communities in Central Kalimantan in March 2020, where a community member named James Watt was arrested by the police and declared a suspect. This arrest was considered a form of criminalization and was seen as a scenario created by PT. Hamparan Masawit Bangun Persada to suppress community resistance.

Another agrarian conflict in August 2020 made headlines in various national print and electronic media in Indonesia, concerning a conflict between the indigenous Dayak Laman Kinipan community in Seruyan Regency, Central Kalimantan Province (I. Nugraha & Sapariah Saturi, n.d.). Additionally, issues regarding transmigration resettlement have also altered the social structure and land ownership model in several areas in Central Kalimantan, creating conflicts between land certificates and customary land, and contributing to land disputes in this region (Levang, 2003).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, indigenous peoples were greatly affected due to the lack of healthcare facilities, including the absence of Community Health Center. Consequently, indigenous peoples were heavily impacted and became victims of the pandemic due to the difficulty in accessing healthcare services (COVID-19). Another issue of injustice in the political realm related to the 2020 Elections in Indonesia was highlighted by the National Commission on Human Rights of Indonesia, particularly concerning vulnerable groups. Some of the notes made by the commission include insufficient election socialization and the challenges faced by indigenous peoples located in remote areas to exercise their voting rights (Ramadhan & Krisiandi, 2019). Furthermore, indigenous peoples faced difficulties participating in the elections due to issues with accessing electronic Identification Cards, particularly since a significant portion of them are illiterate (Ramadhan & Krisiandi, 2019).

The ongoing relocation of the National Capital City (IKN) of Indonesia has also resulted in conflicts and issues, such as the limited involvement of indigenous peoples and their exclusion from being considered affected parties in the Law related to IKN. According to records from the Agrarian Reform Consortium (KPA), in the past five years, there have been 30 agrarian conflicts due to land overlapping, affecting an area of 64,707 hectares (Hidayat, 2023).

Agrarian conflict data in Indonesia in 2023 showed the loss of approximately 638,188 hectares of agricultural land, fishing areas, customary territories, and affected settlements of around 135,608 households. This conflict data is even higher compared to six other Asian countries including Cambodia, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and the Philippines (Alexander, 2024). The majority of conflicts in Indonesia occurred in North Sumatra Province, with 33 conflicts covering an area of approximately 34,090 hectares. Furthermore, South Sulawesi had 19 conflicts covering an area of 75,785 hectares. Riau Province ranked third in terms of the number of conflicts, with 16 conflict incidents covering an area of around 60,955 hectares. Other provinces affected include Jambi, East Kalimantan, Bengkulu, West Java, East Java, and East Nusa Tenggara (Wicaksono, 2024).

According to research by I Nyoman Prabu Buana, the lack of protection and recognition of indigenous peoples and their rights, such as natural resources and land rights, is due to the

lack of political will to address the issues faced by indigenous peoples. In general, most indigenous peoples reside in areas where the last remaining natural resources are yet to be exploited (I. Nyoman Prabu Buana, 2022, p. 395). This aligns with the findings of the National Inquiry Team, which revealed numerous human rights violations occurring in forest areas against indigenous peoples, including violations of social, economic, cultural rights, civil rights, and various cases classified as serious human rights violations (Saturi, 2014).

The various aforementioned factors indicate that indigenous peoples are vulnerable parties in issues such as conflicts related to agrarian matters (Ilyasa, 2020). This is also the reason why the presence of indigenous peoples in Indonesia is increasingly marginalized and lacks legal protection and justice. Therefore, efforts and proactive strategies need to be initiated to provide legal protection and achieve justice for indigenous peoples in Indonesia. Several strategies are outlined as follows:

3.2 Strategies for Protecting Indigenous Peoples as a Vulnerable Group in Indonesia

The various forms of discrimination against indigenous peoples in Indonesia are not in line with the meanings of various theories of justice. It does not align with the concept of justice by John Rawls, which has a significant influence on the value of justice. John Rawls argues that the struggle for justice is aimed at those who experience poverty and adversity and this struggle is directed at all citizens (Rawls, 2006). In this regard, indigenous peoples are certainly included because they are also part of the people in Indonesia. It should be recognized that the values of equality, justice, rights, and morality for seekers of justice are worthy of attention and development (Arliman. S, 2019). Rawls's theory of justice desires that social institutions uphold justice for the entire society, but in reality, there is still injustice, especially for weak and vulnerable groups like indigenous peoples.

Limbong states that a characteristic of a just society is that there is at least no dispute that cannot be resolved by political and social functions originating from the classes where they are born. According to this view, one of the government's functions is that it can succeed in maintaining the essence of social law as a guide to broader order; the government is said to be successful if it can achieve prosperity and peace within its jurisdiction (Limbong, 2019).

This perspective asserts that justice is a unity. Thus, justice does not become a consideration of conflicting interests in a case, such as the concept of the European Lady Justice, which symbolizes justice in a technical and formal sense and is grounded and evolved on highly developed concepts of individual interests (Purnamawati, 2021). Modern Legal Mechanism is intended as a social technique to fulfill specified procedures and is subject to these schemes (Sunaryo & Purnamawati, 2019).

As the concept of spreading modern law reaches various parts of the world, this dissemination also impacts culturally-based states, differing from Western concepts such as in Indonesia. The reconstruction of law and justice becomes determined by modern law, so the original concept centered on substance becomes formal and transactional (Srikusuma, 2021).

The rationality of modern society has even forced law to emerge from ethical and moral values, where the basis of justice resides (Wibowo, 2017). Modern law characterizes specific features and characteristics that become rational as manifestations of pseudo-social order within the walls of capitalism (*erzat social order*) (Purnamawati, 2021). The order of modern

society ultimately becomes mechanistic and dynamic, so that fair certainty and the fulfillment of human spiritual and material well-being are no longer functions and guarantees of law.

These various aspects lead to various legal issues, especially concerning the rights of indigenous peoples based on local values originating from the concept of justice. In this writing, several ideas for enhancing the assurance of protection and justice for indigenous peoples are proposed:

1. Strategies to Promote the Formation of Special Laws Governing Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia

Various Indonesian legislative regulations to date still demonstrate efforts to restrict, reduce, hinder, and even attempt to revoke the traditional rights and historical rights of indigenous peoples in Indonesia, without providing compensation. Retrospectively, this can be considered a violation of Human Rights (*Draft Report on Legal Study regarding the Mechanism of Recognition of Indigenous Legal Communities,* n.d.) Furthermore, regulations in Indonesia governing indigenous peoples are scattered partially across various regulations such as Indonesian Land Law, Forestry Law, Mining Law, and various other regulations. Consequently, there is overlapping and disharmony in regulations such as differences in the use of the definition of indigenous peoples, rights and criteria of indigenous peoples, methods of inventorying the existence of indigenous peoples, and even perspectives on how to treat indigenous peoples in Indonesia.

For example, the regulation in the Indonesian constitution in Article 18B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution as amended states: "The State acknowledges and respects the unity of Indigenous Legal Communities and their traditional rights as long as they are still alive and in accordance with the development of society and the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia as regulated by law." This constitutional provision contains prerequisites for recognizing the existence of indigenous peoples. These requirements must even be fulfilled cumulatively, leading to various practical issues.

For instance, Rikardo Simamarta states that the meaning of Article 18B paragraph (2) of the constitution has a discriminatory nuance, especially towards cultural orientation. It is argued that, covertly, the authorities are attempting to transform and eliminate indigenous peoples, turning them into modern communities with an industrialized character (Simamarta, 2006).

F. Budi Hardiman adds that conditional recognition, which is paternalistic, subject-centric, monological, and asymmetric, such as the phrases "The State Respects, The State Acknowledges," "as long as ... in accordance with the principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia," can be said to depend largely on the state's role in providing definitions, acknowledging, endorsing, and legitimizing the existence, or in other words, "domesticating" indigenous peoples by the State (Simamarta, 2006).

As also explained by Satjipto Rahardjo, the four requirements regarding indigenous peoples in the constitution serve as a form of hegemonic state power that determines the existence of indigenous peoples. This is done by the state through categorization *(indelingsbelust),* and the perception of the holders of state power (Rahardjo, 2005). Many technical regulations of the Indonesian Constitution that regulate indigenous peoples are also contradictory to each other (*Draft Indigenous Peoples Bill (Various issues regarding the rights of indigenous communities over their customary lands in forest areas,) In the book Di dalam buku "Inkuiri*

Nasional Komnas HAM, 2016, page 8). At a more operational regulation level, Indonesian state policies, especially since the New Order regime prioritized the development of natural resource-based industries, have led to indigenous peoples losing both rights and access to natural resources (Academic Manuscript of Draft Law on Indigenous Peoples, n.d.).

Considering these factual descriptions, it is important to establish new regulations at the level of laws specifically governing Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia, as mandated by the Indonesian constitution in Article 18B paragraph (2) which states that one prerequisite is that Indigenous Peoples are regulated in the form of laws. Quoting as expressed by Jimly Asshiddiqie, former Chairman of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, the existence of indigenous peoples is very strategic, hence it needs to be comprehensively inventoried to enhance their empowerment through national regulations in the form of laws (Ashiddiqie, 2003, hal. 32–33) This is deemed crucial because addressing the interests and rights of indigenous peoples at the regional regulation level will lead to a risk of differing interpretations in each region by regional governments (Asshiddiqie, 2008, hal. 815).

Therefore, it is important to formulate and promote regulations on the Law on the Protection of Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia by looking at best practices in some countries, for example, in neighboring countries such as the Philippines, which is considered successful in protecting the rights of indigenous peoples both in the constitution and in its legislation.

The Philippine Constitution (1987) regulates the rights of indigenous peoples in Part 5 Article XII, Part 6 Article XIII, Part 17 Article XIV, and Part 22 Article 11.78. This is different from the 1945 Indonesian Constitution which regulates Indigenous Peoples and their rights only in two articles, including Article 18 B paragraph (2) and Article 28 I paragraph (3). The 1987 Philippine Constitution also explicitly regulates indigenous peoples and is implemented by the Philippine government by enacting Law No. 250 of 1997 concerning the rights of indigenous peoples (Sukirno, 2018).

In Malaysia, the enactment of the Aboriginal Peoples Act (APA) of 1954 stands as a significant measure to safeguard the rights of the Indigenous Peoples (Orang Asli) in Malaysia. The APA comprises 19 sections, including definitions of indigenous peoples, various rights of the Orang Asli, and the administration of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs (JAKOA). The primary objective of this law is to provide protection, welfare, and advancement for the Indigenous Peoples in Peninsular Malaysia (Yahya & Nordin, 2018).

Thailand, another neighboring country of Indonesia, has excelled in protecting the rights of its Indigenous Peoples by designing more than five regulations aimed at promoting, providing, and safeguarding the rights of ethnic groups and Indigenous Peoples in Thailand (Brache-a, 2020).

Therefore, the establishment of specific laws in Indonesia is undoubtedly an urgent matter because, to date, there has been no comprehensive legal regulation that provides guarantees to Indigenous Peoples.

2. *Strategies to Strengthen the Principles of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in Indonesia*

The second strategy that can be pursued is to promote the strengthening of the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) as stipulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) of 2007, where the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration, which is the first universal instrument of great significance for indigenous peoples as it protects their rights, including the right to self-determination (Feri, 2020). Indonesia is among the countries that have supported and signed the UNDRIP (Gómez Isa, 2019).

The concept of FPIC within UNDRIP initially emerged on March 1, 2011, in the FPIC guidance for REDD+ by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC). FPIC serves as a guiding principle and policy approach for development projects. Initially, FPIC was a guideline for projects involving forest degradation, deforestation, and emissions reduction. FPIC has even been established in development projects focused on oil and gas exploitation, resource extraction, and various other investments in indigenous territories (Pham et al., 2015).

"Free" implies that consent is given voluntarily and without coercion from indigenous peoples. "Prior" means that consent must be obtained before the activity commences with consideration of decision-making by indigenous peoples. "Informed" means that indigenous peoples have received comprehensive information, and "Consent" refers to approval in a collective decision-making process (U.N.-R.E.D.D., 2013).

In practice, FPIC is often interpreted as a process whereby indigenous peoples exercise their rights in negotiating programs or policies that will be implemented and directly affect them (Anderson, 2011). Principles in UNDRIP such as FPIC are deemed crucial, as indicated in research by Wa Ode Zamrud et al., which suggests that the FPIC concept and Benefit Sharing are solutions to resolving customary land issues, elevating the dignity of indigenous peoples as full-fledged human beings (Zamrud & Salam, 2022).

FPIC also proves beneficial in efforts to halt human rights violations resulting from development projects carried out without consultation, which adversely impact indigenous peoples (Colchester, 2006). The right to participate in determining their fate is crucial in safeguarding indigenous peoples against development activities in their territories (Forest Digest, 2022).

The essential concept within the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which accommodates indigenous peoples, is outlined in Article 10 of UNDRIP. Additionally, provisions in Articles 18 and 19 of UNDRIP further elaborate on this notion. Article 19 of UNDRIP explicates the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), emphasizing the necessity for states to engage in cooperative efforts to protect the plans and policies concerning Indigenous Peoples. FPIC is also elucidated in the FPIC Operational Guidelines of the Accountability Framework Initiative, defining it as the collective human rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IP/LC) to approve or disapprove any activities that may affect their rights, lands, resources, territories, livelihoods, and food security. This right is exercised through representatives elected by the communities themselves and in accordance with their customs, values, and norms. FPIC is designed to promote, protect, and ensure the full enjoyment and implementation of various fundamental human rights, including the rights to property, culture, and self-determination (Accountability Framework Initiative, 2019).

In practice, FPIC has been implemented in Japan, where the government mandates community approval before commencing any projects. Crucially, important stages such as

discussion and negotiation between the community and project proponents are undertaken to ensure that development projects are conducted appropriately and do not violate human rights (Forest Digest, 2022).

The Philippines serves as an intriguing case study on the implementation of FPIC (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent). The country has adopted FPIC into its domestic legislation, a rare occurrence among nations. Although not identical in practice to the UNDRIP declaration, each article of Philippine law aligns with the international declaration. The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 (IPR Act 1997) The Philippines is even regarded as the most comprehensive provision regarding indigenous rights ever enacted worldwide (Bello, 2020).

FPIC is enshrined in the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA; Republic Act No. 8371, Republic of the Philippines, 1997) and referenced in Executive Order No. 79 (Office of the President of the Philippines, 2012), which pertains to the Mining Act of 1995. Provisions regarding the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent principle within the IPRA of the Philippines are also present in the Draft Law on the Recognition and Protection of Indigenous Peoples' Rights (PPMA) in Indonesia, specifically in Article 9 paragraph (1), which essentially stipulates that indigenous peoples have the right to fair compensation for the territories, lands, and natural resources used, taken, or controlled without free and informed consent.

In practice, the principles of UNDRIP encounter what can be termed the "Asian Controversy", wherein many countries, especially in the Asian region, agree to and ratify UNDRIP but do not recognize the existence of indigenous peoples within their territories. This controversy can be explained through several arguments. Firstly, the rejection of the concept of indigenous peoples arises from states claiming that all their inhabitants are indigenous peoples who have long resided within their territories, rendering this norm inapplicable. Secondly, there is a discrepancy between the definition of indigenous peoples and the constitution of the state, except for a small proportion of the population who are migrants. Thirdly, the implementation of UNDRIP does not align with the internal policies of the state ("The Concept of Indigenous People in Asia," 2008).

In Indonesia, the concept of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) is still partially recognized and not explicitly implied. Generally, the dissemination of information only involves communities that agree with the direction of investment policies and only present positive impacts. Unfortunately, suggestions, opinions, and responses are not decisive factors in policy-making (Winarsih, n.d.).

This aligns with Arifiana TPW's research on the application of the FPIC principle in Indonesia and Australia in the context of protecting the customary rights of indigenous peoples in both countries, indicating that Australia and Indonesia currently lack specific regulations governing the FPIC principle, and the implementation of the FPIC principle in both countries also does not adhere to the FPIC principles (Arifiana, n.d.).

3. *Strategies of Empowering Indigenous Peoples Through Paralegal Programs*

In addition to the aforementioned strategies, a third strategy is deemed necessary, namely, empowering communities through paralegal programs. The term "paralegal" has been utilized in Legal-Activism literature on development-oriented legal aid for the past 30 years (Diokno, 1982). In 1982, Senator Diokno wrote about "barefoot lawyers" or paralegals. As also defined

by the National Federation of Paralegal Associations (NFPA), a paralegal is an individual who meets the qualifications to perform substantive legal work through training, education, or work experience, possessing knowledge of legal concepts but not exclusively conducted by lawyers (Shedd II, n.d.).

The concept of paralegals has evolved, as seen in Indonesia. However, this program has not been widely implemented, exemplified by its adoption primarily by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI), a non-profit organization focusing on environmental issues in Indonesia. WALHI has implemented the paralegal concept, where communities are generally trained in basic law and skills such as education, mediation, and community organizing. The overarching goal of these paralegal initiatives is to develop evidence-based intervention strategies in resolving conflicts related to land and the environment. This project also aims to empower local communities to achieve environmental justice by promoting compliance with regulations and institutional accountability in addressing the impacts caused by changes in land use (Walhi & Namati, 2019).

In addition, another Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago (AMAN) in North Maluku, Indonesia, provides paralegal training to indigenous peoples in the Dodaga, Banemo, and Sawai regions of North Maluku, Indonesia. AMAN North Maluku builds the capacity of these communities to protect their land rights through activities such as Field Assessments, Basic Training, and Developing Case Action Plans. Furthermore, this program facilitates participants in advocating for their communities in the event of land rights violations. The objective is to enhance the overall knowledge of indigenous peoples about their land rights and the avenues to seek redress when these rights are violated (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara - AMAN, 2015) In the strategy to achieve access to justice for indigenous peoples through the paralegal concept, more initiatives from the Indonesian government are needed for indigenous peoples, who fall into the category of vulnerable groups (Paiva de Araujo et al., 2023).

When comparing paralegal services in several countries with specific specializations, for instance, the Paralegal Advisory Service in Malawi focuses on the criminal justice system and the rights of prisoners. In Bangladesh, the Madaripur Legal Aid Association focuses on alternative dispute resolution. In other places like South Africa and the Philippines, paralegal schemes take a more holistic view of access to justice by combining community-based and human rights-based approaches. This approach is often referred to as legal empowerment. Africa over the years, in six Sub-Saharan African countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, minority rights groups have helped support and build strong paralegal networks, to support communities through knowledge transfer, skill development, and legal empowerment (Open Society Foundations, 2010).

A well-designed paralegal training curriculum, such as in Malawi, introduces participants to the legal population of Malawi. Some areas within this curriculum include land disputes, inheritance property seizure, popularly known as 'property grabbing,' child custody and abuse, unfair labor practices, police brutality, and sexual harassment and violence against women (Malawi, 2004). In some countries, paralegal programs are even embedded within trade unions, political parties, and bar associations. Human rights groups and community-based organizations often engage with populations in need of legal services. Paralegal

initiatives added to existing institutions can deepen and broaden the work already undertaken by these institutions (Malawi, 2012).

Based on Kathryn Choules' research, which draws from the experiences of the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) in the Pacific, community paralegal programs have proven to be an effective means of developing skills, knowledge, and human rights actions within communities. A three-tiered or layered approach is considered most effective in producing change as it can build capacity and engagement across all levels of society in human rights and can foster demands for social change from the grassroots level while eliciting responses from higher levels. At the lower level (micro), the RRRT works with individuals and communities with the aim "to strengthen marginalized groups and civil society capacity by advocating for, affirming, monitoring, and defending human rights and good governance." At the intermediate level (meso), the RRRT collaborates with institutions to enhance their capacity at the implementation level while promoting good human rights principles, human resources deployment, and good governance practices. At the top level (macro), the RRRT engages with policymakers and lawmakers to enhance policy-making capacity in adopting good governance practices and implementing human rights principles (Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center, 2011).

Therefore, the ongoing paralegal programs must be continuously enhanced and sustained with several constructive improvements by developing new concepts that internalize human rights values into paralegal training. This approach aims to enhance indigenous peoples' understanding of their rights by incorporating best practices from paralegal programs in various countries, elaborating on these programs with human rights values within a well-standardized curriculum framework.

4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion, several conclusions have been drawn. To date, numerous legal and human rights issues, along with various forms of injustice, are still experienced by indigenous peoples in Indonesia. Therefore, ongoing and consistent efforts are required to protect the rights and existence of indigenous peoples. The first strategy involves promoting the establishment of regulations in the form of a specific law on Indigenous Peoples in Indonesia by advocating for the ratification of the Draft Bill on Indigenous Peoples. The second strategy is to promote the strengthening of the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) concept by observing best practices in other countries. The third strategy is to encourage the development of concepts such as the paralegal program, which aims to enhance the role and capacity of indigenous peoples. The hope is that indigenous peoples will no longer be considered a vulnerable group, as they are an essential part of the Indonesian nation.

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The Buddhist Exchange Between China and Vietnam in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties: Focusing on Shilian Dashan's Works

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Abstract

Hai Wai Ji Shi (Overseas Stories) records the history of Shilian Dashan being invited to visit Vietnam and his experience there. It reflects the social development of Vietnam from one aspect. Dashan claimed to be the heir of Master Juelang. However, his trace was secret, and he was closely related to the feudal king Shang Zhixin. Therefore, many people slandered it. Dashan had a tragic fate, and his writings were quite controversial. Soon after the book's publication (1699), some people accused him of "hurting the country and Buddhism". Finally, he was exiled and died on the road. However, his book made a relatively objective review of the development of Buddhism in Vietnam. According to the records, "all the common people there are all soldiers". To escape military service, people sent children to Buddhism to be monks. So, there were too many monks, but Buddhism declined. Therefore, he tried to give ordination to a large number of Vietnamese Buddhists, by doing so, he wanted to revitalize Buddhism. According to the existing literature on him, it's difficult to tell whether his visit is to "chase fame and wealth" or "promote Buddhism". Judging from his account, like Chinese Buddhism at that time, Vietnamese Buddhism also fell into a trough. There are two reasons for this phenomenon: one is that Chinese Buddhism has developed to a limit and there was no developing room; the other is that the political confrontation has caused a great impact on the development of Buddhism.

Keywords: *Hai Wai Ji Shi (Overseas Stories)*, Shilian Dashan, Vietnamese Buddhism

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Introduction

In ancient China, there were extremely close connections between Vietnam and the Chinese dynasties. Vietnam's Confucian and Buddhist cultures mainly originated from China. Even after Vietnam became an independent kingdom, its relationship with the Chinese dynasties did not cease. Throughout various dynasties, there were cultural envoys traveling between China and Vietnam. During the Ming and Qing periods, Shilian Dashan was a representative figure. As a monk, his interactions with both Vietnamese officials and the public had both the nature of "spreading Buddhism" and a strong secular aspect. Upon returning to his homeland, Dashan published his collection of writings, *Overseas Stories*. Due to defamation, this work brought him fatal consequences. This article does not intend to discuss the virtues or vices of Dashan himself but aims to explore the general situation of the development of Buddhism in Vietnam at that time through *Overseas Stories*. It also seeks to briefly discuss the interaction between Chinese and Vietnamese Buddhism and the "secularization" tendency of Mahayana Buddhism in its later development.

About Shilian Dashan

Shilian Dashan (1633–1705) was a famous monk, poet, and painter in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. He was possibly born near the Yangtze River. Coming from a poor family, he worked as an apprentice to the Suzhou painter Shen Hao (1586-n.d.) in his youth. Later, he converted to Buddhism under a Zen master named Daolang Juesheng and became a formal monk. During the Kangxi era, Dashan moved to the Guangdong region, where he interacted with local literati and received support from an assistant of Shang Kexi. He promoted Buddhism in temples such as Dafosi and Changshousi. In 1695, he was invited by the Nguyen in Vietnam for a visit, which brought him fame and fortune. However, his later years were tragic. Due to a conflict with Pan Lei, he was exposed, imprisoned, and died while being exiled shortly after.

Dashan's life was full of ups and downs, and his actions were eccentric. During the Kangxi era, he was widely discussed. After his passing, Qing dynasty scholars such as Shen Deqian and Mi Quansun provided commentary on him. Mi Quansun was even praised by Mr. Jiang Boqin as "the first scholar to establish an academic biography for Shilian." During the Republican era, Mr. Chen Yuan paid great attention to Dashan and related figures in his works, "restoring Dashan's rightful place in the early Qing Dynasty Zen history" (Jiang Boqin). In the latter half of the 20th century, Mr. Deng Zhicheng researched Dashan's later life, with Mr. Jiang Boqin commenting that "his evaluation of Dashan is very fair and appropriate." Mr. Rao Zongyi made a "special contribution" to the study of Dashan, affirming his achievements in literature and art, and considering Dashan's account of his trip to Vietnam in the *Overseas Stories* as a work worthy of study.

The trip of Shilian has long been a subject of interest in the academic circles of exchanges between China and foreign countries, but there seems to have been no substantial breakthrough for a long time. In 2018, Mr. Ye Shaofei wrote an article discussing this topic. After analyzing relevant historical materials, he pointed out that Shilian's activities "challenged the tribute system of the Qing Dynasty and influenced the Qing Dynasty's policies towards the Southeast Asian region, ultimately leading to the tragedy in his later

years".[1] This study not only reexamined Shilian's trip but also provided a new interpretation of the tragic outcome of his later years.

Foreign scholars' attention to Dashan mainly focuses on his trip to Vietnam. American scholar Liam Kelly, in his master's thesis, analyzed Dashan's descriptions of Vietnamese history, religion, and culture. Vietnamese scholars are more concerned with Dashan's influence on the development of Buddhism in Vietnam. However, they also recognize that Dashan is a "special monk": "Shilian is first and foremost an artist"; "Due to his reputation, his frankness and honesty, many people strongly hate him and become his enemies"; "Shilian's academic thoughts are nothing particularly profound."

This article focuses on the reflection of the Sino-Vietnamese Buddhist relationship by Dashan in *Overseas Stories*. Therefore, we cannot ignore the various controversies surrounding Dashan. I agree with Ye Shaofei's analysis in his paper: the tragedy of Master Dashan's later years is almost entirely caused by this manuscript.[2] However, considering the complexity of this figure, this article intends to briefly emphasize another reason for the tragedy of Dashan before introducing *Overseas Stories*, that is, his entanglement with Pan Lei. I believe that the unfortunate late years and tragic ending of Master Dashan were largely sparked by the publication of *Overseas Stories*; however, from a different perspective, this was also largely caused by Pan Lei. Pan Lei once wrote a book, collecting over twenty "crimes" of Dashan. In general, some of these "crimes" are one-sided accounts by Pan Lei, while others are based on secular prejudices at the time. From a contemporary standpoint, most of these accusations are difficult to substantiate. Wu Chao tends to affirm Pan Lei's account and belittle Da shan, a viewpoint with which I cannot agree.[3] I believe the conflict between Pan Lei and Dashan is quite complex, but to a large extent, it is due to the "conflict of personalities" between the two. Wu Chao emphasizes: "Accusers believe that Dashan lacks true talent and learning, is cunning and good at amassing wealth, all of which are shameful aspects of Dashan".[4] However, I believe these aspects precisely reflect the "secularization" of Buddhism in the Ming and Qing dynasties. From the perspective of historical trends, this is also where the vitality of "popular religion" lies. From this perspective, today's researchers do not need to excessively belittle Dashan; instead, we should strive to explore the characteristics of "Lingnan Zen Buddhism" manifested by Master Dashan. Moreover, he has left behind a "great work" that cannot be bypassed in the history of Sino-Vietnamese cultural exchange - *Overseas Stories*.

About *Overseas Stories*

In 1695, Dashan received an invitation from Nguyen Phuc Chau of Vietnam to spread Buddhism in Vietnam. This overseas journey brought both fame and fortune to Dashan. After returning to his country, he published a book called *Overseas Stories*, which documented the reasons for and consequences of his trip to Vietnam, his experiences along the way, as well as his personal poems and writings. Unexpectedly, the publication of this book became a turning point in his destiny.

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[1] Ye, S. (2018). Dashan's *Hai Wai Ji Shi* and the Request for the Title of "Dai Viet". *Journal of Maritime History Studies, 1(1),* 53–67.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Wu, C. (2010). Discussions of the Contact between Qu Dajun, Pan Lei and Shilian. *Eastern Forum,3(3),*100–105.

[4] *Ibid.*

Overseas Stories was first published in 1699. After its publication, it came under attack by Pan Lei. There is currently no consensus in the academic community regarding Pan Lei's motives for accusing Dashan.[5] Perhaps due to certain personal grievances, Pan Lei's accusations against Dashan were very intense. After reading *Overseas Stories*, Pan Lei commented that the book "contains mostly falsehoods, with only a bit of truth, and many errors. It brings shame to the country's dignity in secular society and hinders the development of Buddhism in religious terms. It may have negative social impacts in the near future and lead to karmic retribution in the long term".[6] Pan Lei also wrote to Dashan, advising him to "destroy your work, go into hiding, and repent for your past mistakes".[7] Dashan did not respond positively. As a result, Pan Lei "spread his writings everywhere," claiming that Dashan engaged in various "illegal" activities overseas.[8] Among these, the most serious accusation may have been Dashan's "collusion with foreigners." In his writings, Pan Lei stated, "His most illegal behavior is colluding with foreigners. Although there are no longer restrictions on foreign exchanges, trade should be the domain of merchants. A monk interacting with foreigners is not appropriate. Shilian had dealings with foreigners, often passing on prohibited items to them for hefty profits. Those who heard about these incidents were shocked... The legal history prohibits the buying and selling of people, yet he purchased individuals to train as opera performers and then sold them off...".[9] From Pan Lei's account, it appears that Dashan's "illegal activities" were not simply "colluding with foreigners," but rather, colluding with foreigners in the guise of a monk; apart from seeking high profits, some of Dashan's actions also involved suspected "human trafficking." However, Pan Lei himself admitted that the information he received was only based on hearsay and eyewitness accounts, so we cannot conclusively determine that these were ironclad evidence of Dashan's "illicit interactions with foreigners." Nevertheless, due to Pan Lei's accusations, Dashan was arrested and imprisoned. At that time, the feudal lord Dashan had originally aligned with had declined in power, and his former friends had turned against him, leading to his isolation and eventual exile. Unfortunately, Dashan passed away halfway through his exile due to illness.

Dashan is a very complex figure. He is a Zen monk, but at the same time, he is almost a "versatile talent" in the literary world. He excels in poetry and prose, is passionate about opera and painting, and even designs furniture and gardens. Dashan grew up near Yangtze River, where he began learning these skills from a young age. It is well known that in ancient Chinese society, traditional literati often viewed being an "apprentice in the art world" as a lowly background, and an obsession with opera was not necessarily in line with Confucian ideals. Perhaps for these reasons, Pan Lei and others suspected his identity as a "successor to a Buddhist master" and wrote extensively about the legend of his "human trafficking." There are also rumors that in his youth, Dashan had a homosexual relationship with his painting teacher.[10] I speculate that these various factors may be some of the deeper reasons why certain mainstream figures in the intellectual community disliked Dashan.

Dashan excels in poetry and painting, but undoubtedly, his most important work left to posterity is *Overseas Stories*. This book mainly consists of two parts: one part is his

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[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Dashan, (2000). *Hai Wai Ji Shi*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, p.3.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] Shao,Y. (2012). Exploring Homosexual Themes in Ming and Qing Dynasty Paintings. *Art Research,4(4),* 47–58.

understanding of the development of Buddhism in China and Vietnam; the other part is his account of maritime transportation.

In Vietnam at that time, there were two powerful political powers in a state of confrontation: the Trinh and the Nguyen. Due to frequent wars between the two political powers, the areas under the rule of the Nguyen basically achieved "comprehensive militarized management". In his writings, Dashan described the "universal conscription" status he witnessed: "After inquiring, I learned that people in various professions in the country are also soldiers. In February and March every year, soldiers go to the countryside to recruit physically fit individuals aged 16 and above as soldiers... If farmers are willing to join the army, they will be assigned to learn a skill. After successful learning, superiors will assign them warships for training. If there are military activities, they will arm themselves and go to the battlefield .... Before the age of sixty, they are not allowed to return to their hometowns or see their relatives".[11] It can be seen that the people under the rule of the Nguyen bore a great deal of pressure. In addition, Dashan also described in *Overseas Stories*: the life of Chinese immigrants, transportation routes between China and Vietnam, maritime skills of Vietnamese residents, folk customs in central Vietnam, and so on. However, these are not the focus of this article. The following text will focus on the development of Buddhism in Vietnam as recorded in *Overseas Stories*.

The Historical Origins of Buddhism in Vietnam

Buddhism is one of the world's three major religions, originating in ancient India and spreading outward from the time of Emperor Ashoka. In terms of transmission routes, Buddhism can be divided into three branches: Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, and Vajrayana Buddhism. Among them, Theravada Buddhism was once derogatorily referred to as "Hinayana Buddhism" by the later Mahayana thought trend.

From a geographical perspective, Vietnam is located in Southeast Asia. However, unlike neighboring countries, Vietnamese Buddhism does not belong to Theravada Buddhism but rather to the Mahayana Buddhist system. This is determined by the historical ties between China and Vietnam: as is well known, Vietnam has maintained close ties with Chinese dynasties throughout history, and Vietnamese culture has been strongly influenced by Chinese culture. Vietnamese Buddhism has also been transmitted from the Chinese region. Therefore, although Vietnam is part of Southeast Asia, the development of Vietnamese Buddhism follows a trajectory similar to that of Mahayana Buddhism. Dasha had the opportunity to be invited by Nguyen Phuc Chau to propagate Buddhism in Vietnam due to this background.

According to the mainstream belief in the Buddhist community, Buddhism entered the Central China in the year 2 BC. As for Buddhism in Vietnam, there are records stating that during the Eastern Han Dynasty, a man named Mou Rong (?—79) sought refuge in Jiaozhi, which led to the introduction of Buddhism into Vietnam. However, there is still no consensus among Buddhist historians regarding the relationship between Mou Rong and Buddhism. What can be confirmed is that based on records in Chinese historical texts, many "foreign monks" had been traveling through Vietnam to the Central Plains since the 3rd century AD. There were also instances of Chinese monks seeking refuge or spreading Buddhism in

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[11] Dashan, (2000). *Hai Wai Ji Shi*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, p.3.

Vietnam. Therefore, it can be seen that Vietnamese culture was influenced by Chinese Buddhism as early as the 3rd century AD.

Zen Buddhism may have the deepest connection with Vietnamese Buddhism. According to records, a disciple of the Zen master Sengcan once established a sect in northern Vietnam, which can be considered as a branch of Chinese Zen Buddhism in Vietnam. This sect was popular in Vietnam for a long time, from 580 AD to 1216 AD. Around the year 820 AD, a disciple of the Zen master Baizhang Huaihai established another Buddhist sect in Vietnam, which lasted in Vietnam until the 13th century.[12]

From the 10th century onwards, Vietnam went through several dynasties. During this period, Buddhism held a high social status in Vietnam and even served as the state religion for a significant part of its history. Although Buddhism in Vietnam experienced rapid development during this period, its ideological resources mainly came from the Zen school. Many sects of Vietnamese Buddhism leaned towards the Southern Chan school in terms of theoretical style and had very close ties with Chinese Zen Buddhism. From 1428 to 1527, Buddhism in Vietnam faced severe suppression. Against this backdrop, when Dashan arrived in Vietnam in 1695, the country was in turmoil politically, with the Trinh and Nguyen factions in a north-south confrontation. The cultural landscape was also in decline - Buddhism had been severely damaged, and Confucian ethics had been seriously undermined. Due to these circumstances, in the eyes of Dashan, the Buddhist world of the Nguyen Kingdom was in chaos, and the cultural literacy of the people was generally low.

The Impact of the Nguyen's High-Pressure Regime on the Development of Buddhism

Shortly after Dashan arrived in Vietnam, he observed a special phenomenon, that is, the highly militarized nature of the Nguyen's regime. As mentioned earlier, Dashan's observations revealed that every year soldiers would go to the villages and forcibly recruit able-bodied individuals into the military. Yu Sili, the compiler of *Overseas Stories* emphasized, "it can be seen that the 17th-century Vietnamese Hue regime was like a large military camp."[13] Obviously, the Nguyen's ruthless exploitation and oppression of the people were aimed at ensuring the strength of its military power, without which it would not be able to contend with the northern regimes. However, this policy that excessively emphasizes "military force" has caused severe damage to "culture", hindering not only the development of Buddhism but also affecting various aspects of culture, education, and more.

When it comes to Buddhism, the most direct consequence of militarized management is that it forces people to use the way of taking refuge in Buddhism to evade military service, leading to a decline in the quality of personnel within the Buddhist community. On the surface, Buddhism thrived under the rule of the Nguyen Dynasty, but upon closer inspection, its essence had become very corrupt. Dashan commented, "Parents fear their children being conscripted into the military, so they send them to become monks at a very young age to avoid military service. As a result, there are many monks, but their theoretical literacy is very poor."[14] Consequently, Vietnamese Buddhism not only fails to develop healthily but also its social reputation will inevitably deteriorate. Clearly, the main reason lies in the high-pressure approach of the Nguyen's regime in its management.

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[12] Huang, X. (1988). *The World's Top Ten Religions*. Beijing: Oriental Publishing House, p. 155.
[13] Dashan, (2000). *Hai Wai Ji Shi*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, p.7.
[14] Dashan, (2000). *Hai Wai Ji Shi*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, p.16.

The policy forces people to use religion to evade military service, leading to the decline of Buddhism. This is not a unique phenomenon in Vietnamese history. It is understandable that people seek refuge in temples for survival, which is human nature. For the rulers of the Nguyen, they may have been somewhat aware of this situation, but it was difficult for them to find a balance between "culture" and "military power" in the context of the North-South confrontation at that time. As a guest, Dashan may have felt it inappropriate to comment further. This created a very awkward situation: on one hand, the Nguyen hoped to use Buddhism to maintain social stability, even at the cost of inviting Chinese monks to Vietnam to support Buddhism; on the other hand, the more they "struggled" to govern, the more Buddhism deteriorated, and society became more chaotic. This dilemma was fundamentally caused by the North-South confrontation and was not something that individuals could easily change. Therefore, although Dashan was aware of this issue, he did not express his opinions at a macro level but only provided his views and suggestions to the Nguyen regarding certain micro-level phenomena.

Dashan's Three Suggestions

Dashan wrote a long article, presenting his three views. Yu Sili believes, Dashan only understands some superficial knowledge of Buddhism and does not have much learning. What he propagates in Vietnam is the theory of the unity of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. However, from Dashan's expression, his criticism of Vietnamese Buddhism is still quite sharp, and his theory is not simply "the unity of the three teachings."

Firstly, Dashan emphasized the seriousness and importance of Buddhist precepts. In his writing, he said, "The Buddha established precepts, just like Confucius proposed 'rituals'... Our Buddha, considering the deep-rooted desires and emotions of humans, which are difficult to break free from, thus established precepts."[15] The Buddhist precepts and the Confucian pursuit of "rituals" are certainly not the same. Here, Dashan juxtaposes the two, in fact, continuing the tradition of Chinese Buddhism, that is, using a familiar language to interpret foreign cultures, which is quite suitable for the Nguyen in Vietnam.

Furthermore, Dashan pointed out that there are some monks in Vietnam who do not value precepts, and this attitude "harms both Buddhism and believers".[16] "There are some fake monks who do not follow the proper procedures to arrange religious ceremonies for believers. Regardless of who the other party is, as long as they give money, they will be recognized as official Buddhists."[17] In other words, Dashan discovered the phenomenon of "buying and selling Buddhist identity documents" in Vietnam at that time, making religious ceremonies more like joke. Undoubtedly, this is a great blasphemy against the sanctity of Buddhism.

Next, Dashan criticized that there was a group of pretentious and misleading monks in Vietnam at that time: "Recently, I have found a group of fake monks who know nothing about Buddhism and deceive people everywhere."[18] Dashan believed that this was a chaos in Vietnamese Buddhism, and these "monks" were only driven by material desires. He warned that tolerating them would inevitably lead to further decline of Vietnamese Buddhism. Therefore, he said, "Although I am old and have limited abilities to help Buddhism in any way, I am very clear about these monks now. They do not understand the theories and

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[15] Dashan, (2000). *Hai Wai Ji Shi*. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company, p.16.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*

systems of Buddhism, which is a root cause of the problems in Buddhism. I have to comment on this."[19]

Finally, Dashan also specifically mentioned the development of the Zen sect. Zen sect claims to be "unique within Buddhism," therefore, it places special emphasis on its "lineage". However, in Dashan's view, Zen sect in Vietnam not only lacks a clear lineage but also the local "Zen masters" do not have a specific educational method and lack a deep understanding of Zen theories. Dashan expressed strong dissatisfaction with this bleak situation in Vietnamese Zen sect: "As inheritors of Buddhism, we should firmly uphold our faith and help others awaken based on this foundation. We should realize that the current development of Buddhism is already very bad, how can we deceive each other? Monks across the country do not understand the true pursuit of Buddhism, everyone is deceiving each other, how can I remain silent? I can only speak out my true thoughts, regardless of the consequences!"[20]

The Dilemma of Chinese Buddhism in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

Dashan has put forward three suggestions for Vietnamese Buddhism. Objectively speaking, these three suggestions are somewhat superficial because the complex situation of Vietnamese Buddhism at that time was caused by the era's background. What Dashan discussed was only the surface chaos. Setting aside whether these chaotic situations can be governed, even if they can be resolved, will Vietnamese Buddhism be able to revive after the chaos is eliminated? In simple terms, we can at least see the decline of Vietnamese Buddhism from two perspectives: first, it is due to reasons within Vietnam itself; second, the decline of Vietnamese Buddhism is a microcosm of the overall decline of Chinese Buddhism. Now I will elaborate on these two aspects separately.

First, the decline of Buddhism in Vietnam did not happen overnight. In several dynasties before the Nguyen, Buddhism had already begun to decline. During certain historical periods, Confucianism was designated as the state religion, and the status of Buddhism was very low. Between 1460 and 1497, there were imperial orders that required "temples were not allowed to develop properties, and officials were not allowed to interact with monks and Taoists", causing Buddhism to "go underground". Although later, during the period of division between North and South, both sought to protect and promote Buddhism, by then Vietnamese Buddhism was already critically ill, making it difficult to be rescued through policy support. Furthermore, the management style of the Nguyen regime did not bring any long-term benefits to Buddhism, leading to a rapid decline in the quality of Buddhist practitioners. Nguyen Phuc Chu cannot evade responsibility. Dashan, being a foreign guest, finds it hard to blame Nguyen Phuc Chu on this issue. Instead, he reluctantly praises the Nguyen regime's "military strength, which is rarely seen now, even in ancient powerful countries, it was almost like this."

We even find a certain special change in Vietnamese religion: one year after Dashan's visit (1696), a monk in Vietnam created a heretical sect, "he imitated the organization of the Chinese White Lotus Sect, combined a set of theories, and created a heresy called 'Lian Society', which had a significant influence among the farmers in northern Vietnam."[21] This article does not intend to explore how heretical the White Lotus Sect in China is, but simply from the perspective of this development in Vietnamese Buddhism, the vitality of mainstream

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[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Huang, X. (1988). *The World's Top Ten Religions*. Beijing: Oriental Publishing House, p. 157.

Vietnamese Buddhism is already weak. In this situation, how could Dashan possibly help Vietnamese Buddhism return to the right path through a few suggestions? Optimistically speaking, it is wishful thinking on his part; pessimistically speaking, his suggestions are just empty words.

Secondly, Vietnamese Buddhism itself lacks originality, with its sects and theories mostly being copied and improved versions of Chinese Buddhism. Therefore, the decline of Vietnamese Buddhism also reflects an awkward situation faced by Chinese Buddhism during the Ming and Qing dynasties: it could no longer provide nourishment for the development of Vietnamese Buddhism. For Chinese Buddhism, Tang Dynasty was a peak period of development, with eight major sects of Buddhism and a much stronger influence compared to Confucianism and Taoism. By the Song dynasty, the Zen sect still had significant influence, but during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, Chinese Buddhism lost its internal drive and could only barely survive on some historical resources. In this context, as a descendant of Chinese Buddhism, how could Vietnamese Buddhism thrive? The decline of Vietnamese Buddhism also indicates the overall decline of Chinese Buddhism, a historical trend that seems unavoidable.

Conclusion

At the end of this article, we can also explore a question: Can Chinese Buddhism still find vitality? We can briefly discuss it through Dashan's visit. The fundamental reason for the invitation lies in an inherent contradiction within Vietnamese Buddhism: on one hand, the Nguyen needed Buddhism; on the other hand, Vietnamese Buddhism at that time could no longer meet their needs. Therefore, Nguyen Phuc Chu turned his attention to China. Yu Sili believes that Shilan had no real talent or learning, and his motive for the visit was to make money: "He was originally a idler within the Buddhist community, a speculator pursuing fame and fortune. He wanted to engage in greater risky activities in order to gain more wealth for enjoyment." I completely disagree with this view. The subjective motive behind Shilan's visit is beyond our speculation. Although he achieved fame and fortune upon returning home, we do not have enough evidence to prove that his purpose for the visit was solely to "pursue fame and fortune." After all, individual motives are beyond our conjecture. However, by observing his actions, we can propose a hypothesis: Shilan's visit reflects the "secularization" of Buddhism during the Ming and Qing dynasties, which aligns with the trend of religious history development and is not purely driven by individual motives. Faced with the dilemma of development, "secularization" may be the only way out for Chinese Buddhism: only by actively adapting to social changes, embracing commercial development, can Chinese Buddhism have the opportunity to survive and continue to develop. Shilan's choice, rather than being attributed to his pursuit of fame and fortune, can be seen as him unconsciously conforming to the historical trend of "secularization". By the Ming and Qing dynasties, Buddhism had reached a theoretical dead-end, with no further room for development except towards a more "secularized" direction. There were no other possibilities its development. However, due to various historical factors, Shilan's life could only end tragically.

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The Orientalist Aesthetic in Amadeo Preziosi's Oeuvre

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Abstract

This paper discusses Amadeo Preziosi's Orientalist representations within the socio-political and cultural contexts of nineteenth century Ottoman Empire. Adopting the theoretical lens of Orientalism, this paper will show how Preziosi's oeuvre is interlaced with the lexicon of Eurocentric exoticisation of the Middle East, where the space and people are transformed into objects of aestheticism. The nineteenth century artist (Count) Amadeo Preziosi (1816-1882) is often known for the representation of the Ottoman city, Istanbul, where he based most of his career. However, to understand Preziosi's broader context within the fabric of Orientalist discourse, the paradoxicality and hybridity of the artist's own national context as a Maltese citizen has to be taken in consideration. Amadeo Preziosi was the first-born son of Gio Francesco Preziosi and Margareta nee Raynaud. The Preziosi family had Italiophile origin with strong ties with the Order of Saint John and later with the British colony. Despite his nobility and lineage to central Europe, Preziosi's Maltese nationality made him a British subject. In this light, the aim of this research has been to place him within the theoretical framework of Orientalism. This is done by questioning the notions of authenticity in his representations and deeply analysing the narratives at play. For this reason, he will be mainly discussed within the representation of Istanbul, and Malta, and based on the several socio-cultural dynamics of the period.

Keywords: Orientalism, Nineteenthcenturyart, Orientalistart, Amadeopreziosi, Arthistory

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse Amadeo Preziosi's Orientalist representations and the aestheticization of the Middle East. Through the theoretical framework of Orientalist discourse, this paper will highlight how Preziosi's oeuvre is intwined with Eurocentric exoticisation of the Middle East, where the people and spaces are translated into objects of Aestheticism.[1]

Amadeo Preziosi remained a renowned name within auction houses, such as Sotheby's and Christies, as well as an artist of importance both in Malta and in Türkiye. His name gained substantial attention in Art History in 1985, through the Victoria and Albert exhibition, titled *The People and Places: watercolours by Amadeo Count Preziosi.*[2] The exhibition re-introduced Preziosi within Art Historical discourse, however he remained relatively absent from Orientalist and Post-Colonialist theories, contrasting other Orientalist artists. From there on, Preziosi gained attention as an artist who portrayed authentically Middle Eastern cultures and lifestyles, particularly within Ottoman context.[3] For this reason, the purpose of this research has been to place Amadeo Preziosi within the broader framework of Orientalism.

Theoretical Framework

In recent history, the understanding of Orientalist theory is very much based on the seminal works by the Egyptian French political Scientist, Anouar Abdel-Malek, specifically his essay *Orientalism in Crisis* (1967), and by the Palestinian-American literary critic and political activist, Edward Said. Said's 1978 book, *Orientalism*, pioneered postcolonial and Orientalist discourses. The Saidean model of Orientalism recognises Western colonialism as an aspect that conditioned the perception and narratives surrounding what is defined as the Orient.[4] Orientalist tropes are used by the West to transfer the anxieties and self-criticism, projecting them elsewhere – thus the need of the reflective *other*.[5] It becomes a metaphor to criticise the Western modernised bourgeois society. Traditional art historical understanding of Orientalism is used as means of escapism and to instil inspiration.[6] However, by doing so it translates the Middle East into an object of aesthetic. The omission of modernisation in Orientalist representations gave a misconception on the socio-cultural and economic situation of the East.[7]

The nineteenth century characterised the Ottoman Empire with a set of reforms. These reforms were motivated by the Empire's attempt to remain relevant as Western powers grew dominant. A key aspect of these reforms was modernisation. The fabric of modernity can be understood within 4 routes. The first route is (European) internal route towards change. The

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[1] This paper discusses Amadeo Preziosi within the context of Orientalism, with a special focus on the Maltese context, and is based on the author's own M.A (by research), in History of Art (2022) thesis at the University of Malta, under the supervision of Professor Conrad Thake.

[2] Llewellyn, B., Newton, C., *The People & Places: watercolours by Amadeo Count Preziosi*, (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1985).

[3] Abdilla, R., *Amadeo Preziosi and Orientalism: A Study of his Art in Istanbul and Beyond*, (M.A History of Art diss. University of Malta, 2022).

[4] Abraham, M., 'Introduction: Edward Said and after: Toward a New Humanism' *Cultural Critique No.67*, (Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 2-4.

[5] Lowe, L., *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalism,* Cornwell University Press, 1991, 93.

[6] Mackenzie, J., *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts*, Manchester University Press, 1995, 72-74.

[7] Abdilla (2022).

second route is the modernisation of the Americas and Australia through European migration. The third is through Western colonisation (an example of this are Malta and Egypt). The fourth was the external induction of modernity as Eastern empires are threatened by Western powers – the route that the Ottoman Empire had to take.[8] By the break of the new century, there was a conscious attempt by the empire to reform itself. Sultan Mahmud II had started the reformation, while his successor, Sultan Abdulmejid brought about the Tanzimat reform in 1839. The aim of these reforms was to modernise, and to certain extent, Westernise, the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire became a centre of inter-cultural exchange and Istanbul was a cosmopolitan city that advocated modernity, equality, and education. As it socially progressed, the topography of the city was also changing, following a similar model to that of Paris. The role of modernity played a crucial role in the Tanzimat, and in Europe's expansionist attitude towards the East. The notions of modernisation became essentially a European hegemonic tool.[9]

Biography

Amadeo Preziosi was born on 2nd December 1816 into a noble Italophile Maltese family, whose nobility was very much tied with the Order of Saint John, through which they gained their countship.[10] His father, Gio Francesco Preziosi, was a prominent figure for Malta to become a British protectorate during the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, which subsequently, led to Malta to become a British crown colony.[11] His mother Margareta nee Reynoud, was French. Thus, Preziosi had a very central European lineage, while his Maltese nationality subjected him to a British colony.[12] His early artistic training was in the Nazarene school of Giuseppe Hyzler, and 1839, the young artist studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts for a year.[13] It can be speculated that Preziosi was introduced to Orientalism during his year in Paris,[14] where he supposedly went to study law at the Sorbonne, as his father wished for his eldest son, however instead he pursued his artistic endeavours.

Upon his return to Malta in 1841, it is documented that Preziosi went on a tour to the Levant, and on 28 September 1842, Amadeo Preziosi left Malta permanently with the plan to establish himself in Istanbul.[15] It is still unclear to why the artist chose to live in the Middle East, as most of the Orientalists travelled for a period of time and returned to Europe shortly afterwards. Taking for instance, within a Maltese context, the Schranz brothers, particularly Joseph Schranz, often travelled to Istanbul for a couple of years and then returned to Malta. It is traditionally thought that it was due to the constant conflict with his father over his artistic lifestyle.[16] However, it is quite plausible that the reason was that Preziosi met his wife, a Greek Balkan from Istanbul, whom he married shortly afterwards.[17]

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[8] John Freely, *Istanbul: The Imperial City*, Penguin Books, London 1998, 226.

[9] Vaughn Findley, C., *The Turks in World History*, Oxford University Press, New York (2003), 138.

[10] Llewellyn, Newton (1985).

[11] John Montalto, *The Nobles of Malta, 1530-1800*, Midsea, Valletta, 1973, 324.

[12] Abdilla (2022).

[13] Leone, F., *Amadeo Preziosi (1816-1882): I Disegni Preparatori*, Art & Libri, Florence (2011), 51.

[14] Abdilla (2022)

[15] Llewellyn, B., Preziosi Biography OMK Catalogue, unpublished manuscript, 2020. NAM CUS KL (arrivals and departures), 58.

[16] Leone, 7.

[17] Abdilla (2022)

Works

Preziosi arrived in Istanbul amidst the Tanzimat reforms, and established his workshop underneath the British Embassy, thus it comes to no surprise that his early commissions were from British officials. Easel paintings were the preferred style in Istanbul,[18] and in fact, most of his works are small in scale, and his preferred mediums were watercolour washes on paper, and chromolithographs. Over time, his workshop became a popular spot among European travellers, where they could purchase watercolour drawings to take back with them to Europe – there is the sense of portability of the 'Orient'.[19] His early works were in the tradition of Ottoman costume books and were commissions from influential British patrons. Two of his most prominent early works were the portrait of Sir Henry Layard (Fig1), and the *Costumes of Constantinople*, in which both examples one can note cultural appropriation and aestheticization of Ottoman culture. The portrait done for the British archaeologist, Sir Henry Layard who at the time was in Istanbul. The portrait depicts the archaeologist in a *Bakhtiari* dress (1843).[20] The aim of the portrait functions as means to exert the archaeologist's knowledge over Assyrian and Iranian cultures. Seen in this context, the Iranian attire is accessorised to induce a sense of fantasy for the European audience.[21] Here Preziosi's works would seem to fit within Eurocentric and Orientalist frameworks, where exoticisation and intrigue presents the individuals and the inhabiting space as objects of aesthetic and fantasy.[22]

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[18] Roberts, M., *Istanbul Exchanges*, University of California Press, California, 2015, 5-6.

[19] Abdilla, R., 'Amadeo Preziosi and Orientalism: The Question of Authenticity'*, Treasures of Malta 87, Summer 2023*, (FPM, 2023), 21.

[20] Greenwood, de Guise, *Inspired by the East: How the Islamic World influenced Wester art,* British Museum, 2019, 202. Bakhtiari dress is a tribal outfit, originated from the Iranian regions. It may have been popular among Europeans to give them sense of rurality and detachment from European modernity (dandy) – Roberts (2007), 20-21.

[21] Young, J.O., *Cultural Appropriation and the Arts,* Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2010, 58.
See also: Eagleton, T., *Culture,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 60-62.

[22] Abdilla (2022).

Fig 1: Amadeo Preziosi, Portrait of Sir Henry Layard in Bakhtiari Dress, 1843,
Watercolour on Paper, British Museum

This can be noted further in the costume book, which was commissioned the British Ambassador's private secretary, Robert Curzon. Such books, including travel books, were a popular artistic production at the time. They were intended to exhibit the diverse ethnicities of the Ottoman Empire, highlighting the various nationalities and traditional attires.[23] On a surface level, these functioned in a similar manner to the sixteenth century Ottoman-costume books. Such books were produced by Ottoman illustrators to be distributed as diplomatic gifts in Europe to educate Europeans about Ottoman cultures and customs. However, as the political climate shifted due to Western expansionism, costume albums were based on Eurocentric narratives. In this manner, the viewer may hypothetically travel through place and time through the pages of the travel books. A defining aspect of such costume books is the standard stylisation of the imagery, where the figures stand isolated, and dominate the frame of the drawing, often with a low horizon and a scenic context in the background.[24]The creation of Ottoman costume books is made through a series of preconditioned assumptions and biases. The spaces within which the figures are placed were often such that evoke a sense of timeless nostalgia, displacing the figures from the contemporary space of the nineteenth century. Hence, exemplifying how Ottoman individuals are translated into objects of aestheticism.[25]

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[23] Fraser, E., 'The Ottoman Costume Album as Mobile Object and Agent of Contact', Fraser (Ed.), *The Mobility of People and Things in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (2019), Taylor and Frances, 91.
[24] Ibid., 91.
[25] Abdilla (2022), 62.

Figures 23-24. *Fig 2 & 3. Amadeo Preziosi, Costumes of Constantinople, Costumes of Constantinople, 1844, watercolour on paper, 26.5 x 19.9 cm, British Museum, London*
Fig 2 & 3. Amadeo Preziosi, *Costumes of Constantinople (Madam Guido in a Carcissian Dress), 1844, British Museum*

In *Costumes of Constantinople,* Preziosi included two portraits of Lady Canning's Genoese maid, Madam Guido, in a Circassian dress (Fig 2, Fig 3). In one of the portraits, she is reclined on a Turkish carpet with a pair of slippers next to her. Like Layard's portrait, Madam Guido's portraits show an aspect of cultural appropriation. However, Madam Guido instigates an element of an exotic fantasy. The travel writer, Emily Hornby recounted at length the beauty of Circassian woman within a harem and her own longing to experience an exotic fantasy. Here, one can note further the aspect of aestheticism, integrated within cultural appropriation, through travel writings and a narrative generated through Eurocentric interpretation of the *Arabian Nights.* In Orientalist art, often the subject matter depicted becomes a nostalgic fascination of an idyllic space, detached from a coherent timeframe – it becomes a spectacle to suit a narrative that would indulge European audiences. The figures in *Costumes of Constantinople,* and in other paintings by Preziosi, are devoid of intellectuality; the mundane space that they inhabit becomes a staged spectacle.[26]

Figure 25. Amadeo Preziosi, *Turkish Common Soldier, Costumes of Constantinople,* 1844, watercolour on paper, 26.5 x 19.9 cm, British Museum, London

Figure 26. Amadeo Preziosi, *A Barber,* 1843, watercolour on paper, 26.5 x 19.9 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

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[26] Abdilla (2022), 162.

<table>
<tr><td>Fig 4: Amadeo Preziosi, Cup of Coffee, Stamboul: Recollection of Eastern Life, 1858, Victoria and Albert Museum</td><td>Fig 5: Amadeo Preziosi, Interior of A Coffee House (detail), Stamboul: Recollection of Eastern Life, 1858, Victoria and Albert Museum</td></tr>
</table>

In 1858 Preziosi produced the chromolithograph album *Stamboul: Recollections of Eastern Life*. It was published by the printing house Lemaire in Paris, and it is one of his most prominent works.[27] Whilst there are several editions of the album, an interesting aspect of it, is the inclusion of the Sultan's seal on the cover, which is known as *Tughra*. This may suggest that the album was somehow affiliated with the sultanate or possibly dedicated to the Sultan.[28] Furthermore, the city is referred to with its Ottoman name, rather than its Byzantine name as per Robert Curzon's book. The album presents a sublime image of the city, devoid of any aspect of modernisation and industrial changes that were present at the time. It focused on the image of the mundane everyday life – thus, *recollections of an eastern life*. Istanbul took the role of stage to induce a spectacle to suit a European audience.[29] The only elements that place the scenes to a contemporary setting is the architectural motifs in some of the prints. Taking for instance, *The Cup of Coffee* (Fig 4), a harem scene, which has eclectic architectural motifs, evoking neo-Ottoman architecture and Baroque revivalism. Yet the context of the print remains very much within the notions of an *Arabian Night* instilled fantasy, A similar aspect can be seen in *Interior of a Coffee House* (Fig 5). The eclectic architectural vocabulary was the most prominent aspect within Preziosi's oeuvre which exhibited Istanbul's elements of modernisation.[30] Thus, most of the time there would be an aspect of amalgamation between traditional cultural elements and eclectic modern additions.

Preziosi's oeuvre juxtaposes itself with various narratives at play, which were also dependant to which audience the artworks were targeted for. There is a cross-cultural dynamic which

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[27] Leone.

[28] Abdilla (2022).

[29] Schiffer, R., *Oriental Panorama: British Travellers in 19th Century Turkey* (1999), Rodopi Publishers, 265.

[30] Abdilla (2022)

interchanged the narratives and representations. So much so, that even during his lifetime Preziosi was considered as an artist who accurately depicted life in Istanbul.[31] Yet, taking in consideration the various socio-cultural and political dynamics, particularly when including the role of the audience, modernity (and its omission) become a hegemonic tool. This can also be noted in a market scene in *Souvenir du Caire*, which preserves the sublime image of Old Cairo. Here, in contrast to *Stamboul,* the album omits all of aspects of modernisation.[32]

On the other hand, the European cities of Paris and London are portrayed as centres of modernity. The watercolour album of 1875, which records Preziosi's voyage to Europe with his family and the Balkan regions, titled *Souvenir: De Mon Dernier Voyage*, reflects a different treatment between the West and East.[33] An interesting representation is the watercolour of Ludgate, where Preziosi included a locomotive on a viaduct (Fig 6). The viaduct was considered a symbol of modernity during the Victorian age.[34] The artist clearly captures this with a crossing locomotive leaving a trace of steam behind, portrayed with strokes of white chalk. There is quite a distinction when comparing this with Orientalist scenes, and the juxtaposition can be noted further when compared with *A Street in Old Istanbul* (1855, Fig 7). Both watercolours have a similar composition and execution, yet the iconography is quite strikingly different. Another watercolour from the same album showcases a hall in the British Museum, proudly exhibiting the Assyrian lions, referencing once again Henry Layard, and Greek sculptures. Once again, there is the sense of the *Orient* being portable and staged for European narrative. In this instance this is also extended to the Balkan, particularly Greek. Here Greek and Iranian artworks are appropriated to fit further within a European, colonial, context – enhancing further the notion of Eurocentric narrative and aestheticism.[35]

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[31] Llewellyn, Newton (1985).

[32] Abdilla (2022).

[33] Ibid., 71

[34] Abdilla (2022), 139.

See also: Shaw, W. M.K, 'Between the Sublime and the Picturesque', from Zeynep Inankur, Reina Lewis, Mary Roberst (ed.), *The Poetics of Place: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism* (2009), Pera Museum, Istanbul, 123.

[35] Abdilla (2022).

Fig 6: Amadeo Preziosi, Holborn Viaduct, St Paul's Cathedral in the background, 1875, watercolour on paper
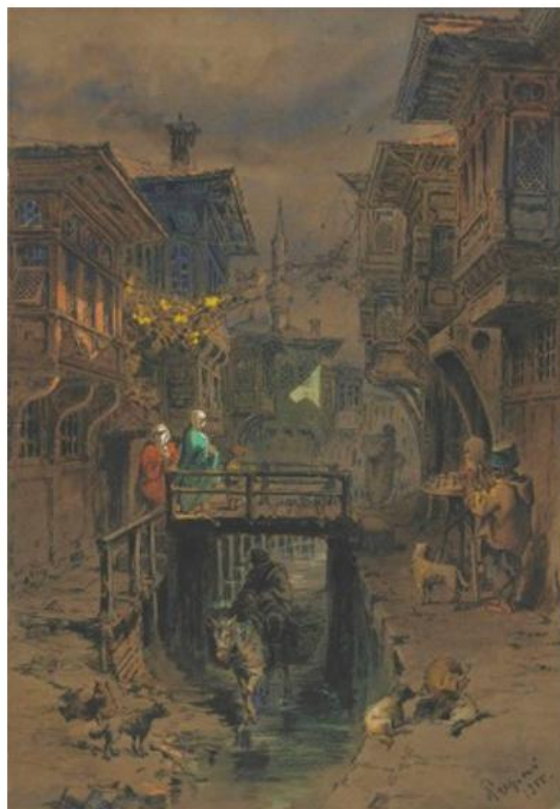
Fig 7: Amadeo Preziosi, A Street in Old Istanbul, 1855, watercolour on paper

Fig 8: Amadeo Preziosi, British Museum, London, (verso and recto), Souvenir De Mon Voyage, 1875, watercolour on paper

Conclusion

To conclude, whilst this paper focuses primarily on a selective example of Preziosi's oeuvre, one can note how his gaze presents a series of paradoxes that are conditioned by pre-established biases brought about by European expansionism and othering of the East. The people and spaces became objects of fascination and intrigue – aestheticized to indulge Eurocentric narratives. Preziosi's socio-cultural stance remains rather ambiguous within the larger context of the discourse. This is further accentuated by the fact that his portrayals are also conditioned by the audience for which it is produced. Amadeo Preziosi's life in Istanbul established him as an artist that represented the Ottoman culture (and by extension the Middle

East), in an authentic manner. However, as it has been discussed, aestheticism and romanticism incline towards a tendency of cultural appropriation, and due to these different narratives, detach the representation from the socio-cultural environment.

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Traditional Cultural Expressions Management: A Legal Perspective From Indonesia

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Abstract

The issue of the importance of legal protection for Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) in Indonesia has begun to become a concern since the claims for the *Reog Ponorogo* and *Pendet* dances were widely published as part of Malaysia's tourism campaign. Using a normative legal approach, this paper aims to examine the legal protection of TCEs in Indonesia based on several important regulations ranging from Law Number 28 the year 2014 on Copyright, Law Number 5 the year 2017 on the Advancement of Culture, and Government Regulation Number 56 / 2022 on Communal Intellectual Property, some observations concerning the implementation of TCEs management in Indonesia is also addressed. The result shows that First; TCEs-based regulations in Indonesia are the emphasizing of state's authority. Second, the preservation, protection, and productive utilization require government action and community participation. Third, *Sui generis* regulation developed from plurality and the core concepts of communality around TCEs perceived to be more adaptive for the dynamic society that keeps growing and fosters the growth of culture and cultural expressions. Fourth, inventory of TCEs is the important initial step of protection as the implementation of defensive mechanism protection and to prevent the misappropriation of TCEs, ensure disclosure of origin and proper attribution of benefit sharing to the custodian and provide the participative opportunity for the custodian in the preservation, protection and productive utilization of the TCEs. Lastly, in terms of implementation, the government needs to empower the cultural human resources, cultural organization, and cultural institutions.

Keywords: Culture Preservation, Legal Protection, Traditional Cultural Expressions

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Introduction

At the 39th UNESCO General Assembly took place in UNESCO Headquarters – Paris, Francesco Bandarin, UNESCO's Assistant Director General of Culture stated that UNESCO has considered Indonesia to be a superpower country in terms of culture (Purwanto, 2017). Indonesia is located at the intersection of 2 continents and 2 oceans consists of more than 17,500 islands and is one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations composed of more than 500 ethnic groups practicing 746 vernacular languages (Butler, 2016). Various local cultures are integral parts of Indonesian cultural heritage. The expressions of culture are practiced, preserved, maintained, and developed among generations of local communities in Indonesia for the sake of their well-being and existence (Roisah, 2017). The diversity of tribes, languages, customs, and beliefs in Indonesia is in line with the birth of various traditional cultural expressions and contributes highly valuable intellectual property to Indonesia (Rachmanullah et al., 2018).

Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCE) is one of the most emerging issues in protecting traditional and communal intellectual property (Purwandoko et al., 2021). The issue of the importance of legal protection for TCEs in Indonesia has begun to become a concern in the last few years when the issue of allegations of claims for the *Reog Ponorogo* and *Pendet* dances by Malaysia was widely published as the part of Malaysia tourism campaign (Ariani et al., 2022). Several cases of claims by developed countries on Indonesia's TCEs raise the tension as well as raise the awareness of urgency concerning the proper protection for TCEs.

The Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia mandates the state to develop its national culture, guarantee the rights and freedom of all components of its people in preserving and developing the culture, and benefit from the product of cultures. Operationally, the constitutional mandate raises the obligation and authority of the state to formulate policies, regulations, and administrative measures concerning the preservation, protection, and productive utilization of TCEs (Roisah, 2017). In terms of regulation, TCEs are regulated by several legal regulations, however, it is important to note that many custodians of TCEs still maintain traditional way and are mostly not equipped with adequate legal literacy and cultural sensibility concerning TCEs as legal rights of certain communities and state, thus the legal and cultural implications haven't understood comprehensively.

This paper aims to examine the legal protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions in Indonesia based on several important regulations ranging from Indonesian Law Number 28 year 2014 on Copyright (Copyright Law), Indonesian Law Number 5 year 2017 on Advancement of Culture (ILAC – 2017) and Government Regulation Number 56 / 2022 on Communal Intellectual Property and some observations concerning the implementation of Traditional Cultural Expressions management in Indonesia.

Research Method

The research uses a normative legal approach combined with a conceptual approach. The legal approach is carried out by analyzing the Traditional Cultural Expressions – related regulations in Indonesia consisting of Law Number 28 year 2014 on Copyright (Copyright Law), Indonesian Law Number 5 year 2017 on Advancement of Culture (ILAC – 2017), and Government Regulation Number 56 / 2022 on Communal Intellectual Property. Conceptual approach carried out through observation concerning the implementation of Traditional Cultural Expressions management in Indonesia. The analysis model used secondary data

sourced from the regulations supported by tertiary legal materials including journal articles and literature related to TCEs.

Discussion

1.   Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions in Indonesia

1.1. Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions Under Indonesia Copyright Regime

The ratification of international agreements such as the *Berne Convention* and *TRIPs Agreement* provides the background for IP protection in the national legal system. Article 15 paragraphs 4 Berne *Convention* regulates the protection of an anonymous work/creation, whose creator is not known through the appointment of a competent authority in a country to administer, manage, and report the copyrighted work in the form of TCEs to the Director General of WIPO. Ownership of creative works in the form of TCEs is exclusively owned by the country that deposits the TCEs with the Director General of WIPO as a representative for the interests of the creator who created the creative work in the form of a cultural expression.

In this section, TCEs will be examined from the legal perspective based on Law Number 28 year 2014 on Copyright (Copyright Law). The rights of copyright are the intellectual property in the field of science, art, and literature that have a strategic role in supporting the development of the nation and promoting the general welfare as mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia 1945 (Annalisa Y, 2018).

According to the Copyright Law, copyright-protected TCEs include both singular and multiple expressions, such as verbal textual, the scope of which oral and written in the form of prose and poetry with a variety of themes, as well as in the form of literature and narrative; Music (vocals, instrumentals and/or combinations); Motion (dances), Fine Arts (two or three dimensions made of leather, wood, bamboo, metal, paper, ceramics, textiles); Theatre (folk plays and puppets); traditional ceremonies (Erlina et al., 2023). The copyrights for TCEs are held by the state (Article 38 verse [1]) and the state is obliged to formulate inventory, preserve, and maintain TCEs (Article 38 verse [2]). In addition, the utilization of TCEs shall consider the values that live in the custodians that practice them. However, further provision on the right held by the state on TCEs as mandated by Article 38 verse (4) Copyright Law is not regulated yet. In addition, legal protection of TCEs by Copyright laws and treaties does not appear to have been particularly effective or expedient since there are no sufficient measures to control the proper utilization, commercial use, and benefit sharing of TCEs.

Indonesian Copyright Law shows that the state acknowledges communal rights over TCEs while also acknowledging the protection of the individual as the creator of the derivative works that are potentially sourced from TCEs. In this case, the Indonesian Government attempts to balance between the legal protection for the communities as the custodian of TCEs and the legal protection for the individual creator by placing the fundamental rights of TCEs in the hands of the custodian community to prevent the exclusive monopoly of TCEs while still maintain the proportional access for utilization, creativity, and innovation.

However, despite the regulation of TCEs in Copyright Law, numerous contentions and debates arose for several reasons: **First:** TCEs are related to a collective entity (a collection of people, communities, or groups). TCEs do not have individual characteristics because

TCEs express a shared cultural identity.(Lily Martinet, 2020). **Second,** the copyright emphasizes the aspect of originality, while TCEs are handed down and shared from generation to generation. (Wendland, 2004) **Third,** TCEs are constantly evolving, developing, and being recreated within the community.

Naomi Mezey has noted that TCEs as the property is in contradiction with the core concept of copyright as intellectual property. In addition, the traditional communities in Indonesia are more concerned about the survival and maintenance of their cultural expressions than the legal exclusivity of their works. (Susanti et al., 2019) This condition demands an active role from the government to provide legal protection that is not just appropriate but also easy to comprehend and implement by the community as the custodian of TCEs. The comprehension and acknowledgment of the community are important aspects of the legal protection of TCEs as Satjipto Rahardjo argues that legal protection is protecting one's interests by allocating power where the legal protection is provided as the form of shared interest in national development efforts.

1.2. Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions Under the Law of Advancement of Culture

Article 38 verse (1) Copyright Law states that the Copyright for TCEs is held by the state. In addition, Article 38 verse (2) regulates that the State is obliged to inventory, safeguard, and preserve TCEs, and further, Article 38 verse (4) Copyright Law regulates that further provision regarding custodianship in the form of state's copyright for TCEs will be regulated by Government Regulations, however, to date, there has been no government regulation that specifically regulates the legal protection of TCEs. As a consequence, the protection of TCEs within the scope of Copyright Law is still experiencing several obstacles in its implementation.

On April 27, 2017, Indonesian Law Number 5 of 2017 on Advancement of Culture (ILAC-2017) was enacted as the legal-formal basis for managing Indonesia's culture. Cultural development and community advancement are inseparable aspects; therefore it's very important to engage the society in the implementation of advancement of culture. Article 1 point 3 ILAC defines the Advancement of Culture as the effort to improve cultural resilience and Indonesian cultural contribution to the development of world civilizations through Cultural Protection, Development, Utilization, and Capacity Building / Empowerment. **Protection** is defined as the effort to preserve the sustainability of Culture through inventorying, safeguarding, sustentation, salvation, and publication. **Development** is the effort to vitalize the ecosystems of Culture and to improve, enrich, and propagate Culture. **Utilization** is the effort to use Objects of Advancement of Culture to strengthen national ideology, politics, economy, social life, culture, defense, and security in achieving national goals. **Capacity Building / Empowerment** is the effort to empower Cultural Human Resources, organizations, and institutions to improve and expand the community's active roles and initiatives.

In relation to the database, article 1 point 12 ILAC regulates the Integrated Database on Culture is a system of primary data on Culture that integrates all data from various sources. Article 15 ILAC regulates the Minister [1] establishes an Integrated Database on Culture to support the execution of the Advancement of Culture. The Integrated Database on Culture

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[1] Minister refers to the Minister responsible for Cultural Affairs

contains data on objects of Advancement of Culture, Cultural Human Resources, Organizations, and institutions, cultural facilities and infrastructures, and other relevant data on culture. The data managed by the ministries or agencies are linked to the Integrated Database on Culture which must be accessible to any person. However, the management of the Integrated Database on Culture must take into account national sovereignty, security, and resilience.

Article 16 ILAC regulates the inventorying of the Objects of Advancement of Culture consisting of the following stages: recording and documenting, stipulating, and data updating that is conducted through the Integrated Database on Culture. According to Article 17 ILAC, the Central Government and/or Regional Government in accordance with their authority must record and document the objects of the Advancement of Culture. As a form of participatory measure, Article 18 ILAC regulates that any person[2] may record and document objects of Advancement of Culture with the facilitation of central government and/or regional government. In addition, further provisions are regulated by Government Regulation. Article 19 ILAC regulates that the Minister stipulates the result of the recording and documentation of Objects of Advancement of Culture through the stages of verification and validation. Considering the evolving and growing nature of TCEs, Article 20 of ILAC regulates that any person may update data on Objects of Advancement of Culture the Central Government and/or Regional Government must update data on Objects of Advancement of Culture that have been stipulated. These updates of data must be conducted periodically and continuously.

1.3. Legal Protection of Traditional Cultural Expressions Under the Government Regulation of Communal Intellectual Property

Indonesia as an archipelagic country has a diverse cultural diversity that produces communal intellectual property (Communal IP). Cultural aspects are an important element in the development of Communal IP in Indonesia considering that Communal IP is generally based on community culture. Communal IP has a distinctive characteristic, in that it contains an element of collectivity in the sense that the benefits and common interests are the ultimate priority. According to Government Regulation Number 56 / 2022 on Communal Intellectual Property, Communal IP consists of Traditional Knowledge, Geographical Indications and Traditional Cultural Expressions. This regulation was prepared based on the consideration that Indonesia's Communal IP potentially become the basic capital of national development and for the purposes of protection, preservation, development and the purposes of protection, development and/or utilization needs to be managed and maintained in the form of inventory.

Article 9 stipulates that the data concerning TCEs inventory should at least contain the name of TCEs; the Custodian of the TCEs; the Classification of TCEs; the Region / Location of TCEs and the Description of TCEs. Inventory is carried out through electronic or non-electronic documentation/archiving; Articles 14 and 15 mandate the establishment of a Data Center that at least contains the name, form, and nature of the Communal IP, the custodian of the Communal IP, the custodian of the Communal IP, the location/area of IP, the description of Communal IP, the documentation of Communal IP and other supporting data. This Data Center is open to the public unless otherwise determined by the Minister.

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[2] Any person is an individual, a group of individuals, a community organization, and/or a business entity in the form of a legal entity in the form of a legal entity or a non-legal entity

Article 16 of Communal IP law regulates that every person can submit an objection to the Minister regarding the Communal IP contained in the Data Center in the event that the data of communal IP is not in accordance with the social institutions that apply in communal society and / or the custodian. In the event that there are objections, the Minister mediates with the relevant parties to examine the objections and can then accept or reject the objections from the applicant. If the Minister receives an objection, the Minister can change or delete the Communal IP from the Data Center.

2.   The Management of Traditional Cultural Expressions in Indonesia: Some Observations

Indonesia has the highest diversification of cultures and cultural expressions in the world. Ironically, the lack of awareness, appreciation, understanding, and proper infrastructure raises the threat to the existence of TCEs, thus, numerous of Indonesia's cultures and cultural expressions are prone to experience extinction due to the inexistence of proper mechanisms of preservation and protection.

In the context of natural rights from the concept of ownership based on John Locke's labor theory of acquisition people/groups of people who make labor/work on resources that are in the public domain get natural property rights as the result of their labor/work (Moore, 2012). This property rights is acknowledged and protected by law. The utilization, preservation, and maintenance of TCEs carried out by the community is a form of "labor" and this becomes the basis and legitimacy for communal ownership of TCEs which must be respected and protected.

The development of a knowledge-based economy where intellectual property is not only related to legal protection assets but also has an impact on the macro economy of a country, among other things, it can be used to increase exports of quality products, promote technological progress, and encourage research and development, carrying out product development as a local and national identity.

Communal ownership of TCEs is naturally inherent in the community which has created, used, maintained, and developed TCEs in a long tradition, across generations and has become a part of the community's social identity (Roisah, 2014). Cultural globalization represents massive chances for Indonesia to showcase the nation's culture and creativity through TCEs (Santyaningtyas & Noor, 2016). However, research from Kastowo (2020) argues that the economic right to TCEs has not been used optimally in the measures to improve the regional economy (Kastowo, 2020).

The development of a knowledge and culture-based economy places TCEs in a central position not only in the dimension of legal protection but also in relation to productive and sustainable commercial utilization through product development as a local and national identity. Therefore, rules related to IP combined with technological instruments may function as both a facilitator and an inhibitor to appropriately accommodating TCEs and indigenous communities as TCEs custodians and producers within the global marketplace for cultural content (Burri, 2010).

TCEs-based regulations in Indonesia (Copyright Law, ILAC, and Government Regulation) show the emphasis on the state's ownership over TCEs. The ownership is in the dimension of the state's authority. According to Jean Jacques Rousseau, the state's authority is built from

the social contract to form the unity to defend and protect the individual rights, communities' rights, and ownership of each individual and community. In this sense, the state's ownership over TCEs comes from the people and communities, therefore it is considered to be the implementation of sovereignty where the state's rights over TCEs are not absolute but are still bound by law. State sovereignty also raises the obligation of the state to regulate, manage, preserve, and support the whole potential utilization of TCEs.

Top-down approach addressed by Indonesian Law Number 5 of 2017 on Advancement of Culture (ILAC-2017). Article 37 ILAC regulates that major industry and/or foreign parties that will utilize objects of advancement of culture for commercial purposes must have a license from the Minister. The requirements for a license are approval based on informed consent, providing a benefit-sharing scheme, and acknowledging the origin of the objects of advancement of culture. The central government must address the benefit sharing to vitalize and sustain the ecosystem related to the object of the advancement of culture. Further, Article 38 ILAC regulates that major industries and/or foreign parties that violate the provisions/requirements of ILAC and/or misuse the license shall be subject to administrative sanctions. The administrative sanctions shall be in the form of: verbal admonition, written admonition, administrative fines, and temporary suspension of activity and / or revocation of license.

To formulate and provide the protection of TCEs, the state, and stakeholders need to have certainty about the scope of the object of protection. Roisah argues that the *sui generis* regulation model of TCEs would be more comprehensive since the *sui generis* regulation can be formulated to be more suitable for the characteristics of TCEs. *The Sui generis* system is expected to prevent individualism, privatization, and monopolistic ownership and utilization of TCEs. Formulating the protection of TCEs in *sui generis* regulation also presents the opportunities to craft the regulation according to the necessities of the state and stakeholders rather than to be bound by the obligation to build the law in accordance with standard norms of TRIPs agreement which is characteristically different with the cosmology of local communities as TCEs holder and custodian. (Roisah, 2017) *Sui generis* regulation developed from plurality and the core concepts of commonality around TCEs will create an adaptive and dynamic society that keeps growing and fosters the growth of culture and cultural expressions.

The inventory of TCEs is the important initial step of protection (Kastowo, 2020) as the implementation of defensive mechanism protection. It is argued that digital technology potentially generated various opportunities related to the inventory of TCEs (Burri, 2010). There are several ways in which digital technologies may act as benevolent factors. Some digital technologies can be the instrument to protect, preserve, and promote TCEs, especially in their dynamic utilization of TCEs. Digital tools can support the formulation of customized databases that enable the authorized members to define and control the rights, accessibility, and reuse of their digital resources, impose customary law of the custodian society about secret/sacred information or culture; prevent the misappropriation of TCEs or utilization in inappropriate ways, ensure disclosure of origin and proper attribution to the custodian and provide the participative opportunity for the custodian to describe and articulate their TCEs in their own words (THE WIPO PUBLICATION, 2003).

Safeguarding of TCEs in terms of preservation, protection, and productive utilization must involve individuals, communities, and government. However, with regard to community participation, the fact that local communities as the custodians of TCEs use digital media less

often is no doubt a challenge to the integration of government action and community participation. Further, many public sector units and institutions in general point to the lack of information available on digital culture. In addition, training technical teams tend to be complex and the links between the different units that collect cultural data are not always firmly established. Also within the realm of access, it should be noted that despite their potential to bridge the gap between urban and rural populations and to integrate persons belonging to minorities, new technologies can produce the opposite effect, in many cases, and they merely increase the disparity between the parties with the advance support of technology and access to technology.

Inventory as the form of defensive protection is important as proof of ownership in the event of cultural claims by foreign or private parties who want to get economic benefits from the use and utilization of TCEs, either directly or their derivatives. In addition, the database can be the source of information regarding the benefit sharing framework. The research from Finger and Schuler reveals that the purpose of benefit sharing is primarily the distribution of advantages and benefits from the creativity and their thinking.(Finger & Schuler, 2004) Benefit sharing is not just about economic benefit; ILAC mandates the capacity building and empowerment in Article 39: The Central Government and Regional Government must provide capacity building / empowerment for advancement of culture to increase the quantity and improve the quality of cultural human resources, cultural organization and cultural institution. Capacity building and cultural institutions are implemented through the improvement of education and training in cultural fields, standardization, certification, and capacity building for cultural institutions and cultural institutes' governance.

Conclusion

The assets of Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs) are the nation's resources that hold massive potential to be engineered to strengthen the nation's identity and increase communities' welfare. TCEs-based regulations in Indonesia show the emphasis on the state's ownership over TCEs in the dimension of the state's authority. It's important to formulate the integration of TCEs-related regulations, further, the government and the community must take necessary action as the supporter of the preservation, protection, and productive utilization of TCEs. *Sui generis* regulation developed from plurality and the core concepts of communality around TCEs perceived to be more adaptive for the dynamic society that keeps growing and fosters the growth of culture and cultural expressions.

The inventory of TCEs becomes the important initial step of protection as the implementation of defensive mechanism protection. There are several ways in which digital technologies may act as benevolent factors, however despite their potential to bridge the gap between urban and rural populations and to integrate persons belonging to minorities, digital technologies can produce the opposite effect, in many cases, and they are merely increasing the disparity between the parties with the advance support of technology and access to technology. In terms of implementation, the Central Government and Regional Government must provide capacity building/empowerment for the advancement of culture to increase the quantity and improve the quality of cultural human resources, cultural organization, and cultural institutions.

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Knotted: In(weave)—My Autoethnographic Inquiry Into Practice

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Abstract

"Knotted" was a video series engaged in an autoethnographic, practice-led research approach that served as a reflective exploration of my identity as an artist, researcher, and educator amidst a dynamically evolving social and cultural landscape. Engaging in performance art practice offers insights into the weaving of my narrative and subject formation as a South African Indian woman. I analyze contemporary culture, delving into human interaction, value systems, religious beliefs, and experiences. Employing narrative inquiry, I navigate the intersections between the rational and emotional self, clouded and filtered through memory and theories of explanation. Memory, as a temporal trajectory, not only encompasses lived experiences but also involves acts of structuring to make sense of these moments. Operating between the realms of potential occurrences and impossibilities allows me to redefine my role as an artist and researcher, drawing from the Indian aesthetic theory of *rasa* and Csíkszentmihály concept of flow. The immersive process of "arting" connects embodied states during a performance, to what I call a transcendental emotional moment (TEM). Thus, aligning with the philosophy of performance in motion with the transformative potential of *rasa* contributing to the making of culture and well-being. This practice becomes a meditation, aiding the reforming and becoming of my emergent self. "The Knotted" leaves traces in lived bodily interactions, captured in muscle memory and kinaesthetic contact, contributing to my identity formation and resilience. The series emphasizes the aesthetic versus anaesthetic embodied experience, revealing traces through movement in written records and lived encounters between bodies and art.

Keywords: *Rasa*, Practice-Led Research, Autoethnography, Identity, Performance Art

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Introduction

As I delve deeper into the intertwining realms of autoethnography, practice led research, and identity I find myself weaving the threads of these concepts together to unravel the intricate tapestry of human experience. Autoethnography provides a powerful lens through which to explore the lived experiences that shape our identities and inform our performances in the world. Through the interplay of *rasa,* I acknowledge the value of my humanness tied to my gender, and the value of my gender is culture-specific. *Rasa* is an Indian aesthetic theory conceptualized by Bharata in the *Nātyashāstra* around (2nd century BCE) meaning the 'juice' or essence, the aesthetic emotion in the visual and performing arts to invoke the emotions firstly in the artist then the audience. *Rasa* processes has steered some of enculturated elements, allowing the exploration of oneself as the inward journey to self-realization in the researcher's[1] creative journey. I struggled to find a footing. This aspect of my identity raises many 'what ifs' and without the correct answers, sometimes I would feel emotionally and mentally suspended. In exploring the intersections of identity Belamghari (2020), performance and memory I aim to understand how they influence one another and how they contribute understand and explore the complexities of these intersections of socio- cultural spaces. The socio-cultural striated meaning and embodied knowing made me happier to integrate my writing, dancing, artmaking to Be(come) in academia. Becoming more resilient helped with a more shared inquiry of engaged practice, and continually shifting the mindset. As I engage myself as a participant in my research, and reflecting on a shadow on the water, the knots, the transparent fabric, bangles, bells, and other materials that I experimented with I take snapshots of the stillness. Framing my experience and the emotion, the mainframe zooms into a particular context. Applying the snapshots or framing added value clarification, the multidimensional world of a dancer/artist/researcher and how I engaged *rasa* and my understanding of emotions to subject formation during the process. My spiritual practices, such as mindfulness and meditation, have layered a significant role in shaping my identity. As I have delved deeper into these practices, I have experienced a sense of expansion, clarity and inner peace. These experiences have contributed to my overall well-being and have become an integral part of who I am. My spirituality is not just a set of beliefs but a lived experience that informs my identity and guides my actions. My journey of self-discovery, resilience and identity formation was through introspection, self-consciousness and cultivated by self-awareness and inner strength.

The Indian Aesthetic Theory of Rasa and Concept of Flow

Rasa explores the multifaceted nature of life through the aesthetic (mood, sentiment and emotion), the mystical (beauty of God, adoration) and metaphysical (essence of truth, reality, infinite bliss) experiences. *Rasa* can then be identified and "interpreted as a strong emotional experience exposed through particular structures, leading to an awareness of universally shared feeling culminating in delightful relish" according to Indian scholar Govind Keshav Bhat (1984, p. 19). Bharata identified eight fundamental emotions known as bhavas. The term "bhava" stems from the root "bhu" meaning to create and these latent emotions are inherent in every human psyche that surfaces into consciousness upon the stimulus (Menon, 2000). The three objective factors that collectively evoke *rasa* are *vibhava* that renders representation (words, gestures and internal feelings), *anubhava* (actual sensing through physiological effects) mainly occurring immediately and involuntarily, and *vyabhicaribhava*

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[1] The 'I', 'artist' and the 'researcher' is used interchangeably throughout the text. The paper also draws from the authors PhD thesis as an inroad to greater discussion.

that encompass emotional elements that deepen one's emotional experience (Skiba, 2016). These nine basic emotions include *shringara*(love), *hasya*(comic laughter), *karuna*(grief, pity), *raudra*(anger), *veera*(courage), *bibhatsa*(disgust), *bhayanaka*(terrible), *adbhuta*(marvelous) and *ananda*(peace) (Adhikari & Saha, 2022). Giving experience a scientific focus in terms of *rasa* is to analyze it from an empirical point of view.

Flow is a psychological construct developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi according to Chilton (2013) lined to creativity and improves well-being that integrates action and awareness. The flow state is experienced when one is immersed in the creative process of making or 'arting'. During this process my mind made mental notes about the details such as ensuring the knots were tight enough to avoid coming undone. I realized that this deep immersion and embodied practice of conceptualization and making led to a new understanding of artistic practice and appreciation. By fitting together, the puzzle of 'enhancing, growing and experiencing to knowing the gained fresh insights into the nature of artistic expression. This suggests that embracing the natural flow of the creative process rather than trying to force a structured approach can facilitate a heightened awareness and appreciation of one's artistic practice.

Autoethnography and Practice-Led Research

Autoethnography provided further insight into my identity construction and my rationalization of why I am the way I am detailed and artistic representation of my acceptance of myself, and how the nodal points of my identity construction (Hiralal, 2013) effectuated healing and resilience. The total immersion and sincerity of becoming, engages a higher state of consciousness evolving, creating and, eventually, disseminating this knowledge through collaboration with oneself, students, fellow artists and the community at large. I engage with the six senses as an avenue to better understand this interrelationship of *Oneness* (God or divinity) and my identity subject- formation as an artist-researcher. However, it is necessary to get a sense of feelings and looking broadly at Damasio in Pontin (2014) who draws attention to the notion of the difference between feelings and emotions as the feelings highlights the cognizance of information that to a large degree remains latent, whilst emotions is the inward and, later, outward expression of activated feelings as they interface with personalised situational life-based experiences. It is also important to note that there is an automatic, body-mind-driven prepared set of actions, which can also, split seconds later. Such shaping is done following previous bodily experiences that have been mapped. Feelings are better reserved for the private, mental experience of the cycles of emotions. The experience is trapped in the muscle memory. In this way, emotions experienced become feelings realised, and this speaks to the body-mind neuro cycle in neurological processes of making meaning. *Rasa* provides me with strategies only for acquiring or appreciating towards the moment of being. These strategies lead to action and acts of doing (and, therefore, in the context of artmaking).

The use of the mobile phone video to capture the spontaneous creative process rather than a rehearsed presentation can be seen as a form of autoethnographic performance (Spry, 2001). While the video quality was low, this approach allows the artist to reflect and record their subjective experience of 'arting' in the moment. This shift away from a polished pre-planned presentation towards a more immediate embodied documentation of the creative process reflects the principle of autoethnography which emphasizes the self as 'other' (Talbot, 1995). By embracing the limitations of mobile phone, I was able to authentically capture the felt

experience of immersion in the creative act, providing insight into my artistic practice (Arnold, 2012).

Another integral component to understanding the interplay between *vibhava, bhava, anubhava* and *rasa* is the notion of how the mind-body-soul (feelings, emotions, experiences) is emerging and communicated into the world (Sundaram, 2014). Every artwork tells a different aspect of my life and, initially, I had not named any one of them because for a long time I felt as if I do not belong and do not have a personality or an identity of value. This however changed as I weaved the tapestry of my subject formation and mindful practices during the making of the performance or artworks incorporating *rasa* strategies. According to Sundarajan (2010), this experience and self-reflecting for an artist relates to something far more than the mundane conditions and trappings of daily life but moves beyond to transcendental contemplation. Sullivan (2006) links this thought to the artist as the role of the lived experience; "subjectivity and memory are seen as agents in knowledge-construction, and strategies such as self-study, collaboration, and textual critiques are used to reveal important insights" (p. 24). This I experienced as it encouraged the idea of how I am able to draw to the idea of the flow experience.

Knotted—In the Immersive Process of "Arting"

The range of work represents the journey, a process over the last four years. Some works convey more silence, others convey more activity but with a more subtle message to a hint or memory of silence.
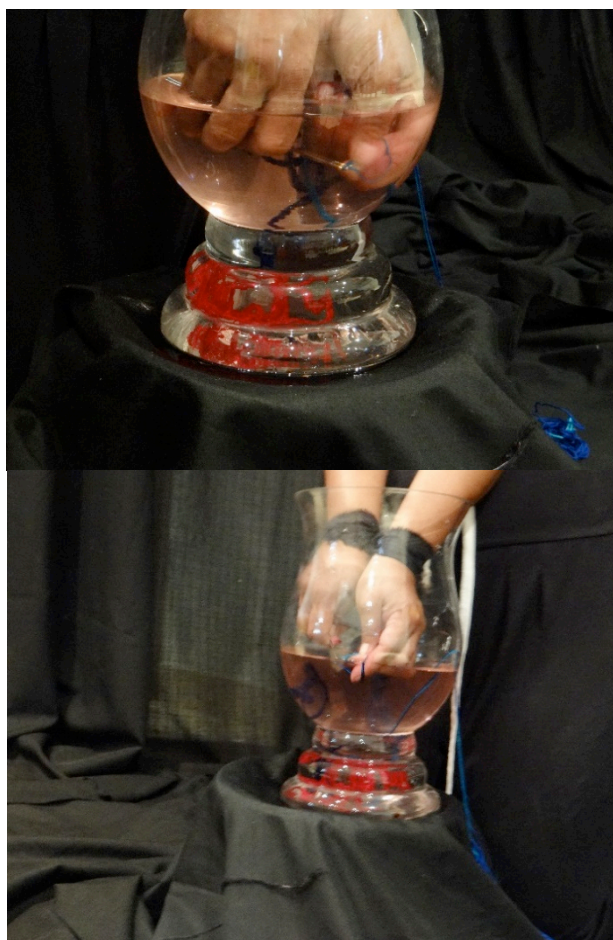

Figure 1: "Restraint" (Reshma Maharajh, 2019)

The artwork titled (Figure 1) "Restraint" serves as a powerful visual metaphor for the artist's experience as an Indian woman navigating the constraints and challenges of my sociocultural context. Through the strategic use of materials, the piece conveys the detrimental impact of limited space for self-expression on the artist's health and well-being. The glass vase symbolizes the visibility as a woman's constraints, while the black fabric represents the emotional emptiness and sense of suffocation felt by myself. The inclusion of water magnifies these feelings, as it distorts and obscures the view through the vase. The crochet cotton and needle on the other hand depict the attempt to create a safety net amidst the overwhelming sense of restraint and suffocation. The red and blue threads serve as a desperate plea, symbolizing the emotional entrapment and physical ailments experienced. The process of creating the artwork mirrors my lived experience. By covering a small pedestal with black fabric and placing a vase atop it, I set the stage for my performance. Clad in black pants, which tethered my surroundings and a white sari blouse, I poured water into a vase before embarking on the intricate task of crocheting knots with the cotton thread. The discomfort and the anxiety induced by the task reflected my fear of damaging the delicate vase, much like the fear of expressing myself freely in the socio-cultural context. The physical constraints of non-expression and non-agency have tangible consequences as I reflect on several health issues. These poignant moments underscore the profound impact of societal constraints on personal agency and enduring power of faith in times of adversity. Through the artwork I invite the viewer to engage with the complex interplay of visibility, constraint and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. By sharing my personal narrative, I hope to raise an awareness about the challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies and the importance of creating safe spaces for self-expression and agency.

The reflections highlight the interconnectedness between the natural act of breathing, the consciousness of visualisation and the alignment of the body with its inherent presence and intimacy. The interweaving of physiological, cognitive and embodied experience serves as a gateway to exploring the concept of *rasa* emotions and the formation of identity and subjectivity. As I use flow as a framework for examining the multifaceted creative process that led to the visual, auditory and kinesthetics performance map. The map embedded the elements of time, space and the energetic body, revealing the complexity and the depth of the creative experience. In preparation for and during the pursuit of my creative endeavours, I consciously align myself with the energy of the universe by beginning with a moment of silence and dep breathing which reconnects my body, mind and soul. Subsequently I utilise the sound bowl to shift the vibration of the environment further facilitating my immersion in the tie, space and bodily engagement required for the creative process. This holistic approach to the creative process grounded in embodied presence, energetic alignment and the interplay of sensory modalities suggest an understanding of the transformative potential of artistic expression. By embracing the natural flow of creativity and the interconnectedness of the physical, mental and spiritual realms, the creative practice becomes a conduit for personal growth, self-discovery and the exploration of the human experience. Drawing on aspects of my identity or areas of my potential subject formation, the intersections offer moments of exploration. Some of the ideas already speak to the potentialities of exploration as these ideas appear as discrete units.

Figure 2: "Gaath - The Knots" (Reshma Maharajh, 2019)

Figure 3: "Unshackling" (Reshma Maharajh, 2019)

My artworks (Figure 2) "Gaath - The Knots" and (Figure 3) "Unshackling" serve as a visual representation of my journey to break free from patriarchal norms and societal expectations, reclaiming ownership of my life on my own terms. These pieces symbolize my defiance against ideologies that once bound me to outdated ways of thinking, allowing me to find agency amidst the mental imprisonment I endured and ultimately liberated myself from. Over time, these artworks evolved into a unified performative piece, marking a complete circle from submission and suffocation to liberation.

Similar to the materials used in "Gaath - The Knots" and "Unshackling" utilize white organza, red paint, bangles, white string, and crochet cotton. These materials serve as a metaphorical journey from captivity to freedom, embodying the emotional and psychological aspects of my transformation to becoming more resilient. My bangles were broken, my *sindoor* (red colour powder) wiped off my forehead, my gendered trappings of marriage were put into the coffin to be incinerated with my husband's body, but the memories were there to eternally haunt me. I relived these moments in my quiet time as a showreel that played repeatedly.

Drawing inspiration from my own experiences of oppression within Indian-based patriarchy I reflect on the oppressive rules and rituals I was subjected to within the institution of marriage. As a mother, I contributed to enriching my family, yet as a widow and single mother, I faced societal scorn and ostracization. This would naturally fill me with a feeling of disgust and rasa helped me to engage the feeling on multiple levels. Firstly, I had to acknowledge the emotion I was experiencing then work through the pain as I engaged in the making process. Working with red ink and paint signifies abundance and prosperity and as a woman bedecks herself with all the ornamentation takes the role of the goddess in the home. However, as a widow I vehemently protested certain practices, for example Indian woman in Indian society are not allowed to perform any of the funeral rites or the prayers of the deceased. I was told to follow scripture and tradition because I did not bear any sons to continue the linage, but my heart and intuition said something else- are daughters not important.

In "Gaath - The Knots", I explore the themes of marginalization, racial discrimination, gender bias which stifled my research pursuits the artwork serves as a rasa moment—a release of latent emotions. Using organza fabric adorned with red handprints, I explore the notion of purity, shame, humiliation, and invisibility stemming from my racialized and intra-Indian Otherness as I struggled to be seen and heard. Bangles tied to a knotted crocheted dome symbolize my liberation from the constraints of widowhood, while the dome itself represents the looming weight of societal judgment. The meticulous process of collecting bangles, purchasing materials, and crocheting the dome mirrors the *vyabhicharibhava* phase—a period of emotional and intellectual engagement that built resilience and tolerance. Each element, from the colourful bangles to the draped organza fabric, each with its own symbolic meaning, represents different facets of my identity and the societal norms I sought to break free from. Through this transformative process, which involves tying and untying knots embodies ultimately, this journey of self-discovery and defiance against societal constraints which was cathartic, allowing me to reclaim agency over my life and embody a sense of ananda—a state of bliss and contentment.

Understanding my artist 'self' during the creative process involves more than just exploring the individual identity. Rather, it is about comprehending the deeper levels of Being and Becoming that are inherent in the experience (Kudelska, 2000). This phenomenology of awareness allowed myself to enter and experience the transitional transcendental space, where I connected with the inner self and merge into a state of *Oneness*. The concept of *rasa* is central to my understanding of my artistic experience. *Rasa* can be understood as a 'taste' or mood of deep enjoyment that arises from the appreciation of an artwork. More importantly *rasa* is not dependent on formal knowledge about an artwork or explicit principles of philosophies in western art. *Rasa* is a vibration that emerges from within an individual enabling them to interact with the artwork in an emotional way to what refer to as TEM "transcendental emotional moment' when the boundary is transcended of one's own identity

merging with the artwork in a state of deep transformative engagement. The TEM is not about the subjective experience of the artist but a universal phenomenon that connects the artist, the artwork and the viewer in a sacred transcendent moment of artistic appreciation.

Identity Formation and Resilience

This sensitivity to observing and interpreting ourselves, or, better, finding ourselves, is inside the experience of 'self-identity'. Thus, the concept of identity, as described by Venn (2020, p. 43) is a knot in a network of intersubjective action and understanding, which implies transformation in the world, and is coupled with the material and the social self. Hermann Lotze (in Larlham, 2012) grounds the idea that "every movement which we execute, every attitude in which we repose, has its meaning rendered plain to us by the feeling of exertion or of enjoyment" (p. 225). When this feeling is kinesthetically experienced, it is one where "the world becomes alive to us through aesthetic enjoyment when one sympathetically expands on our sentience beyond the limits of the body and invests in our kinetic energy" (Lotze, 2012, p. 225). This ties into the authenticity and intimacy of the artwork as Pollock (2007) states "presenting something to the world or making something concrete can sometimes be the only way the real truth come(s) to be known" (p. 10), as *rasa* and meta representation help us make sense of our lived experience. As much as visual artists are able to represent an object or emotion, it will almost always be a *simulacra*—a shadow of the absolute truth. It is in our human nature to mimic anything as it is woven into the fabric of our lives that we can identify with from infancy to our senior years and it is from that mimicking that our learning takes place and understanding of our lived experience to a certain extent (Frost, 2021).

In keeping with Bauer (2011), the phenomenology of awareness is the awareness of Being and this can be meditative, and it focuses on the experience itself, which takes place in the here and now. This experience and self-reflection are far more than the mundane conditions and trappings of daily life and moves beyond transcendental contemplation to the TEM. I argue that this positionality fosters the seeming, being and becoming attributes that the artist explores through experiences. The artist thinks back, experiences now, and plans for the final creative output or artefact. Yet, in the 'now experience of making', the future image is continually re-visioned. I attribute learning about my identity as I engage forces at play in relation to my choice of objects, psychological energies and metaphysical relationships, which contribute to my subjective human understanding of my place within space (Hays, 2016). The medium of art and dance has taught me to see what an imperceptible dynamic layer identity in performance would otherwise be. Through my *rasa* experience the transcendental moment of experiencing myself once I have reached a platform of absolute acceptance, I am able to dissolve outdated aspects of myself and healthily reconstruct my subject formation from a platform of absolute independence, acceptance, and peace.

The material elements are propelled, and function based on the dictates of the mind, and intelligence within the boundary of my spiritual understanding the engine of the human form is the soul itself that informs sensory functionality but is not tangibly visible. I draw on each *rasa* as an emotional energy drawn from our life force, expressed and coloured by our desires to become accustomed to conditioning. The paradigm shift is the provocative shift and dislocates the compass needle. When we inhabit uncertainty, we enter a gap that we cannot see, translucent like water that we can feel, and a silence we try to understand.

Conclusion

In my self-analysis and subject formation, I have come to realise that I exist in a pool of the same ideological functions as other women, mothers, academics, artists and so forth. This realisation has made me understand that the struggles I endure are not in isolation, but rather a shared experience among those who occupy similar social positions and face comparable challenges.my identity and subject formation is no longer about sole character development by myself, for myself and of myself. Instead, it is a synthesis that gives rise to the metaphysics of *Oneness* between the self and the absolute, between humanity and divinity. In the context of artistic practice, this metaphysics of *Oneness* manifests in the relationship between subjectivity of the artist and the objectivity of the work, as well as between the ideal and the material form that emanates from the images.

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Government and Community Strategies in Maintaining the Existence of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis as a World Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Yogyakarta, with its cultural elements, has been recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, emphasizing its global cultural significance. The purpose of this research is to examine the government and community strategies in maintaining the existence of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis as a World Cultural Heritage. This qualitative research employed interviews and documentation as collection data techniques. The collected data was then analyzed through reduction stages, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. The results of the research showed that the strategies taken by the government to maintain the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta are maintaining & protecting the originality, and collaboration between Kraton and government, provincial special regional regulation, the management plan, and the formation of the cosmological axis of Yogyakarta management unit. In addition, the community strategies are participating in community working groups, cultural events, education and outreach, local business engagement, and sustainable practice.

Keywords: Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis, UNESCO, Cultural Heritage, Preservation Strategy, Collaborative Management, Community Participation

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Introduction

In this era, the uniqueness of every country has shaped its character and identity. Every country in the world has a unique culture that differentiates it from one another. The cultural characteristics vary ranging from language, customs, art, music, architecture, traditional clothing, culinary, and values. This cultural diversity enriches global understanding, offering diverse experiences and insights. Indonesia which is known as one of the countries with the most cultural diversity, presents a rich cultural diversity. According to the Geospatial Information Agency (2024), Indonesia has 17.000 islands with rich and diverse cultural mosaics, from the west of Aceh to the east of Papua, it offers a unique cultural heritage. One of the most popular regions in Indonesia is Yogyakarta which is frequently referred to as the heart of Java culture. Yogyakarta is the center of classical Java art and culture such as batik, ballet, drama, music, poetry, and fiction performances.

There are several cultural diversity that have been recognized as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in Yogyakarta which assert its cultural significance at the international level. This includes the magnificent Borobudur Temple, a 9th-century Mahayana Buddhist temple that stands as one of the world's greatest Buddha monuments. Another important site is the Prambanan Temple. A 9th-century Hindu temple complex dedicated to Trimurti, God's expression as Creator, Keeper, and Destroyer. Besides, the Sangiran Ancient Human Site, an important archaeological site for studying the history of human evolution, is located in Central Java. In representing Indonesia's industrial heritage, there is the Ombilin Coal Mining Heritage in Sawahlunto which has also been recognised by UNESCO.

There are many cultural and historical sites in Yogyakarta that can define the Indonesian culture. The city's Cosmological Axis is identified as a potential World Cultural Heritage, and it has had significant historical importance alongside shaping the identity of the region. The Yogyakarta Provincial Government initiated a regulatory framework that would recognize the Cosmological Axis as a heritage site (Siregar, 2019). This recognition therefore provides an opportunity for considering government and community strategies towards conservation and promotion of this cultural treasure at global level.

The City Government of Yogyakarta together with the Provincial Government have recently been involved in various programs aimed at ensuring enhancement of sustainability and preservation of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis. Involving various stakeholders and resources to ensure their continuing significance, these efforts were multifaceted. Recognized by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage since 2014, this marked the beginning of an intricate process that involved elaborate scrutiny, reviews, evaluations and strategic planning.

Over the years, a number of evaluations have been conducted over the years to ensure that the Cosmological Axis satisfied the exacting criteria put in place by UNESCO for cultural heritage listing. The efforts stretched for almost ten years and ended up in September 2023 when Yogyakarta cosmological axis was officially designated as a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO. This honor is not only testament to the cultural or historical importance these landmarks bear but also shows successful partnership as well as dedication on part of local and provincial governments committed to preserving Yogyakarta's rich legacy for future generations. Thus, this study has the purpose of unveiling the government and community-based strategies aimed at conserving and advertising this World Cultural Heritage.

Methods

This research is qualitative in nature and explains extensively on the strategies taken and being put in place by the government and community toward maintaining and sustaining the existence of the Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis as a World Cultural Heritage site. It explicitly tries to explain the various approaches adopted so that the site, rich in cultural and historical values, can still be preserved and appreciated.

The data collection in this research was extensive, including depth personal interviews and massive documentation. Interviews aimed to capture the key stakeholders of individual preservation activities in government officials and community leadership to get an overall understanding of strategies, actions, and perceptions relevant to the preservation initiatives. Sourced from different document types, policy documents, reports, and historical records of each preservation activity, this will provide a basis for their rounded understanding. The data collected was subjected to a rigorous analysis. First in the line followed the step of data reduction where the data was sorted and sifted in order to separate the more relevant and important elements which were to be gathered from it. Subsequent to this, the structuring and presentation of the data were done in such a form that it coherently and clearly makes these findings understandable. Later on, conclusions were drawn, and the results verification was made to ensure that best results are accurate to guarantee its reliability.

This research aims to explore the initiatives from both parties in sustaining the Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis as a World Cultural Heritage site and define such strategies within the broad context of cultural heritage preservation.

Result

The Concept of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis

From the data obtained, it turns out that the cosmological axis is a concept that connects important sites in Yogyakarta into one straight line with philosophical and historical dimensions. Second, The Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis is a creation of the genius of The First Sultan Hamengkubuwana in 1755. Third, the concept itself is often used to explain something about the layout and geographical orientation of key landmarks in the city toward the sacred mount of Merapi. It means not only is the axis a physical straight line that connects various places but also it symbolizes the spiritual relationship of human beings with nature and the cosmos—something indispensable to Javanese culture. It materializes in local philosophy over the disharmony and imbalance between humans and the universe. Presented below is the mapping of the inventoried assets onto the cosmological axis of Yogyakarta.
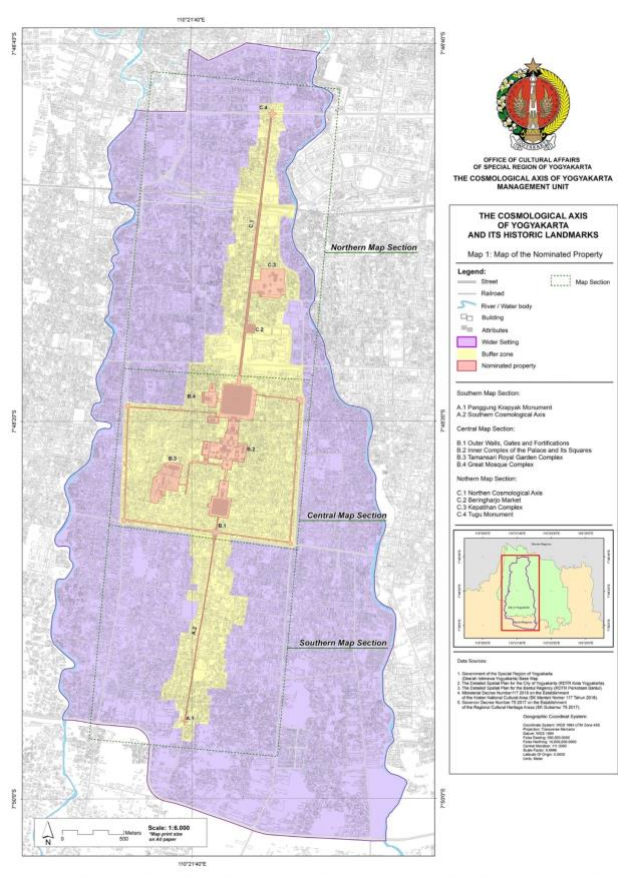
Figure 1: Map of the Inscribed Property

Based on the figure above shows that there are ten landmarks that are attributes along the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta. They are Tugu monument, Kepatihan complex, Beringharjo market, great Mosque complex, Tamansari royal garden complex, Panggung krapyak monument, Outer walls, inner complex of the palace, northern square, and southern square. These attributes are placed in a straight line along the Axis to embody the Javanese philosophy of life regarding the cycle of life (Sangkan Paraning Dumadi), harmonious and ideal life (Hamemayu Hayuning Bawono) and the relationship between man and God (Manunggaling Kawula Gusti). These landmarks are connected through the design, rituals and management system of traditional and Kraton Yogyakarta.

Government Strategies

Some strategies have been implemented by the government and the community to maintain the existence of cosmological axis of Yogyakarta. On the government side, the strategies are divided into five (5) points. The first is maintaining and protecting the originality, Properties within the Kraton are protected by national and local laws, traditional and modern management systems, and community-based management. The original building still stays the same. For example, Tugu monument in 1910 and the Kota Gedhe Mosque in 1888 are still relatively the same as the building right now. Then, the Kraton area is designated as a National Heritage Area by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, and the core zone, buffer zone, and wider setting have been designated as a Provincial Heritage Area.

The second strategy is Synergy between Kraton and the Government. Kraton is a royal palace that is the residence and centre of government of a Sultan and becomes the centre of culture and customs, while the government is institutions that organise and manage public affairs. In this case, kraton will take in charge of traditional management system (Tata rakating paprentahan and Tata rakating wewangunan). At the same time, the government is responsible for a joint secretariat for the management of the sultanate's strategic areas which includes policy and decision-making levels. So, both The Kraton and the government altogether are responsible for overseeing conservation, construction, and other activities that affect values in the Cultural Heritage area.

The third is Provincial Special Regional Regulation. As a special region, Yogyakarta has a special regulation to maintain the local heritage. For example, regulation No. 5/2019 regulates the height, location, and density of buildings within protected areas. The Governor's Regulation on Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) of 2022 mandates HIA for all projects that impact the property. and more regulations to preserve and maintain the cultural heritage.

The next strategy is the Management Plan, which is the authoritative document that guides all stakeholders in planning and carrying out policies and programs to ensure the protection and preservation of Outstanding Universal Value, integrity, and authenticity of nominated cultural heritage property. The Management Plan for 2022-2025 has been developed, and the property is guided by the traditional system of Tata Rakiting Wewangunan.

The last strategy is the formation of an operational management unit. The Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta Management Unit, established in 2021, is responsible for property management. The unit is responsible for implementing the management plan, including coordinating the Community Working Group and monitoring its implementation in close coordination with all stakeholders.

Community Strategies

Some strategies have been taken by society to participate in maintaining this world cultural heritage. The first, Community Working Group (CWG) is a local organization for those who live along the axis dedicated to heritage conservation. These organisations coordinate efforts and liaise between the community and government. For example, these CWGs would identify the potential in each district and deliver it to the government for further policies. Second, in Cultural Events, the community participates and contributes to a series of cultural festivals organised by the government, especially those held along the cosmological axis road. Third, Education and outreach, Community members organize such activities, including school programs and informal seminars to educate others about the importance of heritage conservation. This can help to build a broader base of support and understanding, particularly among young people. Fourth is local business engagement; communities along the cosmological axis create traditional businesses to maintain and introduce Yogyakarta culture to tourists. This can also be an attractive thing for tourists who want to shop for local crafts and cultural stuff. The last is sustainable practices in which the community voluntarily helps to keep the cosmological axis area clean. Implementing sustainable practices at heritage sites, such as limiting waste, using environmentally friendly materials in maintenance, and controlling visitor access to sensitive areas, can help ensure the existence of these sites.

Discussion

In terms of developing Yogyakarta into another cultural hub, there must be participation from community members and local authorities in sustainable tourism development initiatives (Isdarmanto et al., 2021). Moreover, such an initiative does not just bring tourists but also helps to reveal how culturally abundant and historically deep-rooted the city is. The governance structure in Yogyakarta is characterized by uneven decentralization within an integrated nation state that creates both difficulties and prospects for cultural preservation and development. The unity between government and leadership with regard to cultural heritage is highlighted by Sultan's position as Governor of Special District of Yogyakarta (Asmorojati et al., 2022). Keraton Yogyakarta represents one among several institutions serving as custodians for Java traditions and heritage while practicing cultural diplomacy (Nugraha et al., 2022).

The efforts they make are aimed at enhancing the preservation and development of regional cultural identity on national and international scales. This is further intensified by dynamic interaction in UNESCO selection criteria that gives prominence to Philosophy Equity as a prospective World Cultural Heritage Site for Yogyakarta. It not only acts as an urban icon but also represents philosophical and cultural aspects of Yogyakarta's heritage (Syahdani, 2023). This explains the relevance of knowing the standards set by UNESCO which underscores the importance of upholding authenticity and integrity for various cultural sites like Cosmological Axis.

Different strategies and measures have been used to preserve historical places so as to maintain their significance or even existence, in such fields as cultural heritage conservation or urban development. For instance, there have been attempts in recent times by Yogyakarta City Government working together with Provincial Government to enhance sustainability of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis. In fact, there has been an undertaking to re-constitute green spaces around axial zone showing commitment towards maintaining both cultural and environmental authenticity of this significant ecosystem (Agathis et al., 2021). There are other methods that save the axis and have an impact on local communities as well as its surroundings. Besides, it is important to note that this city can only be branded as a major tourist attraction through the use of marketing strategy which takes advantage of the unique heritage, culture and cuisine in Yogyakarta. One important character emerging from literature is about adaptive sustainable reuse, stated (Spina, 2020) in her study. Adaptive reuse is a way that extends lifespan of heritage site; it is also an urban strategy to promote economic-cultural-social values hence helping local area growth. The present-day view implies matching between preserving inheritance with modern layout requirements in cities such as these ones.

It is further added that the cultural intersection and urban branding probed by Evans (2003), reflect a new phase where cities are developing as centers of culture and using contemporary art and cultural districts to brand them. This points out the increased transformation of cultural heritage into a tradable commodity, with institutions like museums and art districts as the center of city identity and global attraction. Cultural commodification raises questions to heritage conservation and commercialization in urban environments. Again, it was succinctly put forward by Rahman, when putting forth a case for protection of diversified heritage, in terms of its contribution toward the preservation of cultural identity, promotion of tourism, economic development, environmental conversation, enrichment of education, and public pride. This holistic view further recognizes heritage sites not for their historic value, but

because of the broad contributions they make to society and the objectives of sustainable development. Examples drawn from the case study illustrate ways to manage this complexity and channel tourism into community empowerment. In summary, these scientific works show that interactions between heritage conservation, urban development, and community involvement are complex. It is through the strategies of re-adaptation, embracing digitalization, sophisticated techniques of documentation, and striking a balance between commercial interests and conservation goals that governments and communities can successfully negotiate the challenges of relevance and integrity of cultural heritage amidst a fast-changing world.

Further steps should be initiated to maintain the existence of the Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis as World Cultural Heritage after the declaration. From the government, through exploratory efforts, and the community strategies in preserving its presence, the Cosmological Axis of Yogyakarta as a World Cultural Heritage Site demonstrates some initiatives to protect this city's cultural heritages. It is when the multilayered identity of Yogyakarta is explored, the identities of its places and citizens explained, and marketing strategies put in place that the city embarks on a journey for sustainable tourism development and conservation of culture. The active involvement shown by the stakeholders at different levels—from government instrumentalities to public bodies—indicated collective efforts being made in an attempt to sustain the culture of Yogyakarta at the international level.

Conclusion

According to the data analysis, it can be concluded that the Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis is the conceptual axis which links several important sites in Yogyakarta along a straight line, reflecting the spiritual connection between human beings, nature, and the cosmos, and is therefore very significant in Javanese tradition. This reflects the local philosophy pertaining to the balance and harmony between human beings and the universe. Government steps towards the maintenance of Yogyakarta Cosmological Axis are conserving and protecting the originality and synergy between Kraton and the government through the provincial special regional regulation, management plan, and establishment of the management unit for the cosmological axis of Yogyakarta. Other strategies from civilians include participation in community working groups, cultural events, education, and outreach, local business engagement, and work practices.

Acknowledgments

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Sowing Peace Through Organic Farming for Food Security and Sustainable Livelihood in Conflict-Ridden Communities

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Abstract

This study determines the nexus between conflict, peace, food security, and sustainable livelihood. It is descriptive, exploratory, qualitative research using a triangulation method such as key informant interview, focus group discussion, and participatory rural appraisal involving the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebel returnees-beneficiaries of the *From Arms to Farms* program in Kauswagan and neighboring communities in Lanao del Norte, Philippines. The program has a unique approach to peacebuilding and rebuilding communities in conflict from the Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation process due to its "no disarming" strategy and sustainable agriculture as a platform for sustainable peace and development. Thus, the program fights poverty through farms, not firearms. The institutionalization of organic farming by the local government has promoted community organizing, capacity building, peacebuilding, resource mobilization, and empowerment of local communities. Rebel returnees were provided with livelihood and support services, which resulted in improved family income and overall livelihoods. It also ensures a sufficient, nutritious food supply and available food choices for their families and community. It has encouraged continuous learning and knowledge sharing on sustainable agriculture and technology transfer. Rebel returnees were transformed into self-reliant and resilient farmer entrepreneurs and leaders by example in organic farming. The *From Arms to Farms* program has brought about positive transformations in the lives of rebel returnees, their families, and their communities. Food security and improved rural livelihoods in communities contribute to mitigating and preventing conflicts and securing sustainable peace and development.

Keywords: Conflict, Peace, Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security, Sustainable Livelihood

Introduction

It is evident that there are strong links between conflict, food security, sustainable livelihood, and peace. Conflicts nowadays, have a more localized nature, which implies that impacts on food security, nutrition, and livelihood also tend to be localized. The United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development recognizes the importance of peace for food security and improving food security, nutrition, and rural livelihoods in thwarting conflicts and sustaining peace (Holleman, 2017). Moreover, the 2030 Agenda sees the eradication of poverty and hunger (Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] 1 and 2) as preconditions to ensuring peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16). Conversely, avoiding conflict and violence is critical to achieving the other SDGs (FAO-UN, 2007).

Food security policies and programs build resilience to conflict (Breisinger et al. 2014). However, such policies and programs are immaterial in the context of conflict-ridden communities. Holleman (2017, p.xiv) suggests "concerted efforts by various stakeholders across many areas of intervention". He argues that "food security and nutrition interventions will only have a sustainable impact on peace when implemented as part of a broader set of multisectoral developmental and peacekeeping interventions." Thus, a sustainable community-based agriculture program is deemed necessary to empower people within their localities to actively participate in decision-making processes, such as in identifying, planning, and implementing programs with support from governments and other stakeholders.

On the other hand, there are diverse paths to sustainable development and approaches to peace. The *From Arms to Farms* program in Kauswagan and neighboring communities in Lanao del Norte, Philippines has a unique approach to peacebuilding and rebuilding communities in conflict from the Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation (DDR) process because of its "No disarming" strategy and sustainable agriculture as a platform for sustainable peace and development. Thus, the program fights poverty through farms, not firearms.

This paper describes the condition of the community in terms of peace and order, economic, social cohesion, and environmental aspects before the implementation of the *From Arms to Farms* program and its impacts in socio-political, economic, and environmental dimensions on the communities. It aims to enhance the understanding of how conflict impacts food insecurity and malnutrition, and how improvements in food security, nutrition and rural livelihoods can contribute to preventing conflict and sustaining peace.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive and exploratory qualitative research. Through a triangulation approach, it utilized various methods, such as a case study, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and the application of Participatory Rural Appraisal tools, like gender activity and access and control profiles, to highlight gender dimensions. Twenty-eight (28) key informants who are rebel returnees from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) were involved in the study. The participants consisted of 6 MILF/MNLF commanders, 12 members, and 10 *Bangsabae* (Bangsamoro women), all beneficiaries of the *From Arms to Farms* program. Representatives from other program stakeholders, such as the local government unit (LGU) of Kauswagan, the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI), and

the 15th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, were also involved. The consent of key informants was secured before conducting KIIs and FGDs. The study used a thematic analysis of the qualitative data on similar and different themes from KIIs and FGDs. Descriptive statistics was also utilized, particularly the frequency count and percentage using the Statistical Package for Social Science for quantitative data. A literature review supported the analyses and recommendations.

Findings

Condition of the Community

Peace and Order

Based on the key informants' narratives and focus group discussions, the community's condition in 2000-2009 in terms of peace and order was critical and unstable. The wars in 2000, 2003, and 2008 resulted in the devastation and displacement of residents in Munai, Tangcal, and Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte. Kauswagan was considered a barometer for armed conflict between the government and Muslim rebels since President Joseph Estrada declared All-Out-War against Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) led by Abdullah Macapaar "Commander Bravo " bin Sabbar in March 2001 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2015). Kauswagan was once a conflict-ridden community that suffered during Martial Law and war between "Ilaga" (rat) figured armed Christian group and the Muslim "Barracuda" (fierce fish) and "Black Shirts." There were ambushes and massive evacuations due to war. Five (5) meters from the highway was considered a battlefield. Encounters between the MILF and the government troops were inevitable because there was no peace agreement.

Kauswagan was a "ghost" municipality. The area was critical due to kidnapping, robbery, killing, and carnapping. The government neglected them and had not provided support services to uplift the community's economic condition. In Munai, almost all residents were rebels and did not recognize the government. Even children carried weapons. People were fighting against the government because they did not receive support services. The government did not pay for the firearms they surrendered. Civilians from Munai, Lininding, and Tangcal evacuated to Marawi, Lanao del Sur. The places were no man's land; houses were burnt and looted. In 2007, there was a *rido* or Meranaw clan feud between Mutia and Luksadatu, and all the residents in interior barangays evacuated to Brgy. Poblacion, Munai Lanao del Norte. Kauswagan had witnessed and suffered from the atrocities of war, especially after 2002, when the Philippine government declared an 'all-out' war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Future Policy, 2019).

The major causes of conflicts and unrest in the municipality were the unresolved land disputes between the Meranaws and Visayan settlers, the experience of discrimination among different ethnic groups, and inadequate access to essential services and development opportunities. As a result, many lives were lost, and many development opportunities were missed. The town deteriorated due to corruption, ineffective local government units, disunity among municipal officials due to vested political and economic interests, rampant mismanagement of public funds and tax collections, and an increased poverty incidence level to 79% in 2008 (Assisi Development Foundation, 2021).

Economic

Due to repeated conflicts such as *rido* and wars, the economic condition was poor. People depended only on relief from Local Government Units (NGOs) since they did not have stable jobs and incomes. Rebels or combatants had no income and relied on their supporters' donations. No investors; people were afraid to put up businesses and livelihoods due to war. Some were only involved in small businesses for daily survival. Farmers left their farms; landowners decided to sell their coconut farms due to the scenario that now and then, there was an outlaw. The local governance was not sound, and no support services were provided to the communities. No infrastructure facilities such as water systems, farm-to-market roads, electricity, post harvest facilities, and transport facilities supporting agriculture. Huge losses in properties and agriculture were reported, and thousands of residents were affected and displaced. Kauswagan was ranked with a high poverty incidence rate of 79% in 2009 (ATI, 2019). Massive displacement and dislocation of communities led to health, education, and economic deterioration. The situation also created an atmosphere of mistrust between the Muslims and the Christians (Galing Pook, 2013).

Social Cohesion

There used to be a harmonious relationship between Muslims and Christians. Some of the Christians were born in Muslim communities such as Cayontor, Paiton, and Tingin-Tingin. However, due to conflict between the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Christians and Muslims no longer co-exist. Christians no longer lived in the hinterlands, and Meranaws did not live in coastal areas. The local people had lost their trust in the government. People were fighting against the government because they felt neglected by the government. Rebel returnees lost their trust in the government because the government did not pay for the firearms they surrendered. They questioned the government's sincerity since the promised livelihood assistance and other support were not granted (ATI, 2019).

Environmental

Meanwhile, natural resources were not utilized. Agricultural lands in Munai and Kauswagan could have been more productive. Most of the farmlands were in the uplands. Farming was just survival; it was monocropping, non-irrigated, chemical-based, synthetic, or inorganic. The soil was acidic. The main crops planted were cassava, corn, and upland rice for family consumption. Even the simplest technology of rice was absent. People in Cayontor and Tingin-Tingin were known as producers of upland rice but not vegetable farmers. In Munai and Tangcal, farmlands were fertile, but farming activity was minimal due to wars and the absence of irrigation. During droughts and rainy seasons, farming was a failure. Streams and springs were water sources; however, these were not developed for potable water and farming.

Furthermore, the major causes of conflicts and unrest in the municipality were the unresolved land disputes between the Meranaws and Visayan settlers, the experience of discrimination among different ethnic groups, and inadequate access to essential services and development opportunities. As a result, many lives were lost, and many development opportunities were missed. The town deteriorated due to corruption, ineffective local government units, disunity among municipal officials due to vested political and economic interests, rampant mismanagement of public funds and tax collections, and an increased poverty incidence level

to 79% in 2008 (Assisi Development Foundation, 2021). Poverty, hunger and food insecurity, together with a highly. unequal distribution of income, land and other material goods, can create feelings of anger, hopelessness and injustice among different sectors of the population. There may also be a perceived lack of support from formal and informal institutions in addressing the risks of human and food insecurity (Holleman, 2017).

Data indicate that conflict reduces food availability impacting agricultural production by destroying agricultural assets and infrastructures (Breisinger et al., 2014). Moreover, data imply that poverty, hunger, food insecurity, poor governance, and government negligence in providing support services and infrastructures to address human and food insecurity create feelings of anger, hopelessness, and distrust in the government. Breisinger et al. (2014) and Holleman et al. (2017) pointed out poverty, inequalities in income, land and natural resources, poor governance, and lack of support from formal and informal institutions to address the risks of human and food insecurity as key drivers of conflict.

Impacts of the From Arms to Farms Program

The findings of the study revealed that the *From Arms to Farms* program resulted in positive transformations in the lives of rebel returnees, their families, and their communities.

Socio-Political Aspect

The *From Arms to Farms* program has paved the way for the Local Government Units (LGU) of Kauswagan to institutionalize organic farming through a municipal ordinance declaring Kauswagan "an organic farming municipality." In collaboration and partnerships with other stakeholders, the LGU provided funding, capacity-building and policy support. The LGU-Kauswagan used various strategies for the promotion, advocacy, and sustainability of sustainable agriculture programs in the municipality, such as the establishment of demonstration farms at the different levels (household, communal, Barangay Local Government Unit, Local Government Unit, Gulayan sa Paaralan); the Agro and Aqua Organic Agriculture Fair during April 19-25 every year. There is also the active participation of NGOs, POs, Cooperatives, and Associations in Local Special Bodies, especially the Local Development Council. This implies that food security and nutrition interventions will only have a sustainable impact on peace when implemented as part of a broader set of multi-sector developmental and peacekeeping interventions (Holleman et al., 2017). Moreover, the case shows that limited measures taken by the central government can be supplemented by local action for a sustainable solution (UCLG Peace Prize, 2016).

Sustainable development programs ought to invest significant resources in developing the local social capital necessary to maintain performance over the long run (Pretty, 2002; Reij & Waters-Bayer, 2002) as cited in Mog (2004). Listening to the local people and following their advice was key to the program's success (Heindorf, 2019). The program made remarkable strides in community organizing and capacity building in conflict-ridden communities within and outside the municipality. The *From Arms to Far* program facilitated rebel returnees to organize their respective communities and provided them with capacity-building training/seminars. Moral value formation is integrated into organic farming to improve farmers' well-being. Technical assistance is provided to people's organizations (POs) in making project proposals to access support services from NGOs, GO, and private. Ten (10) rebel returnees associations registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and are in the process of accreditation to Cooperative Development Authority (CDA).

People's organizations have mobilized resources from their membership fees and monthly dues aside from the funds accessed from NGOs, GOs, and the private sector and used them for income-generating projects. It also promoted continuous learning and knowledge sharing on various sustainable agriculture strategies among rebel returnees, facilitating technology transfer. Gender roles and cooperation were evident within the family and the community, helping families to stay intact and spend quality time together. After joining the program, most (90%) rebel returnees acknowledged undergoing self-transformation, helping them become self-reliant and resilient farmer entrepreneurs. Commanders who joined the program also transitioned into leadership roles, setting a positive example in farming practices. Farmer rebel returnees developed a good disposition, self-esteem, faith in God, and trust in their leaders to improve their communities. These are manifested from the responses shared by research participants,

> *Ang pagpanguma negosyo gihapon. Nagtanom mi og saging, gabaligya pud og seedling pwede pud mi suholan pagtanom og saging.*
> "Farming is also a business. We planted bananas and also sold seedlings. We also offer our labor for hire. We plant bananas to other farms for additional income."

> *Ang gihatag nga financial assistance kantidad og PhP150,000 sa DA-ATI gigamit sa pagpalambo sa uma. Gikuha ang tanan sa pagpanukad, palit og hayupan, gipuhunan og ginagmay nga negosyo, pangompra og tibuok lubi, ug nakapalit og luna.*
> "The financial assistance worth PhP150,000 given to me by DA-ATI was used for farm development, to buy livestock, draft animals, and a farm lot, and for capital for a small business like buying and selling coconuts." (Chair Sacar, 46 years old)

> *Leader ug model, nakita gyud ko nila naggunit og pala, nag-actual sa pagpanguma. "Lingaw kaayo ko sa pag-atiman sa akong farm, fishpond, ug livestock."*
> "I am a leader and a model. They have seen me holding a shovel and doing actual farming. 'I enjoyed taking care of my farm, fishpond and livestock.'" (Kumander Benjie, 60 years old)

> *Miyatembang sa kapamomolaan so manga membro. Miyaka-iwas sa kapMarites.*
> "Members got busy in organic farming and avoided gossip-mongering." (Bangsabae)

> *Ako proud nga mag-uuma, ang gibuhi sa pamilya agi sa siningutan, kinugihan.*
> "I am a proud farmer. I can provide for my family through sweats and hard work." (Chair Sacar, 60 years old)

> *Tibuok pamilya magtinabangay, walay suholay aron ang budget sa pagkaon gamiton. Tulo (3) mi kabuok nag-ugmad, kauban nako duha (2) ka anak lalaki. Sa nakabalo na sila nag-separate na og umahan.*
> "The whole family works together. We do not hire labor and use the budget for food instead. Together with my two sons, we do farming. When they were knowledgeable and skillful enough, they separated and developed their own farms." (Chair Sacar, 46 years old)

> *Sa una, dili ko ka-serbisyo sa akong pamilya. Karon, kada adlaw nako nila makita. Nalipay akong pamilya wala ko namatay sa giyera.*
> "Before, I did not get to serve my family. But now, they get to see me every day. My family is happy that I did not die in war." (Kumander Benjie, 60 years old)

>*Lingaw kaayo ko og atiman sa akong livestock ug fishpond.*
> "I really enjoyed managing my livestock and fishpond." (Benjie, 60 years old)

Economic Aspect

The program has helped reduce inequality by affording access and distributing benefits among rebel returnees, regardless of geographic location, gender, and social status. Rebel returnees increased their family income now compared before with estimated monthly earnings of a minimum of PhP10,001-20,000 and a maximum of PhP50,000 and above (PhP20,954). Moreover, the program has transformed rebel returnees into farmers and entrepreneurs. The program has offered various livelihood options in farming. Rebel returnees have acquired livelihood and entrepreneurial skills from their training and exposure. They are also encouraged to produce more to sell and generate income. Thus, the program helps the rebel returnees find ways to reduce risk and increase resilience through various livelihood options. Their socio-economic condition before, as described by some commanders and ordinary members,

>*MNLF pa ko, lisud kaayo ang kahimtang, walay sweldo, depende lang sa ihatag nga suporta, depende sa naay malooy.*
> "When I was still a MNLF, my situation was difficult, with no salary. We only depend on the support given, depending on who feels pity for us." (Kumander Batman, 62 years old)

>*Sugod og kalisud, gubat diri, gubat didto. Walay hayop bisan kanding, isa ra ka hinagiban ang nabilin, lagalaw.*
> "We started from the worst, the war here and there. No livestock, even a goat, only one tool I had, a bolo or *lagalaw*." (Chair Sacar, 46 years old)

>*Sa pagpananom og gulay, naay kwarta kanunay, dili kinahanglan ang kapital, kahago ug singot ra.*
> "In vegetable farming, there is always money. It does not need a capital, only sweat and hard work." (Ibra, 41 years old)

>*Dako kaayo ang pasalamat kay Mayor Arnado kay naharuhay na. Ang programa nakahaw-as sa kapit-os sa mga tawo.*
> "So thankful to Mayor Arnado because our economic condition is better now. The program uplifted the living condition of the people." (Azis, 25 years old)

>*Ako ang nagpasiugda sa ATM sa pagpanguma. Adunay annual, quarterly, monthly ug weekly. Sama sa pinya tinuig, lubi quarterly, saging ug vermi monthly.Ang vermi production maoy nakapahaw-as kanamo sa kalisud. Gikan sa pinakaubos nga ang-ang niuswag gyud.*
> "I was the one who promoted Automated Teller Machine (ATM) in farming in different modes depending on harvesting times like annual, quarterly, monthly, and weekly. Pineapples, for example, can be harvested annually, coconuts are quarterly, and bananas and vermicompost are monthly. Vermi production uplifted us from poverty. From the lowest level, we improved." (Chair Sacar, 46 years old)

To improve people's resilience to weather shocks and lower the incentive for participating in conflict "sustainably," alternative income sources, economic growth, and diversification are

needed in addition to social protection (Breisinger et al., 2014). Hence, a more diverse livelihood base is more sustainable as shocks to one or more components can be compensated for by enhancing others (Morse & McNamara, 2013).

Household-level food security is a pre-condition for community-level food security. There is a sufficient food supply and available food choices for their families and communities-upland rice as a staple food, vegetables, livestock, and fish for their viand needs, as cited by 89%. Some some of the commanders and Bangsabae have shared,

> *Kada harvest sa organic upland rice dili moubos sa singkwenta (50) ka sako para konsumo ra sa pamilya.*
> "Every harvest, at least 50 sacks of organic upland rice are reserved for family' s consumption only." (Kumander Benjie, 60 years old)

> *Wala nahutdan og pagkaon.*
> "We never ran out of food." (Kumander/SB Malic, 49 years old)

> *Miyabibo so pagkain ka kagiya ko miyawna na daa khakan.*
> "Enough food is now available compared before." (Bangsabae)

A majority (89%) of rebel returnees have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The family is safe from chemicals because their food is organically-grown, fresh, and nutritious, such as upland rice, vegetables, fish (tilapia) from fishpond, and native chicken.

> *Healthy, no need mag-exercise kay busy sa uma. Konsumo organic upland rice ug gulay. Sud-an, tilapia presko dili puno sa ice.*
> "We are healthy. We do not need to exercise since we are busy farming. We consume organic upland rice and vegetables. Our viand is fresh tilapia." (Kumander Benjie, 60 years old)

> *Healthy mga anak, ilikay sa mga pagkaon nga dili organic, kaon gyud og gulay, preskong tilapia mamingwit lang, naa pay bisaya nga manok.*
> "My children are healthy. Eating inorganic foods is avoided. They eat vegetables, fresh tilapia from fishpond in the backyard and native chicken." (Kumander/SB Malic, 49 years old)

Furthermore, some were able to send their children up to college in private schools and became professionals. Children of rebel returnees and Christian farmers in poverty engaged in farming entrepreneurship and provided with employment opportunities at the local government units. The OTP helped farmers save on transportation and marketing costs while ensuring fair prices for their farm products.

Most importantly, rebel returnees are proud of being farmers and find happiness and enjoyment in managing their farms, livestock, and fishpond. Livelihood is not just about a means to survival but also about providing resources with which people can enhance and enjoy their lives (Morse & Mc Namara, 2013). The program allows the rebel returnees to become productive, boosts their sense of personal well-being, and gives them a sense of purpose in life. Thus, the technology, practices, and systems being adopted by the farmers or

they are made to adopt automatically influence their lives, happiness, and well-being (Hosrtkotle-Wessler, 1999) cited in Mendoza (2004).

Environmental Aspect

Rebel returnees have adopted and implemented effective, sustainable agriculture practices, including crop diversification, crop rotation, planting of nitrogen-fixing plants, contouring, integrated pest management, and using indigenous knowledge systems. Water management is implemented through contouring, achieved by planting pineapples, which effectively minimizes soil erosion and water run-off. These practices helped in preventing land degradation and promoting a healthy environment. Experiences and observations of farmer rebel returnees show that the pest and disease management options in organic farming heavily depend on preventive measures rather than curative practices, which are based on ecologically safer management methods (Haldhar et al.,2017) cited in Kumar et al. (2020). Rotating crops in diverse and complex patterns is one of the oldest agronomic approaches used by farmers to control nutrient and water balances, weed, pest, and disease.

Conclusions

This study showed the nexus between conflict, food security, sustainable livelihood, peace, and development. Poverty, hunger, food insecurity, inequalities, or unequal distribution of income, land, and other material goods were the causes of the previous conflict in Kauswagan and neighboring communities in Lanao del Norte, Philippines. Moreover, the lack of support from local government units, non-government organizations, and the private sectors in addressing human and food insecurity protracted conflict in the communities. So, effective institutions with courageous leadership must address the root causes of conflict. Thus, building and sustaining peace through good governance, food security, and sustainable livelihood (UCLG Peace Prize, 2021).

This study presents case studies reflecting the transformative power of agriculture in war-torn communities. It offers a broader perspective of development that in establishing an economically viable farming system, attitudes and mindsets can be changed even among individuals who lead a life of rebellion. Thus, the objective of development is not merely to increase incomes or improve poverty indicators but also to expand people's fundamental freedoms (Dongier et al., 2018).

The *From Arms to Farms* program has transformed rebel returnees into self-reliant and resilient farmer entrepreneurs. The program has influenced farmers' attitudes toward land utilization, environmental awareness and protection, and the minimization of nonrenewable resource consumption by adopting and implementing sustainable agriculture practices. Food security and improved rural livelihoods in the communities contributed to mitigating and preventing conflicts and securing sustainable peace and development.

In general, the *From Arms to Farms* program is geared towards the achievement primarily of SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms) and SDG 2 (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 10 (Reduced inequality), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals) as preconditions and mechanisms to ensure peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16) and sustainable communities (SDG 11).

Acknowledgments

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