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*Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Marriage and Family Among  
Mosuo Community in China*

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**Abstract**

The Mosuo people live in the mountainous region of southwest China, on the border of Yunnan and Sichuan provinces, in the Lugu Lake area. This group has been under-represented in the field of research which often resulted to exclusion of some social services. Marriage has often been the subject of study among anthropologist all over the world. This study investigates the construction of marriage, familial patterns of Mosuo rural community and analyze their special marital status, practices, and functions of marriage using Matrilineal system theory. This research utilized a qualitative approach through ethnographic study, to enable the researchers to identify some unexpected issues that may arise during data collection. In this research, a theoretical paradigm has been established as a frame of reference in interpreting research findings. The researchers employ ethnographic methods to understand the phenomena on how Mosuo families interact within their proximal environment. The researchers played the role as virtual participant observers for a couple of weeks and conducted unstructured interviews, focus groups, and textual analysis to qualitatively collect anthropological data. The expected outcome of this study is a systematic analysis of the family structure and marriage system of the Mosuo people from the socio-anthropological perspective and can be used by future academics in the field of Sociology and Anthropology as their frame of reference on the changes of marriage patterns and norms. In addition, this may improve the record of racial and ethnic groups in China for societal awareness and future involvement of Mosuo community for policy formulation and practices implications.

Keywords: Family, Mosuo Community, Socio-Anthropological Analysis

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## Introduction

### Background and Context

In the vicinity of Lugu Lake, in the hilly southwest region of China between the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan, reside the Mosuo people (Mattison, 2010).<sup>1</sup> It is a Tibetan-Myanmar descendant of farmers and herders and the only matrilineal clan still in existence in China, with a population of 40,000 (Wen et al., 2004).<sup>2</sup> This study aims to delve into the intricate marital status and family structure unique to the Mosuo people by examining the family and marriage patterns within the rural community of Mosuo. Academics are pursuing a deeper understanding of these topics due to the lack of literature on the Mosuo family structure and marriage customs.

According to Mattison (2011),<sup>3</sup> the Mosuo family structure is typical mainly, with the mother's side of the bloodline establishing the family and the father resuming his matrilineal links. The mother's brother also plays a significant role in the nuclear family. In other words, according to Mattison (2010), the uncle must assume responsibility for the child's upbringing. The "walking marriage" is the type of marriage that only Mosuo people use. A man enters a woman's chamber late afternoon and leaves the next day (Mattison, 2011). As a result, Mosuo created a system of lawless marriage in which couples were only intended to be temporary (Chen & Lu, 2019).<sup>4</sup> At present, the research on the Mosuo marriage customs and family structure is relatively limited, and there is a lack of many written materials. While there is growing interest in this indigenous community, there has not been enough in-depth study of their cultural practices and social dynamics. Previous studies have only provided surface-level observations without a thorough analytical or theoretical framework. We need to apply anthropological and sociological theories to a deeper study of family and marriage patterns in rural Mosuo communities. By filling this research gap, we can better understand Mosuo culture, help us understand different family structures, and explore what is unique about the Mosuo marriage and family system. This research study holds tremendous significance for students pursuing social science courses as it enables them to gain profound insights into the humanity exhibited by borderless communities and traditional cultures that persist amidst our rapidly advancing society. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the family and marriage patterns among the Mosuo community.

### Methods

This study focuses on the Mosuo, a minority group in China, and employs a qualitative approach using the ethnographic method commonly used in anthropology. By conducting an ethnographic study, the researchers can explore social phenomena in real-life settings. The study utilizes virtual participant observation, online interviews, and textual analysis as data collection techniques. Ethnography, which is the qualitative investigation of culture, behavior, and human expression, distinguishes anthropology from other sciences. This approach enables

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<sup>1</sup> Mattison, S. M. (2010). *Demystifying the Mosuo: The behavioral ecology of kinship and reproduction in China's "last matriarchal" society*. University of Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Wen, B., Shi, H., Ren, L., Xi, H., Li, K., Zhang, W., ... & Xiao, C. (2004). The origin of Mosuo people as revealed by mtDNA and Y chromosome variation. *Science in China Series C: Life Sciences*, 47(1), 1-10. doi:10.1360/02yc0207

<sup>3</sup> Mattison, S. M. (2011). Evolutionary contributions to solving the "Matrilineal Puzzle". *Human Nature*, 22(1), 64-88. doi:10.1007/s12110-011-9107-7

<sup>4</sup> 陈荟 & 鲁奕利.(2019).摩梭人传统婚姻家庭文化的当代境遇及未来抉择——基于木里和泸沽湖地区的实地考察. *青海民族研究*(04),101-105. doi:10.15899/j.cnki.1005-5681.2019.04.016

anthropologists to gain unique insights by studying the issue over time and from various perspectives (Creswell, 2009).<sup>5</sup> Additionally, extensive exploration of documents related to the Mosuo has been conducted, primarily sourced from libraries and local bookshops in China.

### **Sampling Strategy**

The selection of appropriate study participants is crucial in ethnographic research, as they provide data to answer the research questions. For this qualitative study, purposive sampling was employed by selecting 21 Mosuo individuals and key informants as secondary sources relevant to the case. The participants were chosen based on their perceived usefulness to the study. Consultation with a tour guide helped the researchers determine the number of interviewees.

### **Participant Observation**

Participant observation is widely recognized as the standard method for fieldwork in anthropology. Anthropologists engage in different levels of participant observation, actively participating in events or passively observing interesting locations. This method proves valuable in various stages of the research process, including identifying issues for further investigation, reviewing and validating existing data, and observing specific events firsthand. In larger projects involving multiple observers, an observation template may be used to ensure consistent note-taking on key occurrences and additional comments on other events. Due to COVID-19 restrictions in China during data collection period, physical access to the research site was restricted, the researchers decided to use virtual participant observation to gain ore insights on this study. Before conducting virtual observations, participants were informed to protect their privacy and confidentiality.

### **Interview Data**

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with the 21 participants, including key informants who possess relevant field experience with the Mosuo people. Key informant interviews involve a relatively small number of informants selected based on their knowledge and ideas relevant to the research. Open-ended questions were used to capture the informants' thoughts and experiences. The virtual interviews were conducted using an interview schedule composed of a list of open-ended questions and follow-up inquiries. Prior to online interviews, participants were asked to sign a consent form and were informed of their rights to withdraw from the research study at any time without consequences. The virtual interviews were conducted in Chinese language with the assistance of the tour guide, and all data were translated into English for research publication purposes.

### **Limitations and Challenges**

One limitation of this Mosuo research is the lack of practical visits to the Mosuo community. On-site visits could enhance the validity and breadth of the study by allowing for firsthand experience and observation of their marital customs and family structures. Additionally, the relatively small number of people interviewed may be a constraint in terms of time and resources. Changes in family structure, with increased emphasis on parents and offspring rather

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<sup>5</sup> Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc.

than the traditional matrilineal relationship, have been observed in areas affected by tourism (Mattison, 2010; Yang, 2008).<sup>6</sup> These changes complicate researchers' ability to accurately reflect the traditional Mosuo people's matrilineal descent in areas where both matrilineal and parental offspring relationships exist.

## Results and Discussion

### Formation of Mosuo Community

Mosuo nationality does not belong to 55 ethnic minorities in China. Mosuo living in Ninglang, Yunnan, and other places are classified as Naxi nationality, and Mosuo living in Yanyuan, Muli, Yanbian, and other places in Sichuan are classified as Mongolian nationality. But most Mosuo people do not recognize their Naxi identity. In addition, the results of the Y chromosome and mitochondria study of Wen (2005)<sup>7</sup> show that the paternal genetic structure of Mosuo people is closest to that of Yunnan Tibetans, while the maternal genetic structure is closest to that of Lijiang Naxi people. Its language also belongs to Naxi but belongs to different dialect areas. Their similarity in maternal genetic structure is consistent with the similarity in language and history. Mosuo people are the only remaining matriarchal society in China. Up to now, they still maintain the walking marriage system. However, with the social changes and development of Chinese society from traditional society to modern society, from agricultural society to industrial society, and from a closed society to open society (Cai, 2011),<sup>8</sup> Mosuo society has also undergone a transformation, its culture has undergone corresponding changes, and the traditional extended family and marriage mode, which are the cornerstone of Mosuo people's social culture, have changed. Tourism is the biggest driver. In terms of culture, the houses near the lake have been built into tall buildings with three floors or more, the building materials have also been changed from traditional wood to reinforced concrete structure, and the structure of the "Grandmother house" has also changed. In addition, it is the marriage model (Chen, 2012).<sup>9</sup> According to the survey of Xu (1998),<sup>10</sup> 75% of the people of marriageable age around HuGu Lake still maintain "aha occasional marriage" (walking marriage). However, in a recent survey (Wu et al., 2018),<sup>11</sup> only 29.6% of Mosuo people still choose "walking marriage." This also shows that with the transformation from traditional to modern in terms of economic structure and cultural tradition (Chen, 2012),<sup>12</sup> Mosuo culture has been greatly impacted by Han culture, including the walking marriage system.

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<sup>6</sup> Mattison, S. M. (2010). Economic impacts of tourism and erosion of the visiting system among the Mosuo of Lugu Lake; Yang, Wall, Smith, & SLJ. (2008). Ethnic tourism development: Chinese government perspectives.

<sup>7</sup> Wen, B., Shi, H., Ren, L., Xi, H., Li, K., Zhang, W., ... & Xiao, C. (2004). The origin of Mosuo people as revealed by mtDNA and Y chromosome variation. *Science in China Series C: Life Sciences*, 47(1), 1-10. doi:10.1360/02yc0207

<sup>8</sup> Cai, H. & Michael, S. (2003). A society without fathers or husbands: the Na of China. *Waterloo*. 45(1). 178-179. doi:10.2307/25606125

<sup>9</sup> 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.

<sup>10</sup> 徐旌.(1998).摩梭人之民俗文化探析. *云南地理环境研究*(01).

<sup>11</sup> 郇欣言,林启洋 & 杨小军.(2018).文化混搭理论视角下摩梭人婚恋观念研究:泸沽湖地区例证. *重庆社会科学*(07),46-56. doi:10.19631/j.cnki.css.2018.07.005

<sup>12</sup> 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.



## Marriage

In anthropology, marriage is cultural that defined as the socially sanctioned customs, rules, and obligations of relationships between men and women, adults and children and between kinship groups of married partners (Nanda & Warms, 2019).<sup>13</sup> However, anthropological studies have long documented the widespread existence and validity of family types, including families built on multiple husbands, multiple wives, and a plethora of other possibilities (Lathrop, 2004).<sup>14</sup> In terms of the institution of marriage, their unique form of marriage is what we call the "walking marriage" system, where the relationship between the spouses is not governed by the law and the two are always original members of their own family. The lovers are the man who goes to the woman's boudoir for one night and returns to his own home the next morning (Yao, 2015).<sup>15</sup>

## Dating and Intimate Relationship

In anthropological studies, a successful seduction leads to the establishment of a rapport, or intimate relationship, which also means that both parties can share information confidently, and this relationship also connects the two parties through intimate conversations (Moore, 1985).<sup>16</sup> This theory also applies to the matrilineal clan, the Mosuo. One of the criteria for men to choose a partner is youth and beauty, and the other is the ability to maintain a family, and for women, the criteria for choosing a male partner are wealthy family, talent and good character. That means, both men and women can choose their partners voluntarily, and the will of the woman is relatively more respected (Diao, 2016).<sup>17</sup> On the day of the traditional festival "Mountain Turning Festival," Mosuo people all wear colorful clothes and come to Mount Gram, then burn incense and pray, and then hold folk activities such as horse racing, swinging, dancing and singing (Li, 2016).<sup>18</sup> And every day at the bonfire, Mosuo people will dress up and show their ideal partner at the party (Mu et al., 2020).<sup>19</sup> According to Zhang and Zhang (2014),<sup>20</sup> the young men and women of the right age have a good feeling for each other and use the form of antiphonal songs to hint at each other, often men take the initiative to please women. Start dating after the other person gets the hang of it, without asking permission from their family (Zhang & Zhang, 2014). After that, the form of walking marriage was established between two people. There are two types of marriage: the marriage of a person who lives apart, and the marriage of a person who lives together, and the marriage of a "couple" who lives together is based on affection and sexual interaction, regardless of material factors (Sun & Zhao, 2020).<sup>21</sup> The study found out three stages of marriage choice among the matrilineal

<sup>13</sup> Nanda, S., & Warms, R. L. (2019). Cultural anthropology. Sage Publications.

<sup>14</sup> Lathrop, S. (2004). Broadening the Marriage and Family Debate. *Anthropology News*, 45(4), 23-24.

<sup>15</sup> 姚冠男.(2015).那山、那水、那人——泸沽湖畔摩梭人的家庭结构. *裔(06)*,138-139.

<sup>16</sup> Moore, M. M. (1985). Nonverbal courtship patterns in women: Context and consequences. *Ethology and sociobiology*, 6(4), 237-247.doi: 10.1016/0162-3095(85)90016-0

<sup>17</sup> 刁振飞.(2016).摩梭人走婚文化探析. *潍坊工程职业学院学报(04)*,73-76.

<sup>18</sup> 李红营.(2016).泸沽湖摩梭人传统节日之“转山节”. *天津中德职业技术学院学报(04)*,93-96.

doi:10.16350/j.cnki.cn12-1442/g4.2016.04.027.

<sup>19</sup> Mu, S., Zhang, A., & Tian, S. (2020) Cultural Representation of Mosuo Ethnic Twist Dance in Tourism Practice. In *4th International Conference on Culture, Education and Economic Development of Modern Society (ICCESE 2020)* (pp. 168-171). Atlantis Press. doi: 10.2991/assehr.k.200316.039

<sup>20</sup> 张妍 & 张橙.(2014).摩梭人走婚制度浅析. *新西部(理论版)(04)*,17.

<sup>21</sup> 孙涛 & 赵飞.(2020).丽江永宁摩梭人走婚习惯法的存续与递嬗——基于法人类学视角的探究. *昆明学院学报(04)*,108-115+123.

community of Mosuo: Stimulation, Values and Roles. Each stage has unique practices and rituals.

The search for a life partner is an inherent instinct across cultures. For the Mosuo people, this quest takes the form of "walking marriage," a distinctive marital practice. This article examines the stages of walking marriage, including partner selection, value exploration, and role confirmation. Insights from interviews with community members shed light on the intricacies of this unique tradition.

### **Partner Selection:**

In the first stage, known as stimulation, individuals focus on non-mental factors such as physical appearance and qualities. In the Mosuo community, potential partners are often sought during nightly bonfire gatherings.

Informant #1 explained:

For example, during our bonfire party, individuals clasp palms with their desired partners. If not interested, a gentle pinch is given; if interested, they clasp back and exchange notes indicating their flower house color. This helps avoid confusion when finding the girl's room.

### **Value Exploration:**

The second stage involves verbal exchanges to explore values and worldviews, aiming for harmony. However, Mosuo people tend to avoid discussing the details of their interactions openly. Traditionally, Mosuo couples did not engage in daytime dating, instead relying on nighttime interactions. Additionally, the tedious sleepover ritual played a role in establishing physical requirements for partners.

### **Role Confirmation:**

The final stage involves confirming that the abilities and qualities of both partners align with their assigned roles. Walking marriage among the Mosuo is based on long-term stable intimate relationships.

### **Walking Marriage**

The Mosuo community practices a unique form of marriage called "walk-away marriage," which stands out for its absence of financial exchanges, pretense, and bride price. According to our interviews with local community members, this marriage tradition involves the man visiting the woman's house late at night and leaving before sunrise. He then goes back to his mother's house to fulfill his duties and obligations towards his immediate family members.

It was also revealed during interviews, that relationships problems may arise due to perception that the man is "useless" and fails to make a substantial contribution to the female partner's family. In the words of the interviewees, this lack of contribution becomes a significant factor leading to relationship difficulties.

Furthermore, our data collection revealed a noteworthy contrast between the Mosuo community and many other minority groups in China and elsewhere. Unlike these other groups, the Mosuo community does not adhere to dowry or bride price customs, further highlighting the distinctiveness of their marital practices.

## Family Life and Status

The field of anthropology recognizes three primary types of family structures: the nuclear family, the composite family, and the extended family, as identified by Nanda and Warms (2019).<sup>22</sup> One prominent example of a matrilineal society is the Mosuo, renowned worldwide for their adoption of this family system. This is in contrast to the prevailing patrilineal systems found in many other minority societies. In a matrilineal family, children born to a man and a woman within the context of an intimate relationship are considered part of the woman's lineage. They bear the mother's name and are raised by her family. Notably, the role traditionally associated with a "father" in this context is primarily fulfilled by the mother's brothers, who assume responsibility for the discipline and upbringing of their sisters' children. Meanwhile, the biological father typically returns to his own matrilineal family (Zhang, 2022).<sup>23</sup> As a result, a Mosuo family exclusively comprises members from the mother's bloodline, with no direct representation from the father's lineage. Each morning and evening, everyone pays their respects to her, and she remains in this room throughout the day. This room also serves as the venue for important life events and significant ceremonies, including the veneration of ancestors (Cai & Michael, 2003).<sup>24</sup>

The grandmother plays a significant role in the family as she holds a position of authority and is responsible for making important decisions. As the clan mother and matriarch, she becomes the custodian of all resources, ensuring their equitable distribution among her children and grandchildren, while also assuming the role of sustaining and protecting all members of the clan (Goettner-Abendroth, 2018).<sup>25</sup>

## Absence of Paternal Confirmation

One fascinating outcome of this study is the distinct absence of paternal confirmation within the Mosuo community, setting it apart from other minority groups in China and other countries. In the traditional Mosuo culture, the notion of a biological father holds little significance. Instead, their cultural beliefs, rich in myths and metaphors, illuminate the role of men in the process of childbirth. According to Mosuo beliefs, the ultimate creator, known as the "Abaozhu," assumes responsibility for bringing forth a child. Around five months after birth, the Abaozhu places the fetus in the girl's womb, determines its gender, and supports the woman during her pregnancy. In this framework, the man's role is viewed as simply providing the seed that already exists within the woman's womb, enabling it to sprout and mature (Cai, 2011).<sup>26</sup>

The Mosuo "father" demonstrates recognition of their children in a public setting through a child sacrifice ceremony, where a gift is presented to the birth mother (Shi et al., 2002).<sup>27</sup> In cases where the father is unwell or has passed away, it becomes the children's responsibility to

<sup>22</sup> Nanda, S., & Warms, R. L. (2019). *Cultural anthropology*. Sage Publications.

<sup>23</sup> 章立明. (2022). 摩梭人母系家庭与性别分工的百年变迁——以云南省宁蒗县永宁乡大落水村为例. *山东女子学院学报* (02), 52-60.

<sup>24</sup> Cai, H. & Michael, S. (2003). A society without fathers or husbands: the Na of China. *Waterloo*. 45(1). 178-179. doi:10.2307/25606125

<sup>25</sup> Goettner-Abendroth, H. (2018). Re-thinking "matriarchy" in modern matriarchal studies using two examples: The Khasi and the Mosuo. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 24(1), 3-27. doi:10.1080/12259276.2017.1421293

<sup>26</sup> 蔡华. (2011). 人类学怎样理解“父亲”——再论“无父无夫的社会”. *世界民族* (01), 40-47.

<sup>27</sup> 施传刚, 杨春宇, 胡鸿保. (2002). 摩梭是“无父无夫的社会”吗?. *世界民族* (02), 55-57.

visit him or represent their mother at the father's funeral, emphasizing the importance of honoring the paternal connection (Chou & Guo, 2006).<sup>28</sup>

This momentous occasion is marked by a joyous celebration known as the "100 days celebration" to honor the birth of the child, as Qiu (2021)<sup>29</sup> stated. These customs and rituals exemplify the intricate and nuanced understanding of fatherhood within Mosuo society. A Mosuo child once shared, "I live together with my parents. I have an uncle who doesn't live here. But my mom tells me to call my father 'uncle' when we encounter tourists" (Qiu, 2021).

### Rite of Passage

At the age of 13, a significant and highly revered ceremony known as the cheng ding li (成丁礼), also called the coming-of-age ceremony, takes place in the lives of Mosuo individuals. This grand event marks a key moment in their lives and is considered the most significant festival. Various rituals are performed during this ceremony, where boys put on special-made trousers, while girls wear skirts, symbolizing the transition to adulthood (Lidz, 2007).<sup>30</sup> One notable ritual involves stepping on pig's meat and the Mosuo's Ahawa, and the uncle of the boy would adorn him with jewelry and purchases him a new suit of clothes. Upon reaching this milestone, individuals are granted the privilege of having their own flower house, a symbolic representation of their adulthood. The practice of walking marriage among the Mosuo people is primarily driven by the need for reproduction. It can be understood as a unique approach to fostering the continuation of the lineage (Ullmann, 2017).<sup>31</sup>

### Family Obligations

The traditional patriarchy refers to a social system characterized by gender-based hierarchies, where men hold dominant positions and exercise control over women, often leading to their oppression and exploitation (Waters, 1989).<sup>32</sup> This system is prevalent in many societies worldwide. However, the Mosuo community stands as a unique example within China, being the only existing matriarchal society. In a matriarchal society, the defining characteristic is that women wield absolute power and authority. In Mosuo families, it is the female parents who hold control over the management, inheritance, and distribution of goods. Studies have shown that the level of attachment with both fathers and maternal uncles is similar among the Mosuo, while in comparison, the Han culture displays a stronger attachment with fathers than with maternal uncles (Xiao et al., 2022).<sup>33</sup>

The absence of the concept of a "father" in the family structure results in the mother assuming a central role within the household. Mothers fulfill crucial roles in child-rearing, providing support to the elderly, managing the family's finances, and overseeing agricultural and

<sup>28</sup> Chou Wah-Shan & 郭平. (2006). 《一个没有父亲和丈夫的社会——中国纳西族》. *西北民族研究* (03), 169-171.

<sup>29</sup> Qiu, Y. (2021). Mosuo matrilineal society, their kinship system and mainstream Chinese society: Possibilities of integration and/or preservation of traditional cultural aspects in China. *Unpublished Dissertation*.

<sup>30</sup> Lidz, L. A. (2007). Evidentiality in Yongning Na (Mosuo). *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 30(2). <http://sealang.net/archives/lbba/pdf/LTBA-30.2.45.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Ullmann, I. (n.d.). Impacts of migration on Mosuo Cultural Identity: A case study of the Mosuo people in Lijiang. SIT Digital Collections. [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/2647](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2647)

<sup>32</sup> Waters, M. (1989). Patriarchy and viriarchy: An exploration and reconstruction of concepts of masculine domination. *Sociology*, 23(2). 193-211. doi:10.1177/0038038589023002003

<sup>33</sup> Xiao, E., Jin, J., Hong, Z., & Zhang, J. (2022). The relationship between children and their maternal uncles: A unique parenting mode in Mosuo culture. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.873137

domestic tasks. It is only a slight adjustment, which does not hinder the contribution of each member of the family to the family (Chen, 2012).<sup>34</sup>

## Family Relationships

The cultural practices of matrilineal and walking marriages among the Mosuo people align with evolutionary principles, leading to numerous adaptive outcomes such as reduced sexual conflict and improved overall well-being (Yong & Li, 2022).<sup>35</sup> Notably, the Mosuo society fosters a remarkably peaceful family environment, where conflicts or contradictions rarely arise between couples, family members, or between two families. These practices prioritize freedom in romantic relationships and emphasize mutual respect and understanding, contributing to harmonious relationships and a tranquil atmosphere within Mosuo families. It is essential to note, however, that Mosuo children display exceptional obedience and good conduct, even among older children, demonstrating a notable restraint from engaging in such actions. This adherence to respectful behavior contributes to the overall harmonious dynamics within Mosuo families.

## Marital Conflict

In traditional Mosuo society, the approach to marital conflict and separation differs significantly from the formal divorce processes seen in Han culture. The emphasis is placed on maintaining harmony and avoiding conflicts, leading to a peaceful separation if the individuals involved decide to end their relationship. This contrasts with the legal procedures and potential conflicts often associated with divorce in other cultures.

Based on our research, Mosuo people prioritize open communication and mutual respect when navigating disagreements within a relationship. For instance, in the case of Amei and her partner, they never exchanged hurtful words or allowed their disagreements to escalate. Instead, if they reached a point where they no longer wished to continue their walking marriage, they simply stopped the arrangement without the need for legal intervention or conflict.

The Mosuo people's approach to marital conflict and separation reflects their cultural values of harmony, respect, and simplicity. By prioritizing peaceful resolutions and avoiding conflicts, they aim to maintain positive relationships within their community. This unique perspective on separation illustrates the Mosuo people's commitment to preserving social cohesion and reducing the negative impact of relationship endings.

The Mosuo people are influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, and living Buddhas and lamas play an important role in their lives. The Living Buddha would be responsible for naming newborn children, while the lamas would treat them for illnesses (Ran et al., 1999).<sup>36</sup> The leaders who

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<sup>34</sup> 陈更新.(2012). 从摩梭人的典型血亲关系解读人类社会深层结构的形成[J]. *剑南文学 (经典阅读)*, 2012(9):324-324,322.

<sup>35</sup> Yong, J. C. & Li, N. P. (2022). Elucidating evolutionary principles with the traditional Mosuo: Adaptive benefits and origins of matriliney and “walking marriages”. *Culture and Evolution*, 19(1), 22-40. doi:10.1556/2055.2022.00017

<sup>36</sup> 冉茂盛,向孟泽,侯再金,唐牟尼,毛文君,李洁.(1999).四川省摩梭族(蒙古族)对喇嘛治病与求医行为的跨文化认识. *中国心理卫生杂志(01)*.

guided their lives were the chiefs, called "土司" (Tusi), who were the leaders of the community before the infiltration of modern officials (Zhang, 2022).<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

Marriage and family have been the subject of study by anthropologists around the world. In China, the Mosuo are not only not one of the 55 regular ethnic minorities but are also considered to be the only remaining matriarchal clan in China. The Mosuo community, a representative of maternal genetic structure, has unique marriage patterns and family structures. Mosuo community does not adhere to dowry or bride price customs, further highlighting the distinctiveness of their marital practices.

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<sup>37</sup> 章立明. (2022). 摩梭人母系家庭与性别分工的百年变迁——以云南省宁蒗县永宁乡大落水村为例. 山东女子学院学报 (02), 52-60.

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## *Land Art Creation and Environmental Space Beautification*

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### **Abstract**

The research purpose of this paper is to study the influences of Land art creation on the beautification of environmental space and the aesthetics of life. Artists use their experience to create Land artworks in urban squares, manhole covers, and rural pastoral fields. The research methods are to classify the themes of the works of Land art creation into four parts: culture, life, city, and nature, and survey opinions of 30 subjects on Land art by a questionnaire. The test uses subjective rating scales to investigate the opinions of 30 college students on Land artworks, and the subjects were 15 females and 15 males. The research tool used independent sample t-test SPSS statistics, and  $p \leq 0.05$  reached significance. The research results show the opinions of subjects that the works of Land art are combined with local elements to establish the human concepts of cultural preservation. The works of Land art creation improve the public space and the environmental space of the city and nature beautification and innovation. Through the process of appreciation, the activities of the Land Art Festival enhance the aesthetic experiences of human life and the spirit. Furthermore, Land art creation and environmental space beautification promote the benefits of urban tourism and strengthen cultural development. This paper concludes that landscape artworks can beautify the environment and space, enhance the aesthetics of human life, preserve local culture, and promote urban tourism development.

Keywords: Land Art Creation, Environmental Space, Beautification

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## Introduction

Land Art, also known as Earth Art, originated in the United States in the 1960s. A group of artists pioneered it focused on creating large-scale works closely related to the natural environment, with a core philosophy of creating art that integrates with the natural landscape. Today, this field has developed into a globally influential art style. However, entering the 21st century, Land Art faces increasing challenges, including environmental changes, community participation, funding issues, and how to quantify its effectiveness. Firstly, the relationship between Land Art and environmental beautification is very close. From an environmental protection perspective, Land Art combines natural landscapes with art, turning ordinary public spaces into art parts and enabling people to have a deeper understanding and respect for their surroundings. Land art enhances public awareness of environmental issues. The form of incorporating art into the natural environment improves the visual aesthetics of cities and rural areas and provides an important platform for environmental education.

However, the development of Land Art faces a major problem, that is, funding. The creation of Land Art requires a large amount of manpower and material resources and long-term maintenance at specific locations, which makes the cost of Land Art often higher than traditional forms of art. Therefore, how to effectively use limited funds for creation and maintenance, thereby maximizing economic benefits, is an important issue in the current development of Land Art. For example, artists cooperate with communities or businesses, using the resources of communities or businesses to complete creations jointly. It not only can save costs but also can strengthen the connection between Land Art and the community. Lastly, quantifying the effectiveness of Land Art is a contemporary concern. This challenge includes establishing a universally accepted criterion for evaluating the quality and impact of these works. It is important to acknowledge that while some benefits are tangible and easily quantified, such as increased tourism and improved aesthetics of the local environment, others are more subtle and difficult to measure. These may include the intangible value of community engagement, increased environmental awareness, and the personal emotional response evoked by the artwork. Developing a comprehensive, multidimensional evaluation framework for these various impacts is crucial to legitimizing Land Art as a discipline and ensuring its ongoing support and development. The current situation of Land Art development is one of both opportunities and challenges. With the increasing awareness of environmental protection, Land Art, which blends art with nature, has a unique advantage in promoting environmental aesthetics. However, issues such as funding and quantifying the effectiveness of Land Art are problems that need to be solved. Despite these challenges, Land Art, with its profound significance in environmental beautification and community engagement, remains a vibrant and relevant field of artistic endeavor.

Land art is the artistic creations on the ground. The diverse creative techniques of modern artists have given land art many innovative design works, including Christo Javacheff, Robert Smithson, Dennis Oppenheim, Nancy Holt, Agnes Dene, and Michael Heizer. By integrating landscape art and the natural environment, people are more aware of the importance of environmental beautification and enhancing the aesthetics of life. Experts and artists have studied the contents of land. Many experts and scholars also successively put forward their views and opinions on landscape art. Relph (1996) introduced the design methods of Land art that apply multiple materials in the environmental spaces of nature and the city. Carlson (2002) mentioned that artists use the specific characteristics of cultures in their artworks of Land art. Saito (2002) studied Environmental directions for aesthetics and the arts. From the perspective of aesthetics and multiculturalism, it explored the influence of modern Western

art and natural environmental aesthetics on human life. Tufnell (2006) states that innovative creations of Land art increase the aesthetic experiences of humans. Brady (2007) proposed the definition of the natural environment and artistic works and the relationship between the two. They have discussed the presentation of natural landscapes re-endowed with artistic creation and design. Kastner & Wallis (2010) mentioned that the ideas and skills of artists for Land art activities are to beautify the environmental space. Finally, Van Den Berg (2021) noted that Land art influences urban development and the beautification of environmental space. The various diverse applications of landscape artworks can be found through the research of many experts and scholars on landscape art. Landscape art can combine composite materials and digital technology to make nature and urban landscapes more varied. Artists use their own life experiences and local elements of local culture to create landscape artworks.

## **Method**

Evaluating the impact of Land Art, or Earth Art, is an intriguing and complex task due to its multidimensional nature. Land Art is a genre that originated in the 1960s, when artists began to work with natural landscapes to create large-scale installations. These works can be broadly categorized into two types-site-specific sculptures that use natural materials and elements like rock, soil, or water, and non-site works that transport natural elements into a gallery setting for an immersive experience. The audience for Land Art is as diverse as its forms, ranging from casual observers and local community members to art critics, environmentalists, and tourists. Therefore, Evaluating Land Art impact requires an eclectic mix of objective and subjective measures. Objective indicators could include countable elements such as visitor numbers, frequency of visits, or increases in tourism revenue. These metrics can provide a clear, quantitative picture of the impact of Land Art on a community or region. However, the subjective nature of art appreciation also necessitates using qualitative measures. Tools such as surveys and questionnaires can be used to gather data on personal impressions, emotional responses, or changes in environmental awareness or attitudes toward a particular site or installation. A Likert scale, for instance, could be used in a questionnaire to measure the strength of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to the impact of the artwork. Responses could then be quantified on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), allowing for quantitative analysis of subjective data.

For the statistical analysis of collected data, software such as SPSS can be employed. SPSS is a powerful tool for managing and analyzing data, capable of performing complex analyses and providing insights into patterns or trends. It can be used to calculate mean scores, standard deviations, and correlations, as well as perform t-tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis, among other functions. Analyzing the results is crucial to interpreting the finding statistical significance and the practical implications of the findings. For instance, a statistically significant increase in visitor numbers following the installation of a Land Art piece would suggest that the artwork has a tangible impact on local tourism. Similarly, a high mean score on survey items related to environmental awareness could indicate that the artwork successfully promotes environmental stewardship. It is important to remember that while quantitative data can provide valuable insights, the art interpretive nature is unlikely to capture the full range of impacts or reactions. As such, quantitative measures should be seen as one tool among many for evaluating the impact of Land Art rather than a definitive measure of its worth or success.

In this paper, the research methods are to classify the themes of Land art creation into four parts: culture, life, city, and nature (see Table 1), and survey opinions of 30 college students on the works of Land art by a questionnaire. The process research method (Figure 1) follows the steps: questionnaire design (inquiry of experts), the 30 college subjects (15 females and 15 males), test, the rating scales (7 levels) in the questionnaire, data statistics (evaluation and analysis), and the results of this study. The design contents of the questionnaire are to inquire about expert professional knowledge. The rating scales in this study use seven levels to evaluate the rating scales by subjects and then to statistics and analyze the data of the questionnaire. The opinions of subjects collected in this study that subjects divided into two groups; one group had 15 females, and the other group had 15 males. The research method uses the independent sample t-test. After the test, the data are statistics with the evaluating tool SPSS, and the significance is  $p \leq 0.05$ . The questionnaire survey can show about viewpoints of subjects on the beautification of environmental space by Land art creations.

Table 1: The four parts of themes of Land art creations

Four parts	Part 1 culture	Part 2 life	Part 3 city	Part 4 nature
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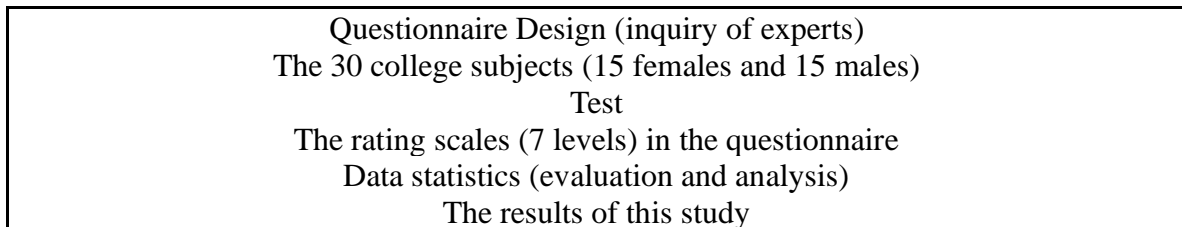


Figure 1: The process of the research method



Figure 2: The creations of Land art in the city park



Figure 3: The creations of Land art in the city park

## Results and Discussion

The results conclude the effects of the benefits and developments of Land art and environmental space. Collect the survey results of the statistical questionnaire according to the data answered by the subjects. The p-values of the questionnaires of subjects are 0.021 for culture, 0.003 for life, 0.006 for the city, and 0.012 for nature. All four parts met the statistical significance. The data from the four parts show the subject viewpoints on the impact of Land art creation on the beautification of environmental space. Artists use multiple materials and technology in innovative Land art creations. Land Art Festival provides humans with a communication mode of leisure. The innovation of Land art creations promotes and expands environmental space beautification, as shown in Figure 2 & Figure 3. Set up landscape artwork in the city park to make the landscapes in the city more visually designed.

Land art creations arouse people to protect nature and preserve culture. In the creation process of landscape artworks, the artist reinterprets the natural landscape and uses various materials so that the natural landscape has more new features. Regarding the theme categories of different landscape artworks, the exhibition themes of the landscape artworks can be divided into animals, objects, figures, landscapes, cultures, and so on. Artists use light combined with music to create landscaping works of art through visual and auditory audio-visual methods, allowing audiences to have more visual experiences. In terms of the theme categories of landscape artworks, artists can make people care more about environmental beautification and ecological maintenance when appreciating natural and urban landscapes.

## Conclusions

The relationships between Land art and environmental space are close. By appreciating Land art creations, humans can increase their aesthetic experiences. Land art influences humans in culture, life, city, and nature. The beautification of environmental space promotes the tourist industry and city development through Land art. Landscaping art combines the public space and natural environment around life to make people feel comfortable and relaxed physically and mentally. On the other hand, by promoting land art activities and exhibitions of works, people began to realize the importance of environmental beautification and maintenance of the natural environment.

Through the activities of landscape art festivals held in various places, people can enjoy more landscape artworks. Many landscape artworks redesign and present the natural landscape uniquely through innovative design by artists. The specific graphs and colors of visual elements integrated into the creations of Land art that are to preserve cultures. In the future, artists can combine digital and multiple materials to create works of Land art in the city and nature. With the evolution of modern art trends, landscape artworks can produce more new forms of creation.

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## ***The Complexities of Complexity: Ways and Reasons to Measure Complexity in L2 Writing***

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### **Abstract**

There are many ways to measure students' written second language (L2) performance and one way to measure it is using complexity, accuracy and fluency (CAF). Teachers rarely use these measures; however, these measures are often used in L2 acquisition research. Research on CAF measures began in the 1980s when researchers started to point out a difference between fluent and accurate language use and complexity was later to appear, in the 90s. Out of these three proficiency measures, complexity is usually is the least straightforward, complex and can be measured and defined in different ways. Choosing which definition and measurement of complexity to use is an issue for researchers, since various ones coexist. This article will examine the way researchers have measured complexity and point out the advantages, disadvantages and controversies relating to these measures. It will attempt to propose the most up to date way and useful ways of measuring complexity that would be the most appropriate for those researching L2 writing performance. Finally, it will present some reasons why measuring complexity is important for researchers and also teachers.

Keywords: Complexity, CAF Measures, Second Language Acquisition

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## Introduction

There are many ways to measure students' written second language (L2) performance. One way to measure L2 performance is using complexity, accuracy and fluency measures (CAF). Practitioners rarely use these measures, but these measures are often used in L2 acquisition research. Research on CAF measures began when researchers started to point out a difference between fluent and accurate language use, but complexity was later to appear in CAF literature (Housen & Kuiken, 2009). Complexity is usually the least straightforward of the CAF measures and can be measured and defined in different ways. Choosing which definition and measurement of complexity to use is an issue for researchers, since various ones coexist. This article will examine the way researchers have measured complexity and point out the advantages, disadvantages and controversies relating to these measures. It will then attempt to propose the most up to date ways of measuring complexity that would be the most appropriate for those researching L2 writing performance and lastly, it will present some reasons why measuring complexity is important for researchers and also teachers.

## CAF Measures

When researchers look at students' writing, they sometimes observe the variation in complexity, accuracy, and fluency of student output. These CAF measures are useful for research purposes, but can also be used by English as a second language teachers because they can utilise the research findings to improve their practice and their students' language performance. Complexity is usually said to be the most controversial out of the three CAF measures and has been defined in various ways. Because many definitions of complexity exist, the problem for researchers is choosing which one to use. Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998, p.69) define complexity as "a wide variety of both basic and sophisticated structures and words that are available to the learner", but Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p.139) define complexity "as the extent to which learners produce elaborated language." It seems that these definitions appear to be worded differently, but they are similar in meaning.

As well as issues with defining complexity, there are also issues and controversies when measuring it. Norris and Ortega (2009), argue that three grammatical complexity measures as a minimum (global complexity, phrasal complexity, and complexity by subordination) should be measured since language can be elaborated at three different levels. Morphological complexity is a relatively new measure of complexity used in SLA studies (Pallotti, 2015) (Brezina & Pallotti, 2016). Brezina and Pallotti (2019) define morphological complexity as "the diversity of inflectional types of a given word class" (p.100), but in SLA research Bulté and Housen, point out, most researchers mostly focus on syntactic or grammatical complexity (2012).

## Ways to Measure Complexity

Traditionally, syntactic complexity has been measured in different ways. The number of dependent clauses per total clauses, clauses per T-unit; the shortest grammatically allowable sentences into which writing can be split, or number of dependent clauses per T-unit are common methods. Type-token ratio (TTR), which is the number of word types divided by all word tokens is another method to measure complexity by looking at lexical diversity, but TTR, has been called flawed by some because long works depress TTR (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005). The diversity index D (Malvern et al., 2004), which is a mathematical transformation of the standard TTR reduces the effects of text length and also provides the degree of word

repetition in a text is a newer way of measuring lexical diversity. *voc-d* which is a method for measuring the diversity of text units, and takes a number of subsamples of tokens at random from the data (McKee et al., 2000), is the way D can be computed. MTLN (McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010) is another newer way to measure complexity. MTLN is similar to D, but D tends to be based on TTR using random selection and curve fitting to reduce the impact of text length. MTLN however, uses TTR as a cut-off point to examine the text length, for which a writer can maintain a certain level of lexical diversity (McCarthy, 2005). HD-D (hypergeometric diversity of D) is another recent complexity measure based on D and similar to MTLN. It is slightly more accurate and slightly more stable than VOC-D (McCarthy & Jarvis, 2010).

Although complexity is an important measure of second language (L2) writing proficiency (Lu, 2011), and large-grained indices such as the mean length of T-unit (MLTU) are the most prevalent in SLA studies (Ortega, 2003), they have recently have come under criticism. Some of the criticisms include their focus on clausal subordination (Biber, Gray, & Poonpon, 2011), and that the types of structures found within a T-unit are not captured by large-grained indices. Kyle & Crossley, (2017) have argued that indices related to usage-based characteristics of verb argument construction (VAC) use could be better indicators of writing development than the traditional measures of syntactic complexity. However, most researchers presently use traditional CAF measures.

There are many online tools that are available to the general public to be able to measure writing complexity. The L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) (Lu, 2010) is a computational tool that can produce syntactic complexity indices. It is often used in research studies that focus on L2 writing performance and can calculate 14 syntactic complexity indices. The Lexical Complexity Analyzer (LCA), (Lu, 2010), also developed by Professor Xiaofei Lu at The Pennsylvania State University, likewise analyses lexical complexity of written English using 25 different measures of lexical density, variation and sophistication and is also an online tool that is easy to use. Another online computational tool that is equally as prevalent in use in L2 writing performance studies is Coh-Metrix. Coh-Metrix can analyse the cohesion and coherence of a text (Graesser, McNamara & Louwerse, 2003) and can provide the indices for measuring complexity especially *voc-D* and measures of lexical diversity MTLN. Most recently, an online tool that was not specifically developed to measure complexity, but can do so is the AI chatbot ChatGPT. ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI and released last year is a type of large language model, but its most notable disadvantage, however, is a tendency to provide inaccurate information and thus when using it to calculate syntactic and lexical diversity measures, caution must be taken. Open AI acknowledges that ChatGPT can write incorrect answers which is common behavior for large language models. Another tool to analyse written complexity is CLAN (Computerized Language Analysis) a cross-platform program. It was created for analyzing transcripts in the Child Language Exchange System (CHILDES) database. CLAN has been used to create and analyze a wide variety of corpora, but unlike the above mentioned programs, the data that is inputted must be formatted in the CHAT transcription format. This format needs programming knowledge and unlike the other programs mentioned above, that just need text to be cut and pasted to run the measures, it is thus much more complicated and time consuming.

There are a variety of reasons to use the above tools. Researchers examining writing proficiency can use complexity measures to see if certain conditions are affecting the students' written performance. These can include task type, task factors such as genre of the tasks, task condition, task structure, the familiarity regarding the topic, planning time, as well

as the level of cognitive complexity of the tasks (Rahimpour, 1999, 2008). The type of pedagogical intervention is also an external factor that researchers look at to see if it may affect complexity, such as different types of written corrective feedback. A study by Van Beuningen et al. (2012), for example looked if written corrective feedback would improve complexity in text revisions and found that the group that did not receive feedback, but wrote a new text instead displayed less complex writing than the writing of students who received direct or indirect feedback. Individual difference variables, for example learners' proficiency level, anxiety of the L2 learners, motivation, or aptitude are other factors that can influence complexity (Rahimpour, 1999, 2008).

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

As well as being useful for researchers, complexity measures are very seldom used by teachers of writing or academic writing, but could be incorporated in classroom activities or as one of the goals of a course. Since syntactic and lexical diversity measures are easy to calculate using on-line tools, incorporating the on-line tools as a classroom activity can be an enjoyable change for both the students and the teacher. An academic essay could be posted into the on-line tools mentioned above and certain complexity measures could be selected. The students, with the guidance of the teacher, could then work towards improving the complexity of the essay and then looking at the result to see, if in fact the essay has improved in complexity according to one the measures selected. It is important to note, however, that examining the assessment of complexity in second language writing for communicative purposes, rather than just for research, is not fully practical without taking into account its functional dimension. Thus, thinking about the concept of functional adequacy when looking at complexity could also be considered (Pallotti, 2009; Kuiken, Vedder & Gilabert, 2010) and not only relying on complexity measure such as MTLT and voc-d.

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## *Students' Views of Art Education as Their Future Career*

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### **Abstract**

Art has long been an important subject of the education system. In Vietnam, teaching arts is taken a solid position as a subject of the education system from primary to tertiary education level. However, little is known about the situation and the need for transformation in the way students are trained to become art teachers. To clarify the view and attitudes of the to-be-an-art-teacher students, we conducted an online survey to collect data from students who enrolled in the bachelor course, majoring in art teaching at a university in Vietnam. A total of 57 students participated in the survey, most of them are females in the second year of the on-the-job B.A. course. The results showed that the respondents reported needing more diversified learning content such as applied arts, installation, and multimedia. They showed a need to have more practice sessions and fieldwork such as visiting museums and exhibitions. The respondents specified that they chose this major because they love the subject and love teaching, as well as to address the social need of learning arts, as arts seem to be a more important subject for elementary education. They shared a positive attitude toward the internationalization of local art education, however, none of them plan to study abroad. These findings imply the need for improving the quality of teaching and internationalization of art teacher education to meet international standards in the context of a developing country.

Keywords: Art Education, Art Teacher, Attitude, Internationalization, Vietnam

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## Introduction

Art education encompasses a diverse range of disciplines, including art history, art theory, and art production, with the aim of fostering creativity, critical thinking, and visual literacy among students (Luehrman, 2002). Its significance lies in nurturing self-expression, promoting cultural understanding, and contributing to overall academic achievement. Moreover, art education cultivates essential life skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and communication (Kuščević et al., 2022). In Vietnam, the evolution of art education has seen notable milestones, including the establishment of the Indochina School of Fine Arts in 1925, the Vietnam Fine Arts Association in 1957, the Hue College of Fine Arts in 1957 and the Vietnam National Institute of Arts and Culture Studies and the introduction of art education programs in primary and secondary schools in the 1980s (Pham, 2010). Among these institutions, Hanoi National University of Education (HNUE), established in 1951, is a leading institution in Vietnam specialized in education and offers a comprehensive training program for art teachers.

Art education in Vietnam primarily takes place within formal school settings, spanning primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, alongside extracurricular programs and community initiatives. According to the national curriculum, 12% of the total number of instructional hours is to be dedicated to arts education in the first two years of secondary school. In addition to arts education's necessity for nurturing creativity and an interest in culture and cultural professions amongst learners, significant evidence points to the ways arts education and creative education overall helps to lift confidence, improve problem-solving skills, and aid attainment and achievement in other key subjects like science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Do, 1987). In Viet Nam, this figure of 12% indicates Vietnamese authorities already greatly value arts education, having a result that is more than double the average for test phase countries of the CDIS, which is situated at 4.8% (UNESCO, 2012).

The curriculum typically incorporates subjects such as painting, drawing, sculpture, and art history. Teaching methods embrace a combination of lectures, demonstrations, and practical workshops. Notably, innovative approaches like project-based learning, collaborative work, and the integration of digital technology are increasingly employed (MOET, 2016). Nevertheless, challenges persist, including limited funding and resources, a shortage of teachers, and insufficient public support for the arts. Amidst these challenges, art education in Vietnam possesses promising opportunities for growth and development, particularly in light of the expanding global interest in Vietnamese art and culture, as well as advancements in digital technology. Furthermore, research has demonstrated the positive effects of art education on students' academic achievement and social skills, highlighting the correlation between participation in art education programs and improved performance academically, as well as the development of crucial social competencies such as teamwork and communication. Thus, art education serves as a vital conduit for preserving Vietnam's rich cultural heritage and supporting the burgeoning creative industries that contribute to the nation's economic growth.

Becoming an art teacher in Vietnam necessitates completing a four-year bachelor's degree program in art education or a related field, followed by potential certification exams or additional training. The training and certification process typically combines academic coursework with practical teaching experience in local schools.



Looking ahead, the future of art education in Vietnam is expected to witness continued growth and development, driven by evolving social and economic conditions. To enhance and expand art education programs, strategies such as increased funding and resources, as well as improved teacher training, can be implemented.

This study endeavors to address the existing knowledge gap regarding the perspectives and attitudes of the future art teachers in Vietnam. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the perspectives, views, and attitudes of students aspiring to become art teachers in Vietnam. By uncovering their motivations, expectations, and challenges, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the potential areas for improvement in art education. This includes understanding the participants' attitudes towards the structure, curriculum, and teaching methods of art education and the perceived challenges faced by art education in Vietnam. The results will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on art education in Vietnam by providing up-to-date and comprehensive research findings.

## Method

We conducted an online survey to collect data from students who enrolled in the BA course, majoring in art teaching at a university in Vietnam. We designed a conceptual framework (Figure 1) to make clear the goals and purpose of this attempt. Students who have interest and curiosity towards teaching arts are attracted to enroll in the B.A. program. During the course they will form a clearer preference of the contents, attitude towards arts education and internationalization, and defining future.

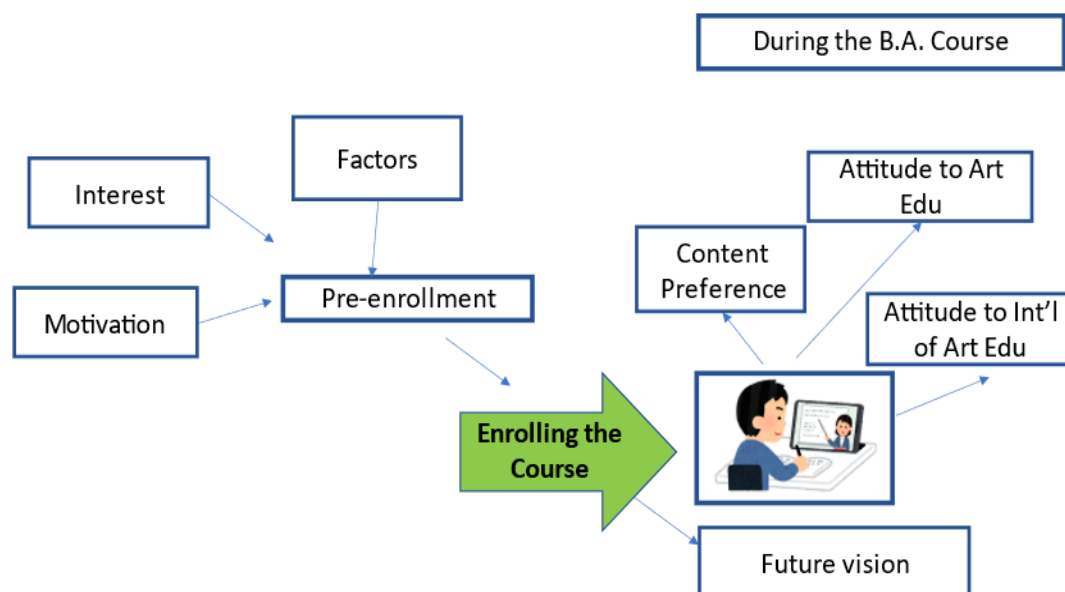


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

For data collection, we created a qualitative data form using Microsoft Forms, which included multiple-choice questions. The questionnaire consisted of personal information (5 items), views and attitude (8 items using a 5-level Likert scale where respondents can indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a statement, ranging from "1. Strongly Disagree" to "5. Strongly Agree"), open ideas (1 item). It took approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was available bilingual in both Vietnamese and English. The survey was conducted during the initial two weeks of August 2022. The target respondents were the undergraduate students studying art education in a national

university in Vietnam. The survey responses were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality and encourage candid responses from participants. Quantitative data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software, specifically employing correlation analysis to explore relationships between variables.

### Results

The participants in this study have the following characteristics: they have a wide age range, with the majority being over 41 years old. There is a significant representation of female participants compared to male participants. The majority of participants are in grade 2, followed by grade 3 and grade 4. In terms of the course enrolment, most participants are enrolled in "B.A. (In service)," with a smaller number in "B.A. (Regular)" and only a few in "M.A." All the respondents have majored in Fine Arts Teaching. Figure 2 shows that most participants envision a career as an art teacher, indicating a strong interest in the field of education and art instruction. A smaller percentage aspire in professional artistic or design careers, while an even smaller group expresses interest in entrepreneurship.

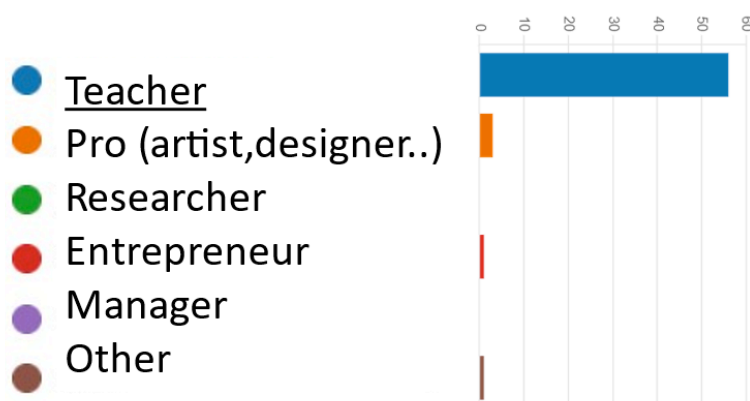


Figure 2. Respondents' envisioned career

The data in Table 1 presents the respondents' attitudes about the importance of fine art education for each level of education. There are 57 participants with valid responses in the elementary education level, and there are no missing responses. The data indicates that participants' attitudes towards the importance of fine art education tend to be relatively high across all education levels, with higher attitudes observed at elementary education level, and a gradually decrease in higher level of education. The mean score for participants at the elementary level is 4.77, indicating a relatively high attitude towards the importance of fine art education. The standard deviation of 0.627 suggests that the responses are clustered closely around the mean, indicating a high level of agreement among participants at this education level.

Table 1. Attitude about Importance of Fine Art Education

Education level	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Elementary	57	0	4.77	0.627
Junior High	57	0	4.65	0.668
High School	57	0	4.60	0.753
Undergraduate	56	1	4.52	0.853
Graduate	57	0	4.25	1.005

Table 2 provides insights into the participants' perceptions regarding the prioritization of different aspects of fine arts in the training program, where higher values indicate a higher priority for a particular aspect.

Table 2. Which part of the fine arts needs to be prioritized in the training program?

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Applied	56	1	4.55	0.872
Layout	57	0	4.53	0.868
Aesthetics	56	1	4.39	0.947
Sketch	57	0	4.39	0.901
Oil painting	57	0	4.18	1.088
History of Arts	56	1	4.13	1.113
Wood	57	0	4.12	1.070
Silk painting	57	0	4.00	1.086
Sculpture	57	0	4.00	1.150
Lacquer	57	0	3.77	1.427
Other	57	0	3.18	1.702

According to the data, the participants rated "Applied" (4.55) and "Layout" (4.53) as the highest priority areas in the training program. Further analysis revealed that the respondents specified "multimedia, photoshop, installation etc." as the specific subjects of applied arts that they want to be given priority in the program. This suggests that the participants recognize the importance of practical and compositional skills in the field of fine arts. "Aesthetics" (4.39) and "Sketch" (4.39) also received high ratings, indicating that the participants consider these aspects crucial in their training. Aesthetics relates to the study and understanding of beauty, while sketching involves the foundational skill of drawing. The participants' emphasis on these aspects suggests a recognition of the significance of visual expression and artistic techniques. The data further reveals that "Oil" (4.18), "History" (4.13), "Wood" (4.12), and "Silk" (4.00) are also regarded as important areas in the training program, although they received slightly lower ratings compared to the forementioned aspects. These areas likely represent specific mediums, historical knowledge, and traditional techniques that contribute to a well-rounded fine arts education. On the other hand, "Sculp" (4.00), "Lacquer" (3.77), and "Other" (3.18) received relatively lower ratings compared to the rest. This suggests that the participants may perceive these areas as less prioritized or less essential in their training. In short, the data indicates that the participants consider applied arts, layout, aesthetics, sketching, and specific mediums such as oil and wood as important areas to prioritize in the training program. These findings can inform curriculum development and instructional strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of art teaching students.

The results shown in Table 3 indicate the motivations behind students' decision to enroll in the Fine Arts BA program.

Table 3. What motivates you to study Fine Arts?

	N		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing		
Love Teaching	57	0	4.67	0.787
Love Art	57	0	4.61	0.620
Social Need	57	0	4.49	0.909
Job Hunting	57	0	3.93	1.462
Business	57	0	3.12	1.680
Family Influence	57	0	2.84	1.820
Other	56	1	3.46	1.525

The participants rated various factors on a Likert scale, with higher scores indicating stronger motivation. Love Teaching (4.67) factor received the highest rating, suggesting that a significant number of students are motivated to pursue the Fine Arts program because they have a genuine passion for teaching. They are likely interested in sharing their knowledge and skills with others, fostering creativity, and making a positive impact on students' education. Love Art (4.61) is the second-highest rated motivation. This indicates that many students are drawn to the program because they have a deep appreciation and passion for various forms of art, such as painting, sculpture, or multimedia. Their desire to immerse themselves in the artistic process and explore different artistic techniques and expressions drives their decision to enroll. Social Need (4.49) gets a high rating suggests that a significant portion of students recognize the importance of art education in society. They are motivated to pursue the Fine Arts program because they believe that learning and promoting art is crucial for individuals' personal development and cultural enrichment. These students may be driven by a desire to contribute to the preservation and appreciation of art in their community. Job Hunting (3.93) gets a lower rating indicates that employment may not be the primary motivation for students enrolling in the Fine Arts program. Taking the fact that most of the respondents are currently working as an art teacher but probably do not possess BA degree in art teaching, it suggests that although students are more influenced by their passion for art and teaching rather than solely seeking job opportunities in the field. Business (3.12) and Family Influence (2.84) are the factors that received lower ratings compared to others, indicating that students are less driven by the potential for business or financial success in the art field or by family pressure or influence. In short, these results highlight the importance of intrinsic motivations such as love for teaching and art, as well as a recognition of the social value of art education. Students' desire to make a positive impact, foster creativity, and contribute to society through art and teaching plays a crucial role in their decision to pursue a Fine Arts BA program.

## Discussion

In the study's context, while dedicated to nurturing creativity and artistic excellence, the institution also faces certain challenges, which are partly in line with the perceptions of the respondents in the current study. One of the challenges is the need to stay updated with rapidly evolving artistic techniques, technologies, and trends. The faculty must continually adapt its curriculum and teaching methods to ensure students receive relevant and comprehensive education in the ever-changing art landscape. Additionally, providing adequate resources and facilities for students' artistic endeavors can be a challenge. Art supplies, equipment, and studio spaces require continuous investment and maintenance to meet the diverse needs of students across different art disciplines. Furthermore, fostering a

supportive and inclusive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds and artistic styles can present its own set of challenges. Balancing individual artistic expression while promoting collaboration and constructive critique requires a delicate approach. Lastly, establishing strong connections with the wider art community and industry to facilitate internships, exhibitions, and career opportunities for students is another challenge that the Fine Art Faculty must navigate.

The current study has been conducted during the fading phase of the pandemic, so we expected that the respondents still have been influenced by it at the time of the survey. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of education, including art teacher education. As universities and educational institutions closed their premises and shifted to online learning (Tran, Nguyen, et al., 2022), art teacher education programs had to adapt to new modes of instruction. The pandemic brought about radical disruptions to routines, revenues, and relationships in the arts and cultural sector globally, including art teacher education in Vietnam (Tran, Kanchana, et al., 2022). In response to physical distancing measures, the value of connection, culture, and the arts became more pronounced [2]. In the context of teacher education, the pandemic presented both challenges and opportunities for art teachers. It prompted them to reevaluate and redesign their pedagogical models to better meet the needs of learners. The transition to blended learning, combining online and face-to-face teaching, became more prominent and emphasized the importance of flexibility in education. While there were initial struggles and issues during the technological transition, teachers demonstrated resilience and commitment to delivering quality art education even in the midst of a pandemic. The experience of the pandemic has likely influenced art teacher education by promoting the integration of technology, fostering adaptability, and reinforcing the importance of connection and cultural enrichment in art education (SingTeach, 2020).

There are limitations that may have influenced the findings. The sample size was relatively small, consisting of only 57 students from a single university in Vietnam. This limits the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of art teacher education students in the country. A larger and more diverse sample would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the views and attitudes of art teaching students. Moreover, the survey was conducted online, which may have introduced certain biases. The reliance on self-reported data from participants could be subject to social desirability bias. Moreover, the online nature of the survey may have excluded individuals who do not have access to or are less proficient in using technology. Additionally, the study focused solely on the perspectives of art teaching students and did not explore the viewpoints of other stakeholders, such as art educators, practicing art teachers, or educational policymakers. Including these perspectives would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within art teacher education in Vietnam. The study was conducted within the context of a developing country, which may have unique challenges and considerations that differ from those in other countries. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the views and attitudes of art teaching students in Vietnam and lays the groundwork for further research and improvement in art teacher education. Future studies could overcome these limitations by employing larger and more diverse samples, incorporating multiple perspectives, and addressing the practical barriers to implementing necessary changes in art teacher education programs.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, we examined the views and attitudes of students enrolled in a bachelor's program in art teaching in Vietnam. The results shed light on the current situation and the need for transformation in the training of future art teachers. The findings revealed that the surveyed students expressed a desire for more diverse learning content, including applied arts, installation, and multimedia. They also expressed a need for increased practical sessions and fieldwork, such as visiting museums and exhibitions. The students chose the art teaching major out of their passion for the subject and their interest in addressing the societal need for arts education, particularly in elementary schools. Additionally, they displayed a positive attitude toward the internationalization of local art education, although none of them had plans to study abroad. These findings underscore the importance of enhancing the quality of art teacher education and promoting internationalization to align with global standards in a developing country context. By addressing these needs and aspirations, the education system in Vietnam can better prepare future art teachers who are equipped to meet the evolving demands of the field and contribute to the growth and advancement of art education in the country.

Overall, this study contributes valuable insights into the perspectives of students pursuing a career in art teaching, highlighting areas for improvement, and emphasizing the significance of internationalization in art teacher education. Future efforts should focus on implementing the suggested changes, such as incorporating more diverse learning content and providing ample opportunities for practical experiences, to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of art teacher training programs. Furthermore, collaboration and exchange with international institutions can facilitate the sharing of best practices and innovative approaches in art education. By addressing these challenges and embracing the opportunities, Vietnam can strengthen its art education system and nurture a new generation of skilled and passionate art teachers who will shape the artistic development and appreciation of future generations.

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***Can Virtual Theater Fulfill the Function of Live Theater in COVID–19 for Tertiary Level Dance Program Stakeholders?***

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**Abstract**

As the coronavirus pandemic affected tertiary level dance education worldwide, relevant stakeholders responded to the unprecedented change to online modality, by pursuing virtual theater as a solution to the absence of the live theater format. This study examined the perceptions of tertiary level dance program stakeholders on the efficacy of virtual theater as a substitute for the live theater experience. This study premised that there was a significant difference between the perception of the respondents when grouped according to administrators and professors versus students. A mixed method study design was used, including quantitative and qualitative content analysis involving 116 respondents of tertiary level dance programs in the country. The results revealed that although stakeholders perceived that virtual theater was incapable of fulfilling the functions of live theater in pre-pandemic times, therefore nullifying the possibility of virtual theater as a stand-in for live theater, virtual theater's continued existence beyond COVID–19 was resoundingly anticipated. There was generally no significant difference between the responses of stakeholders, albeit in some areas where responses were significant, by virtue of stakeholder position or status. Through the findings of this study, the researchers proposed operational initiatives to mitigate the problem of an uncertain future for the performing arts, a sector unhinged by physical distancing. Considering that COVID–19 effects may linger, and that the ongoing presence of virtual theater is inevitable, the researchers likewise broached strategies to reimagine a more resilient and sustainable virtual theater. Recommendations are made with guidelines for future research provided.

Keywords: Virtual Theater, Dance Pedagogy, Dance Education, Education Stakeholders

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## Introduction

As COVID-19 forced governments to implement stringent emergency measures, performing arts students were among the 1.3 billion learners across the globe affected by school closures, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization or UNESCO (2021). Just like other disciplines and educational institutions, the consequent and abrupt shift to online modality propelled performing arts programs to adapt and rethink in terms of learning and instruction (Kaufman et al., 2020; report, 2020).

At the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, the discussions among dance program administrators and professors in Metro Manila, centered on the threatened sustainability of theater and live art performances. More urgently, the dialogues deliberated on how the programs themselves could address the performance outcomes of their various movement courses without an actual platform to stage these in (Toczauer, 2021; Wozny, 2021). Local, Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) hurried to find an alternative, viable, and effective arena that can bridge theory and practice through a production based model. The common approach chosen was the launching of online streaming shows or virtual theater.

Virtual theater is, “a sprawling category, more experiential than formal, which ranges from high-quality performance recordings, to staticky live Zooms, and is unified as a genre only by its reliance on Wi-Fi—is still in its vulnerable infancy (Cunningham, 2020).” Given the foregoing, there now exists an additional qualification for theater; defining the distinction between live theater and virtual theater.

The emergence of virtual theater not only to address the needs of tertiary level dance programs and their students but to ensure the survival of the dance programs’ themselves, relates to Milton Freeman’s “Stakeholder Theory,” a strategic management scheme of organizations in the late twentieth century. Freeman (1984), over the course of his work entitled, “Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach,” generally accepted as a seminal launching of stakeholder theory concepts, defines a stakeholder as any individual or group of individuals that can influence or are influenced by the achievement of the organization's objectives. It is the organization’s responsibility to create value for its stakeholders’ interests. Freeman’s Theory is evidently seen through the emergence of virtual theater not only to address the needs of tertiary level dance programs but to ensure the survival of the dance programs’ themselves (Hong, 2019).

In this instance, with the pandemic as the contextual backdrop, stakeholders adapt efficient solutions with survival as a key objective (Langrafe et al, 2020). Mutual trust between stakeholders, with students as consenting and active participants, create a strategic value for virtual theater as a stand-in for live theater.

The study therefore, aims to determine whether virtual theater can truly be an efficacious substitute for live theater and the theater experience (Crouch, 2022; Kim et al, 2021; 2022) for tertiary level dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff). Furthermore, through the findings of this study, the researchers aim to propose effective, operational, initiatives and strategies that could mitigate the problem of an uncertain future for the performing arts, a sector unhinged by physical distancing (Kaufman et al., 2020; 2022). Considering that COVID effects may linger, the researchers likewise intend to broach strategies to reimagine a more resilient and sustainable virtual theater.

## Statement of the Problem

With the pandemic as the contextual backdrop, this study premises that tertiary level, dance program stakeholders adapt an efficient solution with survival as a key objective. The researchers presuppose that tertiary level, dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff) create a strategic value for virtual theater as an efficacious stand-in for live theater.

This study therefore intends to explore the efficacy of virtual theater as a replacement for live theater. The researchers propose to fill the gap in the current literature by determining stakeholders' perceptions in viewing pre-recorded, digitized performances in virtual space. Furthermore, the researchers assume that such perception could lead to the sustainability of virtual theater and the possible establishment of virtual theater as a genre.

Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of perception of the respondents to the efficacy of virtual theater?
2. Is there a significant difference between the perception of the respondents to the efficacy of virtual theater when grouped according to administrators, professors, staff, and students?

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between the perception of the respondents to the efficacy of virtual theater when grouped according to administrators, professors, staff, and students.

The alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) will be tested using a 0.05 level of significance.

## Methodology

This is a mixed methods qualitative research using the survey methodology to collate and analyze data on the perceptions of tertiary level, dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff) on the efficacy of virtual shows, towards replacing pre-COVID live theater as a vehicle for tertiary level dance students' performance outcomes.

A Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was organized among members of the tertiary level dance program community, who would best provide the necessary details and points of inquiry for the survey. This method of selection is called purposive sampling. Data collated and analyzed from the FGD as well as information from the study's literature review generated the items for the online questionnaire survey. Data obtained from the online questionnaire survey was analyzed using a thematic analysis within the framework of Freeman's Stakeholder Theory and the study's conceptual theory.

The researchers acquired data from one hundred sixteen (116) tertiary level dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff) in Metro Manila. In terms of the sample size for survey respondents, qualitative researchers assert that there is no saturation point about the question of "how many" (Vasileiou et al., 2018) since the depth of the qualitative data is considered relevantly more important than the actual number (Burmeister & Aitken, 2012).

The study employed qualitative approaches to gather both primary and secondary data and information with the objective of determining the satisfaction and evaluation of tertiary level,

dance program stakeholders on virtual shows, as a feasible platform to replace actual and physical theater.

An interview guide with semi-structured or a pre-determined set of open questions based on related items extracted from the literature review, prompted the Focused Group Discussion (FGD). The data gathered from the FGD's participants' perceptions and contextual accounts, were used to create the items for the online questionnaire survey that was sent to tertiary level dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff), to answer this study's questions.

Considering that at the time of the study, the country was still in COVID-19 Alert Level 1, the conduct of an online questionnaire survey proved a sensible data gathering method because it was completed anonymously, it was inexpensive, easy to administer, and yielded a fair amount of data.

The online questionnaire survey collected respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age, and stakeholder category. The second part of the online questionnaire survey involved the respondents' subjective perceptions regarding live theater and virtual theater. They were asked to evaluate the items developed in the previous phase (Focused Group Discussion). The third part included an open-ended question, which zeroed in on additional sentiments or reactions to the aforementioned items in the online questionnaire survey.

Content validity or "the degree to which items in an instrument reflect the content universe to which the instrument will be generalized" (Straub, Boudreau et al. 2004), was carried out by a research coordinator, who triangulated and/or cross verified, both the interview guide for the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and the online questionnaire survey.

To guarantee that results are stable, precise, and repeatable, statistical reliability was ensured by first running a reliability test on a random thirty (30) respondents, using Cronbach's Alpha. This was accomplished to assure consistency across all parts of the measuring instrument (Kalla, 2011; Straub et al, 2004).

Following is the table of Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) interpretation.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Internal Consistency/Reliability
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$	Good
$0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$	Acceptable
$0.6 \leq \alpha < 0.7$	Questionable
$0.5 \leq \alpha < 0.6$	Poor
$\alpha < 0.6$	Unacceptable

*Note. Adapted from Glien, J. A., & Glien, R. R. (2003). Calculating, interpreting, and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert-Type scales. Presented at the Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, October 8-10, 2003.*

The qualitative data was subjected to a thematic analysis, whereby repeated themes were identified (Braun and Clarke 2006). Persistent patterns were established, reviewed, defined, and finally named, that showed a relationship to the satisfaction and evaluation of tertiary level dance program stakeholders on virtual shows, as a platform to replace actual and physical theater. The said themes were used as a guide in creating items for the consequent online questionnaire survey.

To determine if observed results are in line with expected results, and to rule out that observations are due to chance, the Chi-square test was used to test the alternative hypothesis of whether there is a significant difference between the perception of the respondents to the efficacy of virtual theater when grouped according to administrators and professors, versus students.

The researchers sent the online questionnaire survey by email, SMS, and FB Messenger, to tertiary level, dance program administrators, together with a letter of request to participate in the study as well as an entreaty to disseminate the link to the said survey to their stakeholders. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze responses to the satisfaction scales. Stakeholders' responses to the open-ended question were scrutinized using the thematic analysis method.

## Results and Discussion

The results indicate that tertiary level dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff) played a key role in handling the coronavirus pandemic situation in the delivery of the teaching-learning process. While the demand for cultural and creative content intensified throughout the pandemic, with digital access becoming more critical than before, both academics and practitioners contemplated on the future of arts consumption, especially from a tertiary level dance program's standpoint (2019). Distinctly drawing upon Freeman's model, the data captured the perceptions and evaluations of different stakeholders on the efficacy of virtual theater as a substitute for live theater and its relevance to the sustainability of the tertiary level dance programs.

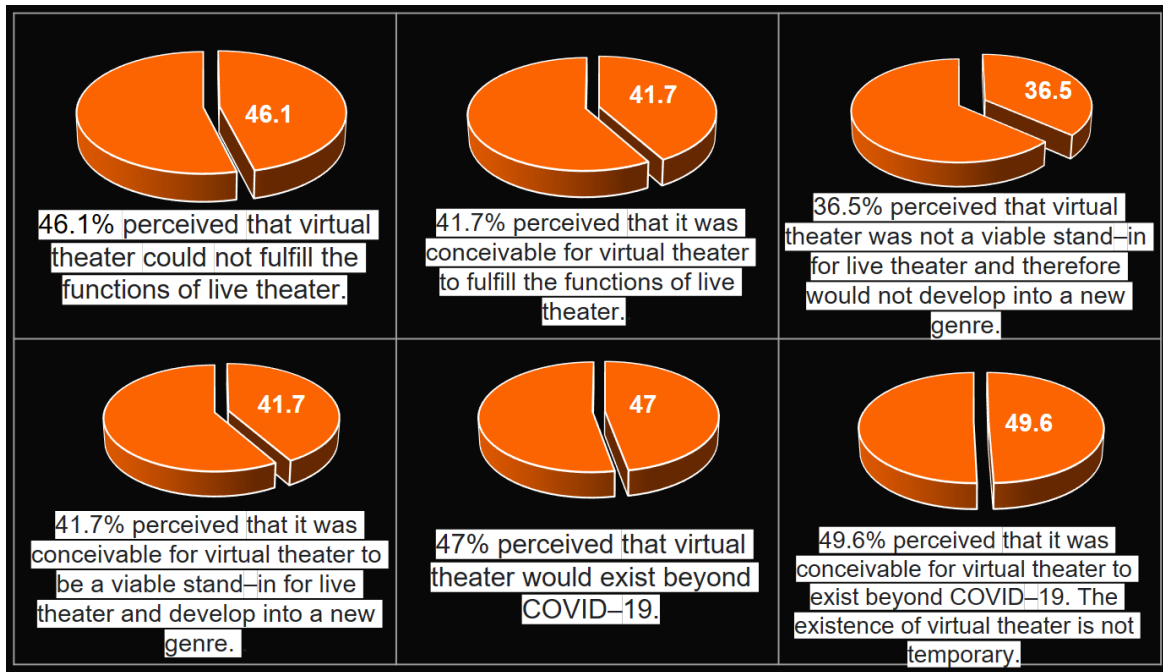


Figure 1: Perceptions of Respondents on Virtual Theater

This study strongly suggests that respondents perceive the existence of virtual theater beyond COVID-19. Virtual theater is a tool that tertiary level dance programs can use effectively and efficiently, to achieve its objectives. In summary, the need for virtual theater is recognizable, and, thereby, the demand for research on the nature and dynamics of virtual theater is imperative to develop adequate measurements about the effectiveness of virtual theater from the perspective of its users (Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017; Rismayanti, Hasjim, & Kurniawan, 2022; Wozny, 2021). The prevailing opinion was of virtual theater enhancing the functions of live theater and possibly developing into a full blown genre with Dance Majors occupying a new niche as dance film makers. Virtual theater therefore is the extension, not the experience (Keam-George, 2021).

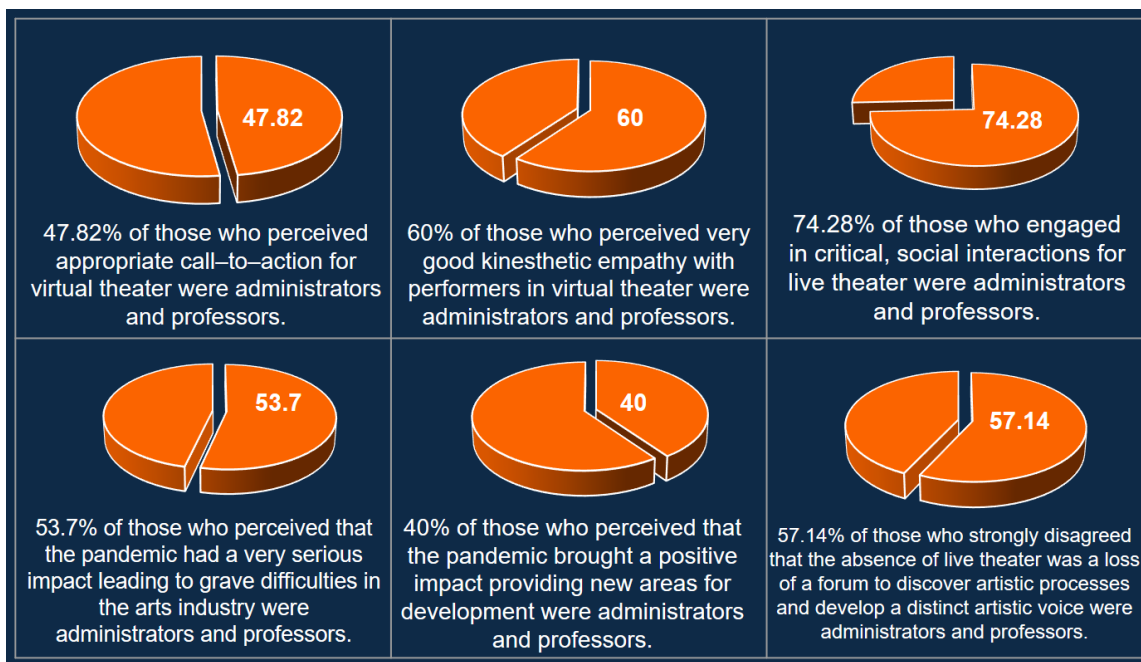


Figure 2: Perceptions of Administrators and Professors on the Future of Virtual Theater

Based on this study's findings, although virtual theater in pandemic times was deemed incapable of fulfilling the functions of live theater in pre-pandemic times, virtual theater's continued existence beyond COVID-19 is resoundingly predicted and anticipated (Morrongiello, 2020). There was generally no significant difference between the responses of stakeholders, albeit in some areas where responses were significant, by virtue of stakeholder position (Füzi et al., 2022; Hong, 2019). The administrators and professors as a group, (1) disagreed that the absence of live theater was analogous to a loss in discovering artistic processes and developing a distinct artistic voice (Wozny, 2021). This group also (2) disagreed with the idea that a perceived absence of live theater denoted a loss of a forum to express and comment upon the human condition (Chandler, 2021). Furthermore, administrators and professors (3) agreed that a perceived absence of live theater promoted the establishment of virtual theater, and increased arts engagement (Cunningham, 2020). Perhaps as internal stakeholders interested in the development of a new theater form, the administrators and professors (4) perceived a call-to-action and kinesthetic empathy present in virtual theater (Luciew, 2021). They were also almost unanimous in expressing (5) that the absence of live theater did not connote a loss of a forum to discover artistic processes and develop a distinct artistic voice (Ritzel, 2021). Instead, this group attested to (6) the absence of live theater as promoting the establishment of virtual theater (Roe, 2021).

Interestingly, maturity, characterized by greater emotional control, less negative affect, and a more positive outlook (Carstensen et al, 2000) seems to be a catalytic factor as seen by the data on administrators and professors' perceptions on the future of virtual theater beyond COVID-19. This group seems to have a more differentiated emotional experience and views the emergence of virtual theater as a bolstering of the performing arts, possibly branching out into a new genre. Students on the other hand, are conceivably neutral regarding the future of virtual theater, adamantly pointing to virtual theater as a mere stop-gap measure in response to a negative stimuli, COVID-19. This is in keeping with Carstensen's Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST), which posits that psychological mechanisms account for age differences in emotional experiences. In other words, older adults' decreased attention to negative affect may reflect a motivational difference between young and old, with the administrators and professors focusing more strongly on maintaining positive affective states. Their perceived growth of virtual theater beyond the pandemic implies a strengthened commitment to the arts and acknowledgment of changes in the arts industry for the common good.

## **Conclusions**

COVID-19 led to substantial demands and opportunities for a new format, i.e., "virtual events, shows, and theater" (Cahapay & Rotas, 2022; Levy, 2021; Romita, 2018). The transformational power of various types of technologies influenced the design of performing arts events and enabled tertiary level dance programs to hold a blended type of teaching-learning environment by fusing real and virtual components.

COVID-19 seems to be accelerating long-term trends that have troubled performing arts organizations for years (Paulson & Hernández, 2022). The rise of live streaming during the pandemic has stimulated virtual theater (report, 2020; Rismayanti et al., 2022); and virtual theater, despite its more obvious limitations, is now being considered as a strong forerunner in the arts (Welsh, 2021). Virtual theater's advantages (convenience, efficiency, and diversity), the least being the inclusion of and participation of remotely located students, cannot be denied (Langston, 2022).

Various literature on traditional, live theater, as well as virtual theater, by studies of Ambrecht et al (2017), Cunningham (2020), Geigenmüller, (2010), Gottlieb & Bianchi (2017), and Pearlman & Gates (2010), defined virtual theater as web-based, pre-recorded performances in virtual environments such as Zoom and live streaming platforms rather than physical places, at a given time for particular purposes. Although there have been considerable research on declaring virtual theater as advantageous (Geigenmüller, 2010; Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017), the data exhibited that thirty six point five percent (36.5%) of the respondents perceived that virtual theater could not be substituted for real face-to-face theater, as the benefits of the former failed to exceed those of the latter (Adema & Roehl, 2010). This was supported by thirty eight point six percent (38.6%) of the respondents who perceived human connection in virtual theater to a lessened degree.

However, with the coronavirus pandemic came a critical reconsideration of the way humans work and live. Remote and online communication technologies have become more widely adopted in many industries, across the board, including the arts industry (Gössling et al, 2020). Regardless of the fact that thirty six point five percent (36.5%) of the respondents perceived that virtual theater was not a viable substitute for live theater, forty one point seven percent (41.7%) of the respondents perceived that it was conceivable for virtual theater to be a viable stand-in for live theater and to furthermore develop into a new genre. This signaled a wait-and-see attitude prevalent among the tertiary level, dance program stakeholders. It was therefore essential to understand user perceptions of virtual theater more comprehensively based on relevant studies and systematic approaches.

Since tertiary level dance program stakeholders (administrators, professors, students, and staff) possess dance specific capacities, abilities, experience, and knowledge, it is logical that they would have a multi-layered, more nuanced, invested interest in ensuring that the program remain robust, despite pandemic challenges (Hong 2019; Langrafe et al., 2020). The rapid growth of virtual theater as a vehicle for their continued development as dance artists is a testament to this (Chandler & Scheuber-Rush, 2021). Although virtual theater may not necessarily fulfill live theater's functions of providing human connection and critical, social interaction, it endures as an alternative avenue for artists to converge as a virtual dance community to address contemporary, societal issues (Roe, 2021; Taylor, 2022; Wozny, 2021).

In general, tertiary level dance programs through the interactions and collaborations of their stakeholders (Hong, 2019) accelerated digital strategies and made agile changes to their programming where physical space was not the only focus (Wozny, 2021). Virtual theater allowed for uninterrupted movement exploration, addressing issues of accessibility and inclusion, as well as exploiting digital content as a new source of transformative experience (Levy, 2021). The shift to virtual theater obliged tertiary level dance programs to reconsider their social role with respect to their new positioning on the market as filmmakers (Chandler & Scheuber-Rush, 2021; Lu, 2021). Certainly, tertiary level dance programs revealed the importance of virtual theater as their main survival instrument in the pandemic (Roe, 2021). Virtual theater delivered the tertiary level dance program stakeholders' expectations of creating and performing dance studies showing complex thematic materials, despite restrictive pandemic protocols. The digitized approach of virtual theater was a resilient response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent loss of live theater (Luciew, 2021). The simple fact that there was involvement in virtual theater despite the fact that it was COVID-19 driven, implies that virtual theater as a pandemic panacea to solve the pain points



of tertiary level dance program stakeholders, was actually realized as a value to the sustainability of the dance programs (Wozny, 2021).

## **Recommendations**

### ***Operational Solutions***

As COVID–19 drastically influenced the learning and performative environment of tertiary level dance programs, the circumstances coerced stakeholders to make adaptations toward virtual theater in the absence of vital resources such as studios and live theater. Various provisions for tech software must be facilitated to ensure that dance programs remain at the forefront of the performing arts conversation.

Information Technology (IT) has significantly impacted educational processes, from the nature of pedagogy to the ways of delivering content during the pandemic. This department needs strengthening. Outside support, from other external partners like R&D laboratories and centers, philanthropic foundations, etc., must be tapped for higher educational institutions to perform unimpeded during cataclysmic events such a pandemic.

Aside from technological provisions, the model of competition between universities as centers of research and learning, must be altered to one of shared collaborative endeavors. Global cooperation in higher education and research should be the norm as well as enhanced networks for tertiary level education to facilitate local knowledge for training people with globally relevant, research–based education.

More attention should be paid to developing e–resources that should respect copyright as a whole, including facilitating uses through licensing of material in educational and research settings. This could limit piracy damages in crisis times and support the development of local industries while paying attention to creators.

### ***Strategies for a More Resilient and Sustainable Virtual Theater***

Given that live theater in pre–pandemic times, facilitates intellectual reflection about a performance among tertiary level dance program stakeholders (Cunningham, 2020; Luciew, 2021), new and more innovative designs for the presentation of virtual theater are required to enhance the implied, reflective nature of the virtual theater environment and its potential for enhancing intellectual amplification (Sorensen, 2004; Yukawa, 2006).

Knowledge gained from this study’s findings could determine directions for innovating software solutions to enhance the productivity and operational costs for the performing arts sector. While it is true that the emergence of virtual theater propelled initiatives intended to expand and diversify the audience for the arts, the survival of virtual theater is dependent on the creation of new formats, structures, and systems, and further innovation and strategies (Chiland, 2021; Morrongiello, 2020).

### ***For Future Research***

We need more stringent, analytical approaches of research that relate communicative qualities of virtual contexts to qualities of the knowledge–building process. This suggests that new, didactic, and instructional platforms, addressing virtual theatergoers’ communicative

awareness at a meta-level, need to be developed in order to fully utilize the interactive and reflective potential of virtual theater (Sorensen, 2004). A deeper understanding of the reflective nature of the online environment and its potential for enhancing intellectual amplification should give rise to the birth of new and more innovative designs for the presentation of virtual theater (Yukawa, 2006).

The findings of this study suggested that human connection or social presence was an important key attribute in determining virtual theater's efficacy (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997). The social solidarity discerned by tertiary level dance program stakeholders as they participated in virtual theater, was an active driver towards their perceived satisfaction (Short et al., 1976). The data would therefore provide tertiary level dance programs with a basis to approach this concept more strategically as they "intentionally" determine and manipulate social presence in virtual theater.

Another point of interest that surfaced in this study was how the Zoom chat box was perceived to have shifted virtual theater from a space of individual viewing to a space of collective viewing (Miller, 2020). This double channel created a viewing experience that was somehow more inter-connected as virtual theater participants were encouraged to continue conversations while they grappled with new information (Blackmon, 2012). In a study by Broadbent and Lodge (2021), respondents reported that such a feature was a good approximation for more traditional face-to-face conversations. While a full discussion on perceptions of chat box usage was outside the scope of this study, it would be good if more research was conducted on chat boxes as a communication tool in virtual theater.

Building virtual theater capabilities for a fast changing environment requires research to understand changing dynamics and new pain points as well as agile innovation to address them (Bakk, 2022; Giles, 2021). Administrators who master this approach will create value for external stakeholders (students, parents, HEI authorities, the government, suppliers, the community, etc.) in high-priority areas and in an environment of increased competition (Hong, 2019; Langrafe et al., 2020).

In summary, the need for virtual theater is recognizable, and, thereby, the demand for research on the nature and dynamics of virtual theater is imperative to develop adequate measurements about the effectiveness of virtual theater from the perspective of its users (Gottlieb & Bianchi, 2017; Rismayanti, Hasjim, & Kurniawan, 2022; Wozny, 2021). Such research should enable policymakers to determine, with confidence, whether virtual theater could be a replacement for live theater. It could also be worthwhile to examine the leadership practices that lead to the empowerment and consequent sustenance of virtual theater, as well as other antecedents as external pressures, virtual application effectiveness, software availability, and academic outcomes.

While tertiary level dance program stakeholders' rapid adoption of technology for remote work proves that they are open and ready to find new ways of performing, or proactively creating their own measures of sustainability, their committed shift to virtual theater may require more research, participant guidance, and technology testing, (Chandler & Scheuber-Rush, 2021; Langrafe et al., 2020).

### ***For Higher Educational Institutions' (HEI) policymakers***

As the COVID–19 pandemic drastically influenced the learning and performative environment of tertiary level dance programs, the circumstances coerced stakeholders to make adaptations toward virtual theater in the absence of vital resources such as studios and live theater (report, 2020). Various provisions for tech software must be facilitated to ensure that dance programs remain at the forefront of the performing arts conversation (Levy, 2021; Mitchell, 2021).

As digitized experiences continue to grow in popularity and COVID–19 is quelled, changes in virtual theater users' preferences are expected to outlast the immediate crisis (Pandey & Pandey, 2022). The bricks and mortar model of live theater will have to be re–imagined as a possible significant number of practitioners will have grown comfortable with the digital, remote, and low–touch options and make a permanent shift to virtual theater, accelerating behavior shifts that were perhaps already underway before the crisis (Raza, 2022; Welsh, 2021). Migrating to virtual theater should boost savings for higher educational institutions (HEI). The savings should consequently be funneled into advanced software programs and further optimizing digital training.

From the user perspective, information Technology (IT) has significantly impacted educational processes, from the nature of pedagogy to the ways of delivering content during the pandemic. This department needs strengthening. Outside support, from other external partners like R&D laboratories and centers, philanthropic foundations, etc., must be tapped for HEIs to perform more suitably during cataclysmic events such a pandemic.

Notwithstanding the urgent need to digitize the learning environment, it would be ideal to keep stakeholders at the forefront of management decisions. In stakeholders lie the resources, information, commitment, and wisdom needed to support the goals of the higher educational system, creating the conditions for students to thrive now and in the future. Policymakers must make stakeholder engagement more inclusive during COVID–19 and past the post–pandemic scenario. Frequent opportunities to gather as equals in dialogue and collaboration must be enacted to move beyond communication to the ultimate goal of connection.

### ***For government interventions***

The respondents proposed several sustainability measures for virtual theater to exist beyond COVID–19. The said measures involve government intervention such as (1) Government recognition of new and non–standard forms of employment (freelance, intermittent, hybrid, e.g., combining salaried part–time work with freelance, digital work); (2) Expansion of government strategies and policies to include non–profit institutions (e.g. dance and theater companies, museums) designed to keep virtual theater employees going; (3) Financial support to develop technological solutions for enhanced digital access to wider markets; (4) Financial support in building digital infrastructure that can amplify advances in virtual theater, and (5) Support for artists in generating income from their online content.

Table 2: Perceived Sustainability Measures for Virtual Theater beyond COVID-19 in the Order of Increasing Frequency

Percentage of Respondents	Perceived Sustainability Measures for Virtual Theater beyond COVID-19
79.8%	Increasing accessibility to tech and digital solutions to address the large discrepancy in this area, especially between cities and remote regions.
78.1%	Support artists in generating income from their online content.
68.4%	Explore how these digital solutions can be extensions and enhancements to the virtual theater experience.
57.9%	Development of technological solutions for enhanced digital access to wider markets.
57.9%	Investing in entrepreneurial skills and capacity, especially in areas of funding diversification, sponsorship and fundraising.
56.1%	Expand government strategies and policies to include non-profit institutions (e.g. dance companies, museums) designed to keep virtual theater employees going.
56.1%	Identify R&D (Research and Development) initiatives that artists can access.
56.1%	Government recognition of new and non-standard forms of employment (freelance, intermittent, hybrid, e.g., combining salaried part-time work with freelance, digital work).
54.4%	Invest in digital infrastructure that can amplify advances in virtual theater.
52.6%	Creatively reuse content archives to develop new forms of programming and audience engagement.

Government involvement and support in the arts, both financial and advisory, is important for the development of a progressive cultural environment (Barresi, 1981). Educational structures in the cultural and creative sectors are affected by significant changes in the economic, cultural, and social frameworks in which they operate (Park & Kim, 2020), COVID-19 being the great game changer. A collaborative and supportive relationship between the government and educational institutions requires a process of social dialogue that should aim to improve the quality and status of education, and professionalize standards and conditions of its stakeholders (Hernando-Malipot, 2017). A possible entry point is a retooling and recalibration of research learning and instruction on the performing arts.

As the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA) faces unprecedented governance challenges, the pandemic has uncovered gaps in both government coordination and the use of evidence for policy making, which directly affect the nature and quality of the measures adopted to tackle the crisis and its aftermath (2021). The aforementioned quick fixes should be assessed when the worst of the crisis is over. It would be good for the government to devise policy responses based on this study's government intervention proposals with a special focus on three (3) main dimensions: coordination and strategic planning, the use of evidence to inform decision-making, and communicating consequent resolutions to the public.

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## *Sound Instance: A Inner Soundwalk Through Life*

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### **Abstract**

The soundscape can be defined as a diverse collection of sounds available in the world that are related to different contexts and origins. These sounds serve as a means of communication, sharing information, and contributing to the well-being of society and other ecosystems. Murray Schafer, the author who originally introduced this concept, emphasizes the need to recognize the importance of the sonic reality and select the sounds that contribute to a tuning of the world, leading to a balanced and healthy life for humanity. The soundwalk is an empirical method of exploring sound in different places, focusing on an individual's daily life, with the aim of changing minds and encouraging action through a critical perception of the environment. By combining soundwalks with ethnography, it is possible to give sound its proper importance in relation to the processes of individual representation, including those related to social, professional, and emotional aspects of life. To provide more information about the importance of this inner sound environment in relation to individual reality, the concept of sound instance is useful in understanding the whole sound field existing in an individual's life. Recognizing the significance of sound in our lives is critical for maintaining balance and well-being, contributing to our understanding of the world and our place in it. By acknowledging the importance of sound instance, we can use it as a deep listening inner soundwalk throughout our life.

Keywords: Soundscape, Sound Instance, Soundwalk, Listening, Identity

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## Introduction

Soundscape is a term used to describe the collection of sounds that exist in a particular environment. It encompasses all of the sounds that can be heard in a given space, including both natural and human-made sounds. The concept of soundscape was first introduced by Canadian composer and acoustic ecologist Murray Schafer. The author emphasized the importance of listening to the world around us and paying attention to the sounds that make up our sonic environment (Schafer, 1977/1994). In other hand, sound instance is a concept that highlights the significance of the inner sound environment in shaping individual realities. It offers insights into the broader sound field that exists in an individual's life, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and understanding the sounds that represent them and their perspective on their function in that environment (Mestre, 2023).

On the level of identity, Goffman (1959) refers to the various roles that individuals play in society and the ways in which they present themselves to others, saying that our identities are not fixed, but rather are constantly being constructed and reconstructed through our interactions with others, emphasizing the importance of symbols, language, and social interactions in shaping our understanding of the world around us and maintain the sense of self.

Mixing these terms, we present a perspective for a different kind of soundwalk, based on the sounds of our inner soundscape, the sounds that share the information about our lives, like sonic footprints, also known as sound instance.

## Soundscape

Soundscape refer to the auditory environment or the overall collection of sounds in a particular space or location. It encompasses all the sounds that are present and can be perceived in each context, including natural sounds, human-made sounds, and any combination thereof (Schafer, 1977/1994). Developed by Canadian composer Murray Schafer, the soundscape study focus on exploration of the relationship between sound and the environment, with the main purpose to understanding and analyze the sonic characteristics of different spaces (Pijanowski, 2011). Soundscapes are multidimensional, incorporating elements such as pitch, rhythm, timbre, spatial characteristics, and the overall organization of sounds. (Gaver, 1993) They can evoke emotions, set a mood, and shape our perception of a place or event. For example, a bustling cityscape with honking cars, conversations, and footsteps may create a sense of energy and urban life, while a peaceful natural soundscape with chirping birds and flowing water may induce relaxation and tranquility (Truax, 2001).

The study of soundscapes has gained prominence in various fields, including acoustic ecology, music composition, urban planning, and environmental psychology. Researchers and artists have developed techniques to record, analyze, and manipulate soundscapes to better understand their impact on individuals and communities (Erfanian, 2019).

One notable reference in the field of soundscapes is the World Soundscape Project, initiated by Murray Schafer in the late 60's, a project aimed to document and study soundscapes from around the world, examining the relationships between sound, environment, and culture. This research produced influential works such as "The Tuning of the World" (1977), which explores the concept of acoustic ecology and the importance of preserving and enhancing positive soundscapes.

In recent years, the advancement of technology has allowed for more sophisticated approaches to soundscapes, with the development of binaural audio recording techniques and virtual reality, researchers and artists can create immersive environments that provide a highly realistic and engaging auditory experience. With these advancements it's possible to find applications in fields like virtual reality gaming, architectural design, therapeutic interventions and sound recording and sharing apps, offering a rich and dynamic perspective on our sonic environment, providing insights into how sound shapes our experiences and influences our well-being (Gaver, et al, 2007).

### **Sound Instance**

The concept of sound instance illuminates the profound relationship between sound and the individual, highlighting its role in representing and shaping life experiences, emerging from the recognition of sound's influence on personal and social fields, molding thoughts, attitudes, and models of representation. Divided by four subfields (sound matrix, sound cycles, sound interference and sound traces), sound instance encompasses the representation and consequence of an individual's life experiences through sound, based on four different perspectives. By understanding the significance of sound within personal and social contexts, we gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of human existence, based on this sonic reflection, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit, ultimately enriching our connection with the sonic tapestry of life (Mestre, 2023).

Based on Schafer's contributions further shed light on the concept of sound instance by emphasizing the detrimental effects of overstimulation and decontextualization of sound, he proposes the field of acoustic ecology and design as countermeasures to combat noise pollution and restore harmony between individuals and their sonic environments (Schafer, 1977/1994).

### **Listening**

Listening is an art form in itself, a profound and transformative experience that transcends mere auditory perception. Just as a symphony conductor guides an orchestra or a composer weaves intricate melodies, the act of listening requires a heightened level of attentiveness and openness. It is through this act that we connect with the essence of music, unlocking its power to transport us to realms beyond the physical world (Buffington, 2016).

One figure who emphasized the significance of listening as a creative and spiritual practice was Pauline Oliveros, an avant-garde composer and pioneer of deep listening. Oliveros believed that listening went beyond the mere act of hearing sounds; it encompassed a deep engagement with the sonic environment and an awareness of our own perceptual responses. In her groundbreaking work, she encouraged listeners to expand their consciousness and embrace the richness of sonic experiences in all their forms (Oliveros, 2005).

To truly listen is to embark on a journey of discovery, to venture into the intricate universe of sound that surrounds us, it is to immerse ourselves in the harmonies and rhythms, to discern the interplay of instruments, and to feel the emotional currents that music can evoke. Just as a musician attunes their ear to nuances and subtleties, a skilled listener hones their ability to discern and appreciate the intricacies of a musical composition (Uddin et al, 2018).

Moreover, listening is not limited to passive reception but can also be an active and participatory experience. It invites us to engage with the music on a personal level, allowing it to shape our moods, thoughts, and even our physical movements. It opens doors to introspection, self-expression, and communal connections as we share our experiences and insights with others who have been touched by the same melodies and rhythms (Hesser, 2001).

Through deep listening, we cultivate a heightened sense of presence and mindfulness. We become attuned to the present moment, fully absorbed in the sounds that envelop us. It is a practice that extends beyond the realm of music, permeating our daily lives, and enabling us to embrace the world with greater empathy and understanding (Supper and Bijsterveld, 2015). Through the art of listening, we embark on a transformative journey that connects us to the vast history of human experience, reminding us of the beauty and power of sound (Nieminen, 2012).

## **Identity**

Identity, a complex and multifaceted concept, lies at the heart of human existence, evolving the shapes our perceptions, interactions, and understanding of ourselves and others (Alcoff, 2006).

Erving Goffman (1959) introduced the concept of "presentation of self" and the idea that individuals engage in impression management to construct their identities. According to Goffman, we constantly perform different roles and adapt our behavior to fit social situations, whether conscious or subconsciously, that shapes how others perceive us and, in turn, how we perceive ourselves. In Goffman's view, identity is not a fixed entity but a fluid and dynamic phenomenon, that navigate through various social contexts, assuming different roles and adjusting accordingly. This process of impression management is akin to a theatrical production, where we carefully craft our performances to create specific impressions on others. Just as actors rely on costumes, gestures, and scripts, we utilize social cues, body language, and verbal communication to present ourselves in a manner that aligns with the desired identity. However, Goffman's work also highlights the tension between our public performances and our private selves, he introduced the concept of "backstage" and "frontstage" behavior, emphasizing that while our public presentation may be carefully curated, our private moments often reveal a more authentic and unguarded version of ourselves. These private moments are where we can momentarily shed the social roles and expectations imposed upon us, allowing for a deeper exploration of our true identities.

In other sociologist's perspectives, Charles Cooley (1902) introduced the concept of the "looking-glass self," suggesting that our identities are shaped by how we imagine others perceive us. According to the author, we develop a sense of self based on the feedback we receive from our social interactions. In this way, our identities are not solely constructed through our own self-perception but are influenced by the reflected judgments and opinions of those around us.

Similarly, philosopher Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity challenges traditional notions of identity, by arguing that gender is not an inherent characteristic, but a social construct enacted through performative acts. According to the author, we continuously perform and repeat gender norms and expectations, which in turn solidify our identities within societal frameworks (Butler, 1990).



There for, identity is a dynamic and multifaceted concept shaped by social interactions, performances, and societal expectations. Goffman's insights into impression management and the presentation of self-shed light on the intricate ways in which we construct and navigate our identities. However, identity is not only a result of our own actions and self-perceptions, but also influenced by the feedback and judgments of others, the cultural and social contexts we inhabit, and the performative acts we engage in. Understanding the complexities of identity allows us to appreciate the diversity and fluidity of human experiences and fosters empathy and acceptance in our interactions with others (Goffman, 1959).

## **Soundwalk**

Idealized by Murray Schafer in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the concept of soundwalk is defined as an empirical method for exploring the auditory environment in various locations, also used to understand and perceive human daily practices from personal and professional perspectives (Nakahodo & Quaranta, 2013). The concept advocates for an active passive participation of individuals in the sonic environment, with the aim of focusing attention and developing a process of critical listening, thereby contributing to the balance of the sound landscape (Adams et al, 2008).

According to Westerkamp (2001), neglecting the individual and social auditory process promotes a poor-quality sonic environment, leading to exhaustive, painful, and somewhat depressive and frustrating soundwalks. In this context, the author suggests that individuals often resort to illusory defense mechanisms that do not contribute to resolving the problem. In other words, these mechanisms do not address the excess of sound stimuli available in the environment, thereby weakening auditory and sensory acuity.

Associated with research in the field of acoustic ecology, the term "sound walking," defined by Hildegard Westerkamp in the 1970s, also highlights the potential for improvisation and composition using the available sonic resources, combining the visual and auditory components to create a blend of meanings and opportunities in the realm of sound art creation (Fernström and Taylor, 2014).

Within the artistic realm, soundwalks promote the creation of sound narratives based on the artist's and spectator's perspectives, transforming the environment into a museum accessible to all listeners, offering to participants the opportunity to have a dual role as a visiting curator in a work of art, engaging in musical orchestration and execution without a conductor, allowing for freedom and constant evolution (Kato, s.d.).

On a personal level, according to Westerkamp (2020), individuals respond in accordance with their perception of the surrounding environment, economic and social status, health condition, age, and cultural and political influences.

According to Kolber (2002), sound is considered an influential and differentiating medium through which we hear and perceive throughout life, sharing information that can evoke emotions, convey meaning, and shape our understanding of the world.

## **Methodology**

Ethnography is a research methodology that involves immersing oneself within a specific cultural group to understand their practices, beliefs, and behaviors (Kutsche, 1989). It

emphasizes participant observation and engagement to gain deep insights into the social dynamics and cultural context (Schwiedland, 1922). Ethnographers collect data through methods such as interviews, field notes, and audiovisual recordings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). The data is analyzed to identify patterns, meanings, and the underlying cultural significance (Geertz, 1973). Ethnography promotes an understanding of cultural diversity and challenges preconceived notions (Marcus & Fischer, 1986). It provides a holistic perspective, capturing the complexities and nuances of human experiences (Maanen, 1980). Ethnographic research findings can inform decision-making, policy development, and foster intercultural understanding (Emerson et al., 1995).

Phenomenology is a philosophical and methodological approach that aims to understand and explore subjective experiences and the ways in which individuals make sense of the world (Husserl, 1931). It focuses on uncovering the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals, highlighting the subjective meanings they assign to phenomena (Merleau-Ponty, 2010). Phenomenologists employ methods such as in-depth interviews and reflective analysis to access and interpret these subjective experiences (Giorgi, 2009). Through phenomenology, researchers seek to illuminate the structures of consciousness and the essence of lived experiences (Heidegger, 1927). This approach encourages a deep exploration of individual and collective perception, embodiment, and interpretation (Van Manen, 2014). Phenomenology offers insights into the richness and complexity of human consciousness and the significance of subjective meaning-making processes (Smith, 2003).

In this matter, both ethnography and phenomenology offer valuable perspectives when examining information based on sound resources, allowing researchers to delve into the cultural practices, beliefs, and behaviors of a specific group, providing a deep understanding of the role of sound within their daily lives, capturing the nuanced sound shapes and influences their experiences.

On the other hand, the focus is on the subjective experiences and meanings individuals attribute to sound, exploring how sound is perceived, embodied, and interpreted by individuals, shedding light on the unique ways they make sense of the world, uncovering the essence of lived experiences and the significance of sound in shaping subjective reality.

By combining both approaches, it's possible to gain a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between individuals, communities, and sound, allowing for the exploration of sound as a cultural and ethnographic phenomenon, while phenomenology delves into the personal and subjective dimensions of sound experiences. This interdisciplinary approach enriches our knowledge of how sound shapes identities, social interactions, and cultural practices.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the concept of the soundscape and the practice of soundwalks shed light on the profound influence of sound in our lives. The soundscape encompasses a diverse array of sounds, each carrying its own meaning and significance within different contexts. Murray Schafer's focus on recognizing the importance of the sonic reality emphasizes the need for selecting sounds that contribute to a balanced and healthy life for humanity.

Soundwalks, as a practical and empirical method for exploring and understanding the sonic environment of our daily lives, promote critical perception of our surroundings, changing our

perspective, inspire action, and foster a deeper connection with the environment. Integrating soundwalks with ethnography further enhances our understanding of how sound influences individual representation in various aspects of life, including social, professional, and emotional realms.

The concept of sound instance provides valuable insights into the inner sound environment of individuals, highlighting the intricate sound field that exists within each person's life. Recognizing the significance of this inner sound environment is crucial for maintaining balance, well-being, and a comprehensive understanding of ourselves and the world around us. By employing a deep listening inner soundwalk throughout our lives, we can cultivate a heightened awareness of sound, promoting harmony, and enriching our experiences.

In essence, by embracing the concepts of soundscape, soundwalks, and sound instance, we recognize the profound impact of sound on our well-being and our perception of the world. Through critical engagement with sound, we can foster a more balanced and harmonious existence, not only benefiting ourselves but also contributing to the greater health and vitality of society and ecosystems. Let us appreciate the richness of the sonic realm, taking proactive steps to preserve and cultivate a soundscape that nourishes and sustains us throughout our life's journey.

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## ***The Turbulence of the Fin de Siècle: Arts Through the Looking-Glass of Intermediality***

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### **Abstract**

The paper addresses the *fin-de-siècle* period as a time when most intermedial processes became more visible, fruitful, and started playing a more substantial role. The epoch is investigated through the prism of intermediality which manifested itself as a valuable tool, process, and phenomenon in the development of arts and media – particularly through the birth of photography and cinematography. Overall, these changes led to placing intermedial processes among the key ones impacting arts and moving forward subconscious and self-reflective intermedial techniques and media-based experiments that would culminate with modernism and postmodernism. The role of intermediality in the *fin-de-siècle* epoch and the reverse impact of the period on intermediality (in particular, syncretic processes) is assessed through the turbulent events of the time, i.e., the key economic and historic developments, as well as cultural and artistic “turnaround” processes. The paper concludes that the turbulence of the epoch and the spreading of various new artistic movements, new aesthetics and philosophies, including decadence aesthetics, impacted the development of mixed (intermedial) arts, stimulated their multiplying, as well as active exploration of intermedial forms and genres in all arts. The period also stimulated the growth of the role of a literary medium due to the introduction of mass publishing and the growth of literacy rates, which set the basis for future theories on intertextuality, text as a dominant form of recording, and “canvas” or “fabric” created by all media.

Keywords: Art Studies, Fin de Siècle, Intermediality, Media Studies

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## Introduction

Intermediality has been a subject of scholarly attention since the 1980s, yet, even though its objects of study – intermedial artefacts – have existed since the early art forms in the ancient world, the theory is not yet refined and scholars from various research “clusters” share different, sometimes contradicting, approaches. Hence, for this paper, intermediality is seen as “(the study of) specific relations among dissimilar media products and general relations among different media types” (Elleström, 2017).

Historically, the term “intermediality” appeared in 1983, when Aage A. Hansen-Love published his research on problems of correlation between verbal and pictorial arts in Russian modernism (Hansen-Löve, 1983). There, he opposed the newly coined term to intertextuality and Dick Higgins’s “intermedia”, having investigated the phenomenon rather from a semiology perspective. However, most studies that followed and used the newly-coined term were dedicated to modern and postmodern works, new media, mass media, and cinematography of the XX century, thus ignoring the heritage of the previous epochs that directly impacted the development of the concept and provided the fruitful basis for its growth and multiplying during modernism and later on.

However, whether modernism is to be seen as “the expressive domain of modernity” (Susan Stanford Friedman, qt. in Moody & Ross, 2020) or literature that “registers” modernity (Immanuel Wallerstein, qt. in Moody & Ross, 2020), it is nevertheless the response to the novelty of the world, which makes it critically close to the turn of the century, decadence and *fin-de-siècle* history and aesthetics. Aesthetics-wise, modernist genii “burgeoned across Europe” in the 1860s-1930s (Bell-Villada, 1996), which makes the turn of the century an aesthetic precursor of what is nowadays seen as “true” modernism. The aestheticizing of life itself under the forces of new media has only deepened since the end of the XIX century (Guillory, 2022) leading to the domination of social and other media in individual’s life, which requires re-calibration of the *foci* of literature studies to respond to lack of understanding, misinformation faced by scholars, educators, readers. Moreover, certain past ideas are too valuable to sink into academic oblivion and, thus, they require re-cognition.

Thus, this paper is an attempt to draw attention to the broad *fin-de-siècle* epoch as a period when yet unknown under this term but already existing intermedial processes intensified due to the birth of photography, cinematography, phonograph, telephone, radio and mass publishing of literature and fully blossomed in the form of modernist artefacts. The methodological approach comprises elements of literature review, context analysis and historical research.

## Pre-Context: Romanticism and Realism

Before speaking of the actual reasons for making *fin de siècle* a critically important period for intermediality and related processes, it would be beneficial to highlight the matter of an integral medium. Thus, romanticism which from a theoretical and aesthetic perspective preceded the turn of the century tendencies worshipped artistic activities as a basis of life and art aimed at the transformation and creation of the world (Kagan, 1972) – this allowed G. W. F. Hegel and F. W. J. Schelling to formulate and objectivize a new intermedial paradigm, which defines the intermedial search in the art history from antiquity to modernity. Thus, the philosophers spoke about the sequence “*architecture/sculpture* > *painting* > *music*”



> *poetry*.” Here, antiquity and the medieval period are seen as artistic epochs when architecture and/or sculpture served as a key integral medium, the one praised by artists and philosophers and the one trying to unite all other media around itself; painting is the avatar of the renaissance; music is the romanticism’s key medium; whereas literature (poetry) is seen to be a dominating art for all the forthcoming epochs – post-romanticism, realism, modernism, postmodernism and whatever may follow in the future.

Romanticism is also crucial in terms of attempting to cross borders between styles (classical and romantic), religions (Christianity and pantheism), arts and sciences (literature and natural studies) (Nivala, 2016), as well as distinguishing a new category of art – mixed or complex arts – which was opposed to the previously known technical//mechanical/non-depictive and muse/liberal/depictive arts. The initially recognised mixed arts included music-dramatic art, music-choreographic art, architectural-depictive synthesis, theatrical art, synthesis of music and poetry, and pictorial-poetic synthesis (Kagan, 1972).

Owing to the possibility of cheap and fast mass publishing due to the introduction of new presses and stereotyping technologies in the 1840s and 1860s (Altick, 1999), the realism epoch that followed manifested literature as a dominant medium capable of directing other media and turned it into the key instrument of creative communication. The growing literacy rates in Europe – for example, in England and Wales from 1800 to 1900 the literacy grew from sixty per cent for men and forty per cent for women to ninety-seven per cent for both sexes (Lloyd, 2007) – supported the spread of verbal genres and forms, newspapers and journals, which were no longer exclusive or inaccessible to a wide audience. The enormously enlarged readership and urban growth established a concentrated market for literature as a commodity (Altick, 1999). Sharing information through the telegraph, newspapers or publication of literary works through journals and pamphlets supported free or cheap access to verbal artefacts, making word-based experiments easier. Serialised fiction actively exploited illustrations and other pictorial forms to support the readership’s imagination, which laid a strong basis for intermedial experimenting. In addition to that, realism’s aesthetics also started perceiving arts as non-absolute forms that had no stable boundaries – this launched and facilitated the constant transformation of arts, searching for the continuation of one art in another (Takho-Godi, 1982), which eventually characterised the art-related processes during the *fin de siècle* and the following periods.

### **Historical Context: The Picture of Turbulence**

The decadent period, *fin de siècle*, the second half of the XIX century, for the intermediality and media scholars may seem remote from modernist aesthetics with its vision of the world, yet, while speaking of this epoch as a prefigure for the birth of intermediality as we know it now, one should think of a distinction “between the *fin-de-siècle* as a chronological period, and *fin-de-siècle* as a unique attitude or response to this period” (Nottingham, 2015). It is this exact response that continues throughout modernism and gives birth to various intermedial forms.

Thus, society, including artists, philosophers, scientists and technicians, faces and responds to multiple crises and changes, allowing Heidegger to call the century from 1850 to 1950 “the darkest of all centuries in modern times” (qt. in Franks, 1994). As proposed by the authors of *The Fin-de-siecle World* (Saler, 2015), one may speak in this regard of decadence literature and the rapid development of cities, move from rural areas to urban settlements (both

physically and within arts), industrial revolutions, change in the concepts and perception of time and space, seeing it as Bakhtin's unified *chronotope* (Bakhtin, 1981), the birth of new nationalism and a new imperialism, new politics of "higher individualism". Changes in mass culture included the above-mentioned mass publishing, acceleration of transport, the birth of consumer culture, spreading of advertisement, which went hand in hand with the development of human sciences, new philosophy, eugenics, mind-breaking developments in psychology and psychiatry, and medicine. People started understanding their selfhood differently – there was a shift in the perception of gender and sexuality, ethnicity and race, religion and atheism, and aesthetics. New challenges stimulated new music, new visual arts, and new realism, whereas new arts, in particular cinematography, stimulated a new spiral of artistic development and troubled the minds of people through the unique moving picture which so deeply corresponded to the speed of the history around them.

These turbulences and rapid developments, when changes happened within one generation, evolved into and echoed modernism, as it faced even worse wars (World War I and World War II) and economic crises (worldwide Great Depression), unrest in the society (equality movements, class changes, spread of socialism and bolshevism), politics (collapse of most empires), and culture (birth of new music, domination of Paris in artistic scene and its shift to New York, spread of visual culture, growth of architectural scales, revival of Olympic games). Political nationalism developed actively and served as a constituent of a wider trend to adapt old forms into new and different ones, it had a deeper degree of self-consciousness and explicitly relied on defining "the other" as opposed to own, national (Baycroft, 2015). The refining processes, when the national self was to be grasped through awareness of national characteristics and cultures, echoed the internal processes when people encompassed various practices concerning the body, which later developed in modernism's description and normalisation of self-perception in view of "efficiency, productivity and health" (Killen, 2015).

The *fin-de-siècle* crises facilitated the reflexive practices and the establishment and cementation of binaries and oppositions, dividing the world into enemies and friends, external and internal aliens, whereas modernism grew on these binaries and transformed them into the juxtaposition of cultures and national discourses through its own, modernised and upgraded self-reflexion. While the literature of decadence adopted an anarchistic style, when "everything was sacrificed to the development of the individual parts" (Gagnier, 2010), the self-reflexion at the turn of the centuries was a wider process and included various constituents. An increase in "individuation led to the disintegration of the whole" (Gagnier, 2010), which was eagerly accepted by modernists as a tool for artistic, economic, political, and social re-evaluation and re-assessment of processes around a person and, consequently, finding a new self. At the same time, the turn of the century and modernism have been united by the aesthetic doctrine of art for art's sake (Bell-Villada, 1996) which tied into one intermedial knot various artistic streams, genres, approaches and generations.

The pain of going through the unknown and unpredicted turbulences, like the fear of Dorian Gray to grow old and die, is what unites *fin de siècle* and modernism like parents and children. They face different experiences but they are equally tough and painful, and the response to rapid changes is similar – rejection, questioning, re-inventing, recycling, re-writing, and adapting only multiply links in the intermedial fabric and lead to the creation of new intermedial artefacts and other prolific intermedial processes.

Both decadent artists and modernists searched for new creative forms reflecting both the interior world of the artist and the dramatic external events and rapid changes. The creators required new synthesis and dialogue at all levels to keep their sanity in the twisted world – they existed at the borders between cultures, civilisations, arts, and social classes and reflected on them. Hence, art became the voice of change, the voice heard by millions. And the need for these new voices and new creative forms would mostly rest in the demand to respond to the variety of new media that were tearing the artists apart. And, while *fin de siècle* had prepared a solid base of knowledge, practices and experience, modernists gathered it all together to dare turn around the existing processes and re-invent arts and present new medial forms, having grounded it in literature as an ever-growing and dominating form due to the ultimate authority of the verbal media in human communication processes.

### **Medial Context: The Flowers of Change**

As a transition between XIX and XX centuries, *fin de siècle* perceives art synthesis critically. On the one hand, it crowns literature as a new (or first-ever) mass art, on the other – praises the achievements and experiments of painting. Moreover, along with the change in communication brought by the railroad and telegraph (Plunkett, et al., 2012), improved lighting in the dwellings and consequent ease of reading as time-spending activity (Altick, 1999), the new arts and technologies push the traditional way of living to such an extent, that they cannot be ignored by artists any longer. The cultures of art and science tend to disagree, yet the artistic horizons get extended by scientific inventions and the scientific ethos at the turn of the century profoundly influences modernism (Bell-Villada, 1996). The inventions of photography (1839), cinematography (1878), phonograph (1877), telephone (1876) and radio (1895) change the world of art and technology by giving people access to new dimensions – recording and transmission of sounds and images, the opportunity to keep things that before that were non-preservable, non-documentable, which challenges the literature and its documenting functions through enlarging the role of aestheticism in lives of people and the role of media in general (Guillory, 2022). Thus, photographic imagery impacts the entire system of artistic vision and creativity and facilitates the birth of new genres and techniques through the development of new documentalist features; cinematography, as a synthesis of verbal and photographic mediums, is born at the junction of new visual “moving pictures” techniques and literary fables, stories, and motifs; phonograph allows recording voice and sound, and its replication on secondary devices, whereas telephone and radio allow transmitting it all over the world.

This media explosion and consequent variety of *fin-de-siècle* genres and forms eventually led to modernism: whereas these technologies appeared during the broad *fin-de-siècle* period, a time of pessimism and decay when one could perceive these new technologies as a new evil, mostly ignoring them or adapting to them at a slower pace, modernists witnessed their growth, spreading and ultimately growing domination. On the one hand, there was a strengthening literary tradition supported by mass publishing, which reinforced the position of the novel (Plunkett, et al., 2012), on the other – the new media seeded confusion, rejection, and fear, similarly to the fear of the new century and its rapid developments. Speaking of the growth of new media, the very first radio interchange happened in 1895, whereas the first commercial radio broadcast was in 1920; opposite to that, Auguste and Louis Lumière showed the first film to the mass audience in 1895, while in 1896 multiple cinematographic theatres were built all over Europe, whereas in 1902 there appeared a first film with the natural colour process and in the 1910s most films had sound integrated to them in a certain

way. The rapidness of certain media-related processes was insane and psychologically destructive. Thus, for instance, Queen Victoria, a symbol of British stability, ascended the throne in 1837 before any of these technologies and media appeared, and by the time of her decease in 1901, there were half a dozen of absolutely new media forms, using new mediums, new processes, new techniques, producing the outcomes and artefacts that none would ever expect.

The growth of key modernist writers, their childhood and younghood years coincided with the turn of the century. They bore the *fin-de-siècle* cultural traditions from their birth and had to face the spread of new media. Thus, James Joyce owned Ireland's first cinema and borrowed cinematographic tradition in his writing, while Virginia Woolf publishes her essay *The Cinema* (1926) stressing the simultaneously existing archaism, primitivism and newness of cinematographic art. As modernists, they were concerned with everyday life, perception, time, and "kaleidoscopic and fractured experiences of urban space" (Marcus, 2016), they borrowed cinematic techniques of close-up, flashback, and montage to shape their experimental works. This can be said of other modernists as well – some researchers would argue that modernisms are the individual responses to the media that appeared and started reshaping the lives of people; some would say that analysis of decadent literature is a valuable tool for the exploration of the works of Joyce, Woolf and other modernists (Boyiopoulos, Choi, & Tildesley, 2015); others would stress that modernist masterpieces emerged from the colonial world of the XIX century (Bell-Villada, 1996) – altogether linking the pre-modernist XIX century and modernism into a unified artistic, political, historical, social and cultural fabric.

At the same time, while speaking about the two artistic epochs, one should bear in mind the vagueness of the border between modernism and pre-modernism, especially regarding the appearance of the new media forms, as it is not clear whether the modernist techniques and works appeared after the turn of the century or actually during its peak. Global modernism has multiple, asynchronous timelines reflecting specific experiences and developments in various cultures and historic discourses (Moody & Ross, 2020). Thus, for instance, John Ruskin's theories, Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophies, and Sigmund Freud's approaches were formulated and publicised before the "official" modernism chronology in Europe, but the modernist-type response followed immediately. The close link between *fin de siècle* and modernism is like an umbilical cord between a mother and her child – at a certain stage, they are so closely tied together that any delineation is impossible. However, the notion of the aestheticization of life through new media obviates the need for this rupture between the *fin de siècle* and modernism. Thus, sometimes one must speak about non-modernist works raising modernist topics through non-modernist language. Was Oscar Wilde a modernist? No. Was the focus of his writing modern? Yes. Besides, one may see significant differences between the novels of E. M. Forster (which are far from being experimental and resemble Wilde's writings or Somerset Maugham's "pop literature") and the works of Samuel Beckett, who is a representative of late modernism. Comparing the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, T. S. Elliot, or D. H. Lawrence published in the 1920s would also be impossible as they represent different modernisms. On the opposite side of the intermedial fabric, modernism in pictorial art may start its chronology from Édouard Manet (1890s), or pre-Raphaelites as his foreshadowers (1850s), or even J. M. W. Turner's studies of light, colour and atmosphere (1830s-40s). In addition, there were many historical delays in terms of "uneven politics of language" (Moody & Ross, 2020), thus, for instance, Karl Marx's works are a product of the early *fin de siècle*, yet, his *Das Kapital* (1867) reached the English-

speaking world twenty years later, in 1887, and fuelled the minds of anti-realists and supported the modernist processes when German-speaking cultures already developed its response to it.

This allows speaking of new media as synthetic forms that required no documentation through literature, were easy to spread, conquer the minds of the masses and unite people from all countries that reached a certain level of technological advances. While *fin de siècle* fathered such media, modernism used them as a tool, as a reinstatement of experimental forms, and as a stimulus. Cinematography, phonograph, radio, and later on television would be an evident element showing that the borders have been broken – the countries have not been that far and exclusive any more, and almost everyone could see foreign landscapes or “exotic” people without going there; many people could hear the voices of prominent singers or listen to operas without the need to travel to Italy or the nearest theatre. The borders, broken physically and mentally, questioned the external oppositions or re-instated them, however, forced the artists to go deeper into themselves and think more of their own bodies, health and mind. Some products of such exploration would be rejected, such as Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleur du mal* (censored in 1857), Oscar Wilde’s works (which led to his runaway to France), and D. H. Lawrence’s sensual novels (the 1920s). Some would be praised, like James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), yet, the depth of its provocation would not be easily seen due to the experimental techniques employed. While the processes of assemblage and collection, triage and sorting would be born by the turn of the century mediums (Moody & Ross, 2020), modernists would make these processes central to their perception.

### **Rupture: In Search of Lost Art**

Here comes the question of intermediality and why it is important to go one step deeper and seek its seemingly (post)modernist origins in *fin de siècle*. Undoubtedly, one may always go as deep as Homer’s *Iliad* and Book XVIII describing the shield of Achilles, which remains the most well-known case of ekphrasis. Not to underestimate the role and merits of the previous epochs for intermediality and the medial fabric of references, quotes, re-writing, inventing new forms, etc., diving into *fin de siècle* gives arts a significant new push. It reinstates the role of the Middle Ages and its epic cycles, the Renaissance and its pre-Raphael/Leonardo/Michelangelo painters, romanticism and its new perception of art and life, its aesthetics and philosophies; it also revives the importance of fragmentation principle. Altogether this is merged into a cauldron of new potion that stimulates the artists to respond to the crises and turbulence around them, digest them and produce a new product, of intermedial nature in most cases. On the one hand, the artists attempt to create new artefacts, new concepts and new art in general, yet, on the other hand, they draw from the legacy of the previous artistic epochs. *Fin de siècle* attempts to combine individual-sensitive-internal with inherited-communal-external that comes in the forms of historical and mythological archetypes, legends, and epics. It marks a crucial turn to re-assessing the roles of text and image (Emden & Rippl, 2010) which continues nowadays and facilitates the reassessment of literature’s role in the global context.

Thus, methodologically, modernism should be seen as a phenomenon of multiple scales and dimensions (Moody & Ross, 2020), with its historic, political and cultural legacy being one of the fundamental axes. Like Marcel Proust searches for lost time, modernists continue the *fin-de-siècle* tradition of searching for lost arts, yet, more surreptitiously. They are not making dozens of paintings of literary characters as the pre-Raphaelites did, but they

integrate the archetypal qualities of these characters into their works, and plant semi-veiled references, obvious for the reader or not. James Joyce's *Ulysses* directly refers to Homer's Odysseus and his wandering on the way back home after the Trojan War, although in other cases the links are not that obvious and require deciphering from the side of an informed reader. E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) may be seen exclusively as a modernist novel with multiple ekphrastic depictions of Italian Renaissance painting, or as an interpretation of the Endymion myth – both approaches making it intermedial through the use of ekphrasis or adaptation of one literary form into another. D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) is named an interpretation of the Oedipus myth by the writer himself in the *Foreword*, yet, both chronologically and thematically, this *Foreword* rather refers to Lawrence's next novel, *The Rainbow* (1915), which has its sequel *Women in Love* (1920), thus allowing all three novels to be studied through the prism of an intermedial adaptation of the Oedipus story, which makes it a re-cycling of an ancient drama into modernist works. Samuel Beckett's novels make an even more complex intermedial knot, as they can be seen both as allusions to ancient myths and parodies or echoes of James Joyce's works, primarily *Ulysses*.

Examples of such intermedial intensification are plenty, yet, it is modernism that openly reflects on media, is impacted by media and, therefore, seeks to integrate media or experiment with it in the literary forms more intensively and extensively than any other epoch, building it on the legacy of the previous two or three generations of artists, philosophers and scientists. The popularity of such experiments is justified by the ever-growing dominance of literature, accelerated self-reflective artistic search transferred primarily into the novel. Hence, revealing (in most cases) conscious, purposeful intermedial elements would mean both reading and re-reading the literature closely, as a fragment of a larger context of arts' separating and unifying, at the same time being aware of the historical context and conventions around the artists, as "dialectic of art resembles the social dialectic" (Adorno, 1984) they exist in.

Thus, while speaking of intermediality and its multiple phenomena, researching them in the works of art in the turbulent period, it is necessary not only to draw parallels with other epochs, search for the origin of the specific fable, plot, archetypal character, their development, detect and explain the use of specific medial elements, their borrowing and incorporation, synthesis but to take into account the transition of arts through the *fin-de-siècle* epoch with its crises and turbulences and its impact on the arts and artefacts created by romanticism, realism, modernism or post-modernism artists (or in parallel to them for artists whose works cannot be easily attributed to one specific period). This mere consideration may help reveal additional features and characteristics, go deeper and see the subconscious legacy inherited by the writers and other artists in their childhood, adolescence or laid upon them through their parents and grandparents. The link with *fin de siècle* and its turbulences can make the research more intense, interdisciplinary, intercultural, and international by depriving it of the borders.

Moreover, the alignment of cinematography and literature, and the interplays between these two media at the turn of the century are "among the most crucial factors that shaped what came to be called modernist literature and culture" (Marcus, 2015). Literature's serving as a key material resource and inspiration, involvement of novelists and playwrights in the cinematographic business (Trotter, 2007), as well as literature's ability to contest the new mediums (Schmid, 2019) and to integrate them into itself, their unity in terms of poetics of

montage (Stewart, 1999) and self-aware search of new forms “at once fragmentary and encyclopaedic” (Trotter, 2007) allow seeing intermediality and its processes as a mother of cinema. Whereas, given the most significant role of cinema in the development and progress of modernisms, one may assume that, in a mediated manner, intermediality is to be seen as a phenomenon that facilitated the birth of modernism as an epoch out of the womb of *fin de siècle*. At the same time, despite the closeness of the new media and modernism, one should bear in mind that the “cross-breeds” were conscious and artificial, as new media were recording mediums, while literature is a representational medium (Trotter, 2007) and they vary in nature, form and purposes.

## Conclusion

The turbulence of the epoch and the spreading of various new artistic movements, new aesthetics and philosophies, including decadence aesthetics, impacted the development of mixed (intermedial) arts, stimulated their multiplying, as well as active exploration of intermedial forms and genres in all arts through serving as a basis for modernist developments and re-invention of the arts and creative processes, as based on the legacy of the *fin de siècle*.

The period also stimulated the growth of the role of a literary medium due to the introduction of mass publishing and the growth of literacy rates, which set the basis for future theories on intertextuality, text as a dominant form of recording, and fabric created by all media. New media, *inter alia*, facilitated the introduction of new techniques to verbal forms and stimulated the experimental writing of key modernists, which facilitated the birth of new literature-based synthetic, intermedial forms and genres. The pressure of time and space, the acceleration of the world and events around them, the much faster spreading of information due to the invention of the telephone and the radio, documenting of life elsewhere beyond – through photography, cinematography, phonograph – facilitated the collapse of borders that were built previously, externally and internally, which guided the modernists towards the deeper study of the interior self in relation to others, which is also based on *fin-de-siècle* heritage.

Altogether, *fin de siècle* and its crises and turbulences created the basis for modernist trends and catalysed the intermedial experiments and birth of new forms and genres – the fact of which should be considered during the research of literary artefacts established after the 1840s, as they are expected to bear a significant intermedial load or be directly influenced and/or impacted by the treatment of media.

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*A Stylistic Analysis of the Use of Language in “L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous”  
by Maurice Bandaman*

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**Abstract**

This article examines the stylistic analysis of the use of language in L'Etat zhéros où la guerre des gaous by Maurice Bandama. Every literary work is an expression of a language and if, consequently, it is inscribed as a social act in this language, it is at the same time an innovative individual formulation. Language in general can be defined as a sign system that can be used for communication. Language is a basic necessity that allows people to connect with each other, influence their lives, express their feelings and feel part of the community they live in. Therefore, each writer uses his own style to express his thoughts and ideas to the readers or audience. Stylistics can be defined as a set of resources that linguistics puts at the reader's disposal to analyze and extract meaning from the text. The goal is to read the text in order based on the text entries identified through linguistics. The concept of linguistic stylistics is related to stylistic research that relies heavily on the scientific principles of language in its analysis. These global rules fall into the categories of lexical, grammatical, word form, context, and formality. This article shows how the writer uses French to express his people's opinion in Maurice Bandama's novel L'Etat zhéros où la guerre des gaous. The purpose of this research is to conduct a stylistic analysis in this novel using the analysis model developed by Leech and Short as the main approach in this work. As a result, the author can manipulate the structure of the French language to achieve his goal.

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## Introduction

Literature has long been celebrated as a realm where words transcend their mere semantic value, transforming into powerful vehicles of artistic expression. Within the realm of literary works, language takes on a unique significance, offering authors a palette of stylistic choices through which they can captivate readers, convey intricate emotions, and illuminate complex themes. In this article, we embark on a stylistic analysis of the use of language in the renowned novel "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*" by Maurice Bandaman.

"*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*" is a literary masterpiece that immerses readers in the vibrant world of Ivorian literature. Through Bandaman's carefully crafted language and stylistic choices, the novel offers a profound exploration of society, politics, and human nature. By undertaking a meticulous examination of these stylistic elements, we aim to shed light on the artistic techniques employed by the author to create a compelling narrative and engage readers on multiple levels.

Throughout our analysis, we will delve into the use of figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, and symbolism, which enrich the text and imbue it with deeper meaning. We will explore the author's manipulation of syntax, rhythm, and narrative structure, seeking to unravel the intricate web of linguistic devices that contribute to the novel's unique aesthetic and literary impact.

Additionally, we will examine the use of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions in "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*." By incorporating these linguistic elements, Bandaman captures the essence of Ivorian culture, allowing readers to immerse themselves fully in the linguistic tapestry of the narrative and fostering a sense of authenticity and cultural resonance.

Through this stylistic analysis, we aim to uncover the nuances and artistic choices that shape the language of "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*." By examining how language functions as a vehicle for storytelling, social commentary, and cultural representation, we can gain a deeper appreciation for Bandaman's literary craftsmanship and the profound impact of language in the realm of literature.

## Biography of Maurice Bandaman

Maurice Kouakou Bandaman was born in 1962 in Toumodi, Côte d'Ivoire. Ivorian novelist and playwright, Maurice Bandaman entered literature by winning first prize in 1986 in the competition organized by the CNOU and CEDA for students with a collection of short stories: *A Woman for a Medal*. In 1993, he received the Grand Prix littéraire de l'Afrique Noire for his novel *Le Fils-de-la-femme-mâle* (L'Harmattan). He has written several plays, including, *La Terre qui pleure*; a finalist in the 1998 RFI competition. He taught Modern Literature at the Lycée moderne de Dabou from 1988 to 1995 and at the Lycée classique d'Abidjan from 1995 to 2000 before being called in January 2000 by Professor Henriette Dagri Diabaté, Minister of Culture and Francophonie, to head the Sous-direction des Arts et de la Culture, a position he held for four months. In May, 2011, Maurice Bandaman became Minister of Culture and Francophonie in Guillaume Soro's government. On 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2012, he was reappointed to the same post in the government of Jeannot Kouadio-Ahoussou.

### **Summary of *L'état Z'hero ou la guerre des gaous***

The book begins with an opening song by Akedewa who narrates the story of his tragedy. Poor as he was, God had made him immensely rich in a dream and he enjoyed a hedonistic life. When he wakes up, disappointed to realize that it was only a dream, he went to see God and asked him to absolutely realize this dream. God granted his wish by demanding one condition: not to abuse his power, not to crush the poor and the weak, not to take from the orphan his due, not to deprive the widow of her property, not to deprive the orphan of the fruit of his labor, not to make him stateless.

Akedewa did not respect his commitment to God. He abused his power, and God's punishment was his extreme degradation. Since then, he has been serving his sentence by transforming himself into a storyteller to instruct the world and make morality understandable through the stories that are told about him.

Through this introduction, the author opens the reflection by posing the problem of power and moral values. The continuation of Akèdèwa's tale about his friend, Kanégnon's story helps to understand the author's message. Kanégnon, Akèdèwa's friend, is a strange child. His mother carried his pregnancy for 21 years and from his mother's womb, he was a feared opponent who would lead political meetings and harass crowds. The author describes Kanégnon before he was born as a mysterious, warlike and belligerent baby who carries the seeds of violence, a man whose destiny was to avalanche deviations.

Kanégnon is finally born but he remains a very violent child who beats his father to death. To help him gain self-control, his father decides that he must undergo a sacred initiation and he passed all tests. He dropped out of school but managed to get a scholarship to study in France which allowed him to obtain doctorates in philosophy, economics and history. He created his political party. With Gbagla Dodo as first lady, they took power through mystical practices after “seven unsuccessful attempts including four aborted coups d'état and three disastrous and calamitous elections.”

In the rest of his account, the author describes the reign of Kanégnon and his wife. The horror of their mystical practices with the help of Akèdèwa, the unstoppable human sacrifices, the blood of innocent people, etc. characterized his power: like this redheaded woman, pregnant with twins, buried alive (pages 64, 65, 66) and this little redheaded virgin of 13 years old whom the President abused and sacrificed (from pages 78 to 83).

For the author, President Kanégnon's power has its source and roots in mystical practices and strong sexual activity. He is a heartless man for whom the well-being of the people is secondary. His reign produced nothing but misfortune for his people which justified the armed rebellion that divided the country into two parts.

The first lady, Gbagla Dodo, has more or less the same personality in the author's description. He robbed her of all humanity and made her an accomplice to her husband's human sacrifices and mystical practices. The author made her present in the beginning of his story and her character fades away gradually.

Akèdèwa is described as a mystical person, a priest of the occult sciences who has the gift of ubiquity. He is President Kanégnon's right-hand man, his spiritual advisor, his spy, his missionary, etc. He transforms himself into a student to spy on and avenge his daughter who

was raped by some students; he also transforms himself into a spy to infiltrate the terrible forces who delivered a bloody rebellion to President Kanégnon. He has spiritual powers that allow him to officiate black masses and orgies to nourish and maintain the reign of the President. He is the one that will bring about the fall of the President. In short, he is a man without faith or law, for whom the end justifies the means. What seems incomprehensible and often incoherent in the author's account is the mystical power that he described in the beginning of his story in *Akèdèwa* which he used often to get out of difficult situations and get the President out of difficult situations.

## **Conceptual framework**

### **Definition of stylistics**

The conceptual point of reference for this study is stylistics and stylistic analysis. Abubakre (2011:263) defines stylistics as the aspect of linguistics which deals with occasions of distinctive language use objectively by providing both the literary and functional interpretation of such usage in literary and non-literary discourse. According to Verdonk (2002), a renowned scholar in stylistics: "Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. It investigates how linguistic choices relate to meaning and how they contribute to making texts what they are." In the book "An Introduction to Stylistics," Jeffries (2010) offers the following definition: "Stylistics is the study of literary discourse, with particular attention to style. It aims to account for the interpretative effects of literary texts, especially those effects which depend upon patterns of language choices and the production and reception of meaning." In "The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language," Crystal (1995) defines stylistics as: "The linguistic analysis of style in language, with particular attention to the choice of words and grammatical structure. It also investigates the intonation, stress, and rhythm of speech." From the array of definitions, stylistic refers to the study and analysis of various elements that contribute to the style and manner of expression in a particular piece of writing or communication. It involves examining the choices made by the author or speaker in terms of language, vocabulary, sentence structure, figures of speech, tone, and other literary or rhetorical devices. These definitions from scholars and experts in the field provide a comprehensive understanding of stylistics as a linguistic discipline that focuses on the study of language use, expressive language features, and their impact on various forms of discourse, including literature.

### **What is stylistics analysis?**

According to Simpson (2004) "Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students" "Stylistic analysis is concerned with understanding how writers shape their texts through their choices of language, including figures of speech, sound patterns, sentence structures, and overall organization. It aims to uncover the stylistic devices employed to create certain effects and meanings." From "Stylistics" by Bradford (1997) "Stylistic analysis is concerned with the examination of the linguistic and formal elements of a text. It seeks to uncover how the writer's choices of language and style contribute to the overall meaning and effect of the text." According to "A Dictionary of Stylistics" by Wales (2001): "Stylistic analysis is the systematic examination of the choices made by a writer in terms of language, literary techniques, and stylistic devices. It aims to reveal the expressive and artistic qualities of a text and understand how these contribute to its overall impact." In "Stylistics: A Practical Coursebook" by Jonathan Hope and Laura Wright (1997): "Stylistic analysis involves studying the linguistic features of a text, such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and

phonology, to understand how they shape the style and meaning of the text. It explores the choices made by the author and the effects they create."

Stylistic analysis refers to the systematic examination and interpretation of the linguistic and literary features employed in a text or discourse. It involves studying the choices made by an author or speaker in terms of language, style, structure, and rhetorical devices to understand the overall effect and meaning conveyed. Stylistic analysis typically involves analyzing various aspects of the text, such as:

1. **Language Choices:** Examining the vocabulary, diction, and syntax used in the text to determine their impact on the overall style and tone.
2. **Figures of Speech:** Identifying and analyzing literary devices such as similes, metaphors, personification, alliteration, or hyperbole to understand their function and effect within the text.
3. **Rhetorical Devices:** Analyzing the use of rhetorical strategies, such as repetition, parallelism, irony, or rhetorical questions, to enhance the persuasive or emotive power of the text.
4. **Sentence Structure and Syntax:** Investigating the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses to understand their impact on the flow, rhythm, and emphasis within the text.
5. **Literary Techniques:** Exploring the use of narrative techniques, point of view, characterization, symbolism, or imagery to uncover deeper layers of meaning and thematic significance.

By conducting a stylistic analysis, readers or researchers can gain insights into the author's intentions, the cultural and historical context of the text, the characters' perspectives, and the overall artistic or rhetorical qualities of the work. It allows for a deeper appreciation and understanding of the choices made in crafting the text and the effects they have on the reader or audience.

### **Stylistic analysis of excerpts from *L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous***

Language is an extraordinary tool that shapes our perception of the world and enables us to connect, express ideas, and convey emotions. Beyond its functional purpose, language possesses an inherent artistic dimension, allowing individuals to engage in a symphony of stylistic choices. From the nuanced selection of words to the deliberate arrangement of sentences, the artistry of language holds immense power in capturing attention, provoking thought, and forging deep connections with the reader. This section focuses on the stylistic analysis of the excerpts from *L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*. The excerpts from the novel are presented below:

#### **Figurative Language used in *L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous***

1. *Mais ceux qui, comme moi, avaient la tête éclairée par des visions surnaturelles surent que l'enfant à naître serait soit un dangereux bandit, soit un immense perturbateur de l'ordre social. P.18*

2. *Kanégnon logeait dans le ventre maternel, comme un roi dans son palais. Bla Nan l'entendait chanter, et quand il chantait de sa voix d'Orphée, elle se sentait inonder par des flots de bonheur, son ventre se laissait parcourir par des frissons et des éclairs. p. 18*
3. *Après sept tentatives infructueuses dont quatre coups d'état avortés et trois élections désastreuses et calamiteuses, Kanégnon parvint enfin au pouvoir. L'élection qui le consacra se tint sous une pluie de larmes, et Kanégnon, élu par des colonnes de cadavres claudiquant, bras et pieds tranches, trainant entrailles et cervelles sur le bitume éploré, fut transporté au palais présidentiel par une marée torrentielle de sang. P. 53*
4. *Les rues, véritables fleuves d'ébène, faisaient rouler en echo les chants des femmes, célébrant Kanégnon, le David des tropiques. P.38*

### Analysis of the excerpts

**Excerpt 1 :** In the quote, "Mais ceux qui, comme moi, avaient la tête éclairée par des visions surnaturelles surent que l'enfant à naître serait soit un dangereux bandit, soit un immense perturbateur de l'ordre social" (p. 18), there are figurative expressions that contribute to the overall meaning and imagery of the statement. Let's analyze them: "La tête éclairée par des visions surnaturelles" (the head lit up by supernatural visions): This is a metaphorical expression that suggests having an enlightened or illuminated mind due to supernatural or mystical experiences. It implies having special knowledge or insights beyond ordinary perception. "Un dangereux bandit" (a dangerous bandit): This is a metaphorical characterization of the unborn child. It portrays the child as a potential threat or criminal figure, emphasizing their potential for causing harm or disruption. "Un immense perturbateur de l'ordre social" (an immense disrupter of the social order): This is a metaphorical expression that depicts the child as someone capable of creating significant disturbance or upheaval in the established social order. It suggests that the child's actions could challenge or disrupt the existing norms and structures of society.

These figurative expressions help convey the idea that the unborn child in question carries the potential for significant impact, either in a negative (as a dangerous bandit) or transformative (as a disrupter of the social order) way. The figurative language enhances the imagery and adds depth to the meaning of the quote.

**Excerpt 2:** In the quote, "Kanégnon logeait dans le ventre maternel, comme un roi dans son palais. Bla Nan l'entendait chanter, et quand il chantait de sa voix d'Orphée, elle se sentait inonder par des flots de bonheur, son ventre se laissait parcourir par des frissons et des éclairs," there are several figurative expressions that contribute to the overall imagery and meaning. Let's analyze them: "Kanégnon logeait dans le ventre maternel, comme un roi dans son palais" (Kanégnon resided in the mother's womb, like a king in his palace): This is a simile that compares Kanégnon's presence in the mother's womb to that of a king in his grand palace. It highlights the idea of Kanégnon's importance and authority within the maternal space. "Quand il chantait de sa voix d'Orphée" (When he sang with his Orpheus-like voice): This is a simile that compares Kanégnon's singing voice to that of Orpheus, a legendary musician known for his enchanting voice. It suggests that Kanégnon's voice is captivating, beautiful, and capable of evoking strong emotions. "Elle se sentait inonder par des flots de bonheur" (She felt flooded by waves of happiness): This is a metaphor that conveys the intensity of Bla Nan's emotions. It suggests that her happiness is so overwhelming and powerful that it engulfs her completely, comparing it to being submerged in a flood of



happiness. "Son ventre se laissait parcourir par des frissons et des éclairs" (Her belly was traversed by shivers and lightning): This is a metaphorical description of the physical sensations experienced by Bla Nan. It implies that the emotions and the impact of Kanegnon's singing are so intense that they create a sensation of shivers and flashes of electricity within her. These figurative expressions serve to enhance the sensory and emotional experience described in the quote. They paint a vivid picture of the strong connection between Kanegnon's presence, his singing, and the profound impact they have on Bla Nan, emphasizing the depth of their emotional and physical connection.

**Excerpt 3:** In the quote, "Après sept tentatives infructueuses dont quatre coups d'état avortés et trois élections désastreuses et calamiteuses, Kanegnon parvint enfin au pouvoir. L'élection qui le consacra se tint sous une pluie de larmes, et Kanegnon, élu par des colonnes de cadavres claudiquant, bras et pieds tranchés, traînant entrailles et cervelles sur le bitume éploré, fut transporté au palais présidentiel par une marée torrentielle de sang," there are several figurative expressions that contribute to the overall imagery and meaning. Let's analyze them: "Après sept tentatives infructueuses dont quatre coups d'état avortés et trois élections désastreuses et calamiteuses" (After seven unsuccessful attempts, including four aborted coups d'état and three disastrous and calamitous elections): This is a figurative expression that employs exaggeration to emphasize the frequency and magnitude of the failed attempts and elections. It adds intensity and drama to the narrative. "L'élection qui le consacra se tint sous une pluie de larmes" (The election that consecrated him was held under a rain of tears): This is a metaphorical expression that conveys a sense of sorrow, grief, or emotional turmoil surrounding the election. It suggests that the election was accompanied by intense emotions and hardship. "Élu par des colonnes de cadavres claudiquant, bras et pieds tranchés, traînant entrailles et cervelles sur le bitume éploré" (Elected by columns of limping corpses, arms and feet severed, dragging entrails and brains across the mourning asphalt): This is a vivid and gruesome metaphorical description of the scene surrounding Kanegnon's election. It portrays a chaotic and violent atmosphere, where the use of dismembered bodies and spilled organs adds a sense of horror and brutality. "Fut transporté au palais présidentiel par une marée torrentielle de sang" (Was carried to the presidential palace in a torrential shower of blood): This is a metaphorical expression that creates a vivid and striking image of Kanegnon's journey to power. It implies a significant amount of violence and bloodshed, emphasizing the brutality and the cost of his rise to the presidency. These figurative expressions contribute to the overall tone and imagery of the passage, evoking a sense of turmoil, violence, and sacrifice. They enhance the narrative by creating powerful visual and emotional impact.

**Excerpt 4:** Metaphor: The figure of speech present in the quote is a metaphor. The phrase "the streets, veritable rivers of ebony" uses the metaphor of "rivers of ebony" to describe the streets. It implies that the streets are flowing and vibrant, reminiscent of the powerful and steady flow of a river. The use of "ebony" emphasizes the color of the streets, suggesting a dark and rich hue. Allusion: The phrase "celebrating Kanegnon, the David of the tropics" contains an allusion. It refers to Kanegnon as the "David of the tropics," making a comparison to the biblical figure of David. This allusion suggests that Kanegnon is seen as a heroic and inspirational figure, like David, who is known for his bravery and leadership. These figures of speech enhance the language and add vividness to the description of the streets and the celebration of Kanegnon. The metaphorical language of "rivers of ebony" evokes a sense of movement and energy, painting a picture of bustling streets filled with music and joy. The allusion to David adds depth to the characterization of Kanegnon, highlighting his heroic qualities and elevating his status within the narrative. Overall, these

figures of speech contribute to the poetic and evocative nature of the language used in the novel, enhancing the imagery and adding layers of meaning to the description of the scene.

### **Use of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions in "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous**

1. And "warifatche," the rich boss of the attackers, who sent you buses, weapons and money to convoy, house and feed the attackers. p. 74
2. Batard! fils de batard! Qui t'a dit de le tuer? tu ne l'as pas vu avec le Presi sur la photo? Tu ne sais pas que c'est le pote du presi? Voila, a cause de toi, un enfoire, un couillon, RFI va parler de nous! Voyou! Ta mere con-pourri! Si tu dis un mot, je te tue, je coupe ta pine et te la fous dans ta vilaine bouche de cafard. P. 76
3. Ca ne nous dérange pas du tout ! parce qu'on sait que vous etes bardés de grigris dangereux et que vos costumes sont trempées de nansidji (eau ayant des pouvoirs mystiques et surnatruels). P.126
4. Mon frère, nous, on est venus sur la terre pour accopagner les autres ! Des enfants comme ca la, ils sont devenus riches dans *dibi-dibi-la*, (cafouillage, désordre) en vitesse *fio* ! On voit pas la différence entre eux et les autres. P.150

### **Analysis of the excerpts**

**Excerpt 1:** In the quote from "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous," the author, Maurice Bandaman, employs dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions to enhance the authenticity of the language and depict the cultural context. Dialects: The use of dialects can be observed in the word "warifatche," which is likely a term specific to a particular region or community. This inclusion of dialect adds local flavor and reflects the diversity of language within the story, representing the cultural nuances and identities of the characters. Colloquialisms: The use of colloquial language is evident in phrases such as "sent you buses, weapons, and money to convoy, house and feed the attackers." The use of "sent you" instead of "sent" and the repetition of the word "and" reflect informal speech patterns. This colloquial style adds realism to the dialogue, mimicking everyday conversation and capturing the informal tone of the characters. Vernacular Expressions: The phrase "convoy, house and feed the attackers" uses vernacular expressions commonly used in informal speech. These expressions reflect the practical and straightforward language used in everyday situations. They contribute to the overall naturalness and authenticity of the dialogue, grounding the narrative in a specific cultural and linguistic context.

By incorporating dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions, Bandaman portrays the characters' unique voices, capturing the richness and diversity of language within the story. These linguistic elements help establish a sense of place, emphasizing the cultural nuances and providing a more immersive reading experience. They also contribute to the development of realistic and relatable characters, enhancing the overall authenticity of the narrative.

**Excerpt 2:** The quote from "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous" by Maurice Bandaman exhibits the use of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions. Let's analyze it: Colloquialisms: The use of expressions such as "Bastard! Son of a bastard!" and "Thug! Your stupid mother!" represents colloquial language. These are strong and informal insults

commonly used in everyday speech, reflecting the emotional intensity of the speaker and the confrontational nature of the dialogue. Vernacular expressions: The phrase "Who told you to kill him?" and "Didn't you see him with the Presi in the photo?" are examples of vernacular expressions. They use direct, straightforward language commonly used in informal conversations. These expressions may deviate from formal grammatical structures but effectively convey the speaker's message. The use of these dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions serves multiple purposes within the context of the quote. They add authenticity to the dialogue, reflecting the characters' cultural and social backgrounds. The colloquial insults and confrontational language contribute to the emotional intensity of the scene, highlighting the anger and frustration of the speaker. Additionally, the vernacular expressions enhance the realism of the conversation, creating a sense of familiarity and immediacy. By incorporating dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions, Bandaman captures the nuances of everyday speech, making the dialogue feel genuine and relatable. These language choices contribute to the characterization, tone, and atmosphere of the novel, providing a rich and immersive reading experience.

**Excerpt 3:** The quote from "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous" by Maurice Bandaman contains the use of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions. Let's analyze it: Colloquialisms and Vernacular Expressions: The phrase "Ca ne nous dérange pas du tout!" (It doesn't bother us at all!) reflects a colloquial and informal expression commonly used in everyday speech. This expression conveys a casual and relaxed tone. Vernacular Expression: The term "grigris" refers to objects or charms believed to have mystical or supernatural powers. It is a vernacular expression specific to certain cultural contexts or belief systems. Dialect: The use of "nansidji" refers to water believed to possess mystical and supernatural powers. It may represent a specific regional dialect or cultural reference within the novel. The inclusion of these colloquialisms, vernacular expressions, and potentially dialects adds authenticity and cultural richness to the dialogue. It reflects the unique speech patterns and beliefs of the characters, providing insight into their cultural backgrounds and perspectives. These language choices contribute to the overall atmosphere and characterization within the novel, allowing readers to better understand the cultural context and the characters' beliefs and attitudes. Overall, Bandaman's incorporation of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions adds depth and authenticity to the dialogue in "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous." It enhances the cultural and linguistic diversity within the narrative and immerses the reader in the world of the story.

**Excerpt 4:** The quote from "L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous" by Maurice Bandaman contains the use of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions. Let's analyze it: Colloquialisms and Vernacular Expressions: The phrase "Mon frère, nous, on est venus sur la terre pour accopagner les autres!" (My brother, we came to this earth to accompany others!) reflects colloquial and informal language commonly used in everyday speech. It conveys a friendly and familiar tone. The term "dibi-dibi-la" represents a colloquial expression used to describe confusion, disorder, or chaos. It adds a playful and expressive element to the dialogue. Dialect: The phrase "en vitesse fio!" is a vernacular expression that conveys a sense of speed, urgency, or efficiency. It may represent a specific regional dialect or cultural reference within the novel. The use of these colloquialisms, vernacular expressions, and potentially dialects helps to capture the authenticity of the characters' speech and their cultural backgrounds. It adds depth and realism to the dialogue, providing insight into the characters' attitudes, beliefs, and ways of communication. By incorporating these language elements, Bandaman creates a sense of familiarity and reliability, allowing readers to connect with the characters on a deeper level. It enhances the cultural richness of the narrative and

adds to the overall authenticity and immersion in the story. Overall, the inclusion of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions in "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*" enriches the dialogue, portrays the characters' unique voices, and enhances the cultural diversity within the narrative.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the stylistic analysis of the use of language in Maurice Bandaman's novel "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*" reveals a rich tapestry of linguistic techniques that contribute to the depth and authenticity of the narrative. Through the exploration of various figures of speech, dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions, Bandaman showcases his mastery in crafting a vivid and immersive linguistic landscape.

The use of figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, and hyperbole adds depth and imagery to the descriptions, allowing readers to vividly visualize the scenes and emotions portrayed in the novel. These figures of speech enhance the reader's engagement with the story, creating a dynamic and evocative reading experience.

Furthermore, the incorporation of dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions captures the diversity and authenticity of the characters' speech patterns, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts. Bandaman masterfully presents the unique voices and perspectives of his characters, enriching the narrative and providing a deeper understanding of their identities and experiences.

Through his skillful use of language, Bandaman not only tells a compelling story but also reflects the complexity of the socio-cultural and political contexts within the novel. The language choices employed by the author highlight the power dynamics, social tensions, and cultural nuances present in the narrative, offering critical insights into the themes of the work.

Overall, the stylistic analysis of the use of language in "*L'État Z'Héros ou la Guerre des Gaous*" showcases Bandaman's ability to craft a linguistic tapestry that immerses readers in the world of the novel. The intricate interplay of figures of speech, dialects, colloquialisms, and vernacular expressions contributes to the authenticity, depth, and richness of the narrative, making it a captivating and thought-provoking literary work.

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***RE/CONNECT Virtual Exchange and Art Exhibition: A Framework for Creative and Meaningful International Exchange During COVID-19 Restrictions***

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**Abstract**

One of the consequences of COVID-19 for Japanese art university students has been a narrowing of the educational experience. Many study abroad programs have yet to be resumed and international exchange opportunities dramatically decreased. The risks to student well-being and need for a new direction in post-COVID education have been recognized. One positive outcome was an accelerated familiarity with remote communication tools. While presenting challenges, opportunities were also revealed for meaningful international exchange, unrestricted by the pandemic. This paper explores the benefits of international online visual art projects using the case study of RE/CONNECT, an online exchange and art exhibition between UK and Japanese art university students. Now in its third consecutive year and with over 60 participants, the project aims to (1) utilize online communication tools for meaningful international exchange despite travel restrictions, and (2) encourage students to explore art creation to help process feelings related to the ongoing pandemic. Through regular video conferences, students share pandemic experiences and create an artistic brief. This is then used as a springboard from which they create individual artworks and accompanying descriptions. Finally, the works are introduced by the artists at a virtual opening party and displayed online in a public exhibition. Through this three-stage process (*exchange, create, exhibit*), it is hoped that students can benefit from rich and meaningful learning experiences, providing a framework for international exchange projects in other disciplines in the post-COVID educational landscape.

Keywords: Art, Education, Virtual, Exchange, International, COVID-19

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## Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching consequences on all aspects of society, not least in the area of higher education. For Japanese art university students, one of the prominent outcomes of the crisis was a narrowing of their educational experience. With many study abroad programs still yet to be resumed, and international exchange opportunities dramatically reduced, students have found themselves confined within the boundaries of their own institutions, unable to interact internationally and engage in cross-cultural learning. Amidst these challenges, the recognition of the risks posed to student well-being and the pressing need for a new direction in post-COVID education have emerged (Komiya, 2022).

One positive outcome of the pandemic-imposed limitations was the accelerated familiarity with remote communication tools (Marcus et al., 2022). As physical travel and face-to-face interactions were restricted, students and educators were compelled to embrace digital platforms and virtual spaces to bridge the gaps that had been created. While presenting considerable challenges (Morgan, 2022), this shift to remote communication also revealed a host of opportunities for meaningful international exchange, unrestricted by the physical barriers and limitations of the pandemic. This paper explores the benefits of international online visual art projects as a means to address such limitations faced by Japanese art university students and to foster a rich and diverse educational experience. Now in its third consecutive year and featuring over 60 participants, the case study of RE/CONNECT (previously DIS/CONNECT), an online exchange and art exhibition that brings together art students from the United Kingdom and Japan, is examined.

The RE/CONNECT project seeks to utilize online communication tools as a means for meaningful international exchange by leveraging video conferencing technology. Students are provided with a platform to share their experiences of the pandemic and engage in cultural dialogue and explore art creation as a method to process and express their feelings related to the ongoing global health crisis. Through the creation of individual artworks based on an artistic brief developed during the exchange, students are encouraged to channel their ideas and experiences into a tangible form of expression. Ultimately, the culmination of the project results in a virtual opening party and a public exhibition of the artworks online. This three-stage process of *exchange*, *create*, and *exhibit* provides participating students with a framework for rich and meaningful learning experiences. Through immersion in cross-cultural exchange centered around art creation and sharing their ideas and artworks with an audience outside of their immediate environment, students can overcome the limitations imposed by the pandemic.

This paper explores the impact of international online visual art projects on student learning experiences, discussing the benefits of cross-cultural understanding, the development of creative and critical thinking skills, and the emotional and psychological benefits of using art as a medium for processing difficult feelings. Finally, the potential for such projects to be adapted and implemented in other academic disciplines is suggested, providing a framework for meaningful international exchange in the post-COVID educational landscape.

## Background and Motivation

The rapid development of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 coincided with the start of the Japanese academic year. Entire cohorts of university students found themselves taking classes online, many doing so from their apartments or homes due to strict campus no-



entry policies. Social interaction was dramatically reduced as clubs and other extracurricular activities were suspended. International students who had recently arrived in Japan were also faced with very limited social contact. Separated from their families and yet to create social networks, isolation became a pressing concern and the risk to student well-being was very real. The situation was complicated by strict government policy and uncertainty about the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, adding to the sense of anxiety and powerlessness (Chishima & Liu, 2021).

Simultaneously, however, an unprecedented digitalization of higher education was rapidly unfolding (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2021). The sudden move to online classes required that the adoption of remote communication tools such as Google Meets, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, was not only necessary but also urgent. The learning curve was steep and often stressful (Mohd Basar et al., 2021). In retrospect, the value and efficacy of virtual classes as an educational panacea are debatable, hinging greatly on the content and nature of the class in question. Nevertheless, within a matter of weeks, universities had learned how to effectively use such technology to teach classes, assign projects, and hold discussions and presentations. This revealed an opportunity to connect students around the world quickly, conveniently, and at little cost, despite the restrictions on international travel.

The idea of creating an online art and international exchange project was conceived during the chaos of the early stages of the pandemic and was driven by two primary goals. Firstly, the project aimed to utilize the potential of recently adopted online communication platforms to foster meaningful international exchange, particularly in light of sudden travel restrictions. By leveraging these educational tools, students around the globe could be offered virtual cultural exchange opportunities as an alternative to international travel where they could share their experiences of the pandemic.

Secondly, the project aimed to encourage students to explore art creation as a powerful medium for processing and expressing their feelings related to the ongoing global health crisis. The project recognized that art has a unique ability to transcend language barriers and communicate emotions and ideas effectively. By encouraging students to channel their experiences and reflections into their artworks, RE/CONNECT provides them with an outlet for self-expression and a means to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic.

## **Methods**

The idea for the project was formulated in the spring of 2020 with promotion and recruitment of students taking place from June to July. Online meetings were held throughout August and the exhibition was launched in September. Using the project name “DIS/CONNECT” (changed to “RE/CONNECT” in 2022), the first year of the project involved two private universities in Japan: a liberal arts college in Miyazaki and an art university in Kyoto. Despite both universities being Japanese, the project attracted a diversity of local and international students (some of whom were stuck temporarily in their home countries) from a total of eight countries. In its second year, the project was partnered by an additional art university in the United Kingdom with a total of twenty-four students, and, in 2022, with the further addition of a private art university in Kyoto, twenty-three students joined. Considering the possible isolation of students during the long summer break, with no structured class schedule or activities to attend, the projects were held between August and September. In each year so far, the project has followed the three-stage process: exchange, create, and exhibit, with each

stage playing a vital role in providing students with a comprehensive and enriching learning experience.

### **Stage 1: Exchange**

The exchange stage of the project consists of regular online group meetings between participating students and organizing faculty. In each year of the project, four ninety-minute meetings were held. In the first meeting, participants have a chance to introduce themselves and their artwork, as well as share their personal experiences and insights regarding the pandemic, how it has affected their lives, their artistic practices, and their perspectives on the world. These exchanges aim to foster cross-cultural understanding, empathy, and appreciation for different perspectives, creating a sense of global interconnectedness while the world portrayed by the media was increasingly fragmented and isolated (Mach et al., 2021). The project aims and requirements were then outlined by the organizing faculty. Finally, participants collaboratively develop an artistic brief from which they will create individual artworks. Reflecting the fluctuating nature of the pandemic itself, as well as the diversity of the participants, the themes of the project varied slightly throughout the years. The focus of the first year was how our lives had been affected by COVID, how we stay in contact with those important to us, and what we had learned about ourselves. A similar theme was followed in the second year, yet simplified to three words: “distance, connection, isolation”. However, by the final year, participants decided upon the idea of “the new normal” as a topic to explore. This organic restructuring was echoed in the changing of the name from DIS/CONNECT to RE/CONNECT after the second year. The latter seeming appropriate for the more optimistic stage of the pandemic in 2022.

### **Stage 2: Create**

Building upon the exchange stage, students create their original artworks based on the brief and reflect on their personal experiences and interpretations of the pandemic. The artistic brief serves as a springboard, providing a thematic framework to explore ideas and emotions, with the development of these ideas being shared in regular exchange meetings. Finding a suitable balance between providing a structure upon which ideas can build and allowing enough autonomy so as to not constrict any original creative thought was crucial to the success of the project. Participants were encouraged to work in whatever media they liked, the only constraint was that the final submission must be a digital image of their artwork. Due to the diverse artistic backgrounds of the members, the submissions included a broad range of media including digital illustration, drawing, manga, animation, and video.

The artworks are accompanied by a short descriptive text by the artist which provides viewers with insights into the inspiration and concept behind the work. This not only enhances the viewer's understanding and appreciation by providing context, but also encourages the artists themselves to furthermore articulate and reflect upon their ideas, developing a deeper understanding of the complex and nuanced connection between creative choices, feelings, and personal experiences.

### **Stage 3: Exhibit**

Many face-to-face events were postponed during the early stages of the pandemic, and students were denied the particular kind of festive social contact experienced in large groups such as concerts and opening parties. For this reason, the culminating stage of the project was

the introduction of the works by the artists at a virtual opening party and their subsequent display in an online public exhibition. The opening serves as a celebratory event where artists can present their works to a broader audience and provides a platform for them to express their ideas and receive feedback from others. Furthermore, by encouraging participants to articulate ideas by engaging in critical discussions about their artwork, this stage of the project is a chance to improve public speaking and presentation skills. Opportunities to share ideas with people outside of one's regular environment were understandably limited due to the pandemic. Ultimately, this shared experience was aimed to help students gain confidence in their abilities and reinforce a sense of validation and accomplishment. The public exhibition was hosted on the free social networking platforms Tumbler and Instagram. Through the sharing and tagging of the participants, the exhibition effectively promoted itself and was able to reach a far wider audience than a physical gallery exhibition could. The potential of online visual arts projects to create an impact beyond the individual student participants themselves became apparent.

## **Discussion**

### **Impact on Student Learning Experiences**

International online visual art projects such as RE/CONNECT have the potential to deeply influence students' learning experiences, enhance their cross-cultural understanding, cultivate their creative and critical thinking skills, and enable them to derive emotional and psychological benefits through using art as a medium for processing pandemic-related feelings.

Through the opportunity to interact with people from different cultural backgrounds, students can broaden their horizons and develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives. This cross-cultural exchange encourages students to challenge their preconceptions and develop a more nuanced understanding of the world around them. Direct contact with an internationally diverse community was especially pertinent during the pandemic as media portrayals of the situation in other countries could be confirmed or challenged via first-hand reports from those countries.

Art students specifically can benefit from this engagement in cross-cultural communication by noticing the similarities and differences between their own creative ideas and those of others outside of their environment. Through this process, they can gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of art and culture, promoting the development of creative and critical thinking skills. During the *create* stage, students are encouraged to explore new ideas and experiment with unfamiliar artistic devices. This process of creative problem-solving enhances their ability to approach challenges from different angles and develop innovative solutions. They learn to embrace ambiguity and take risks. Furthermore, art creation and interpretation require students to think critically about their own artistic choices as they engage in discussions and critiques, helping to develop their analytical skills and learn to articulate their perspectives and opinions.

The use of art as a medium for processing pandemic-related feelings provides students with valuable emotional and psychological benefits (Hilton, 2020). Art enables students to communicate and process complex emotions that may be difficult to express through conventional means of communication. The act of creating art allows students to externalize their inner experiences and give form to abstract thoughts and emotions. This process of self-

expression can provide students with a sense of agency and empowerment (Kapitan, 2014). Sharing their artwork in online meetings also facilitates a sense of connection and solidarity among participants. This communal aspect of artistic expression fosters a supportive and inclusive environment, where students can feel heard, seen, and validated.

### **Comparison with Face-to-face International Exchange**

As mentioned previously, the online exchange project was initiated under the restrictions of the pandemic. Specifically, the inability to travel internationally, and at certain periods the requirement to remain at home and take classes online. From its conception, the RE/CONNECT project was intended to be a temporary alternative to face-to-face international exchange, utilizing the accelerated familiarity with communication technology to provide a substitute for the duration of the pandemic. As such, the limitations of virtual exchange in contrast to face-to-face programs were understood. The level of cultural immersion and hands-on experiential learning experienced by physically living abroad and interacting daily with locals is arguably impossible to replicate through virtual exchange.

However, while face-to-face international exchange programs afford a distinct advantage in terms of the depth of experience they provide, online programs present notable benefits in the form of flexibility, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. Face-to-face exchange programs mostly require several years of planning by universities on either side of the exchange and are generally the result of established partnerships. Such partnerships require ongoing management, time, and effort on behalf of the university administration before participating students have even considered applying. The application procedure itself takes considerable diligence, including the submission of multiple forms, certificates, and often an interview process to check for suitability. Students wishing to join an international exchange program will need to start planning several months in advance. Taking part in an online exchange program, however, is as simple as signing up during the recruitment period. There are no interviews or lengthy applications to submit, and because the program does not conflict with the regular university schedule, there is minimal impact on their regular studies, work, or social lives. The financial aspect constitutes a significant factor contributing to the appeal of online programs. Face-to-face exchange programs entail substantial expenses associated with travel, accommodation, and often additional educational costs, rendering such programs unviable for many students. Conversely, online programs are essentially cost-free for participants, with the sole financial obligation being the subscription fee for communication software, which is typically borne by the institution.

Ultimately, both face-to-face and online international exchange programs possess their own inherent merits, and the choice between the two is contingent upon individual circumstances and objectives.

### **Feedback and Survey Results**

Survey results of Japanese art university students (N = 7) in the 2022 project showed that few participants had previous international exchange experience (< 20%). When asked which part of the project they found enjoyable, the most common response was “sharing artworks with international students,” followed by “expressing ideas in English”, and “communicating with international students.” Interestingly, the most challenging aspects of the project were in equal measures “expressing ideas in English”, and “communicating with international students.” The fact that participants simultaneously found these aspects both enjoyable and

challenging is a testament to the satisfaction gained from the project, requiring effort, problem-solving, and skill development. The sense of accomplishment achieved from overcoming these challenges potentially added to the depth of the experience. Regarding how participants benefited from the project, the most common response (> 50%) was “I became more confident in communicating with others.” Clearly, the social aspect of the project was valuable to students, most of whom had experienced reduced communicative opportunities in their daily lives.

Possibly the most valuable student feedback came in the form of free comments. One student remarked “It was very meaningful to interact with British students and teachers...(and) to feel the difference in trends between British and Japanese art,” suggesting that cross-cultural exchanges using the medium of art have real potential. Another student commented, “It was my first time to participate in an overseas exchange, so I was nervous because I couldn’t speak English and the students I met looked more mature than I had imagined.” While excessive or overwhelming nervousness can hinder learning, research suggests that reasonable levels of nervousness can be an indication of a valuable learning experience. The phenomenon known as “flashbulb memories” (Conway, 1994) indicates that experiences that cause surprise, shock, or nervousness, can result in long-lasting and vivid memories. The fact that the student was aware of such heightened emotions suggests that even though the exchange was held online, it felt *real* enough to trigger feelings normally associated with more direct forms of stimulation.

## Conclusions

Through virtual communication tools and platforms, students can engage in cross-cultural discussions, share experiences, and develop a deeper understanding of different perspectives. Online international exchange projects structured similarly to RE/CONNECT can provide a framework for meaningful learning experiences in various disciplines. Although the focus of the project detailed above is visual art, the underlying principles and methodologies could be adapted and applied to other academic disciplines within the humanities or sciences alike to create similar learning experiences.

The digital landscape opens up possibilities for global collaboration, offering a solution to the logistical and financial constraints associated with conventional study abroad programs. By utilizing virtual platforms, students can engage in cross-cultural exchanges without the need for physical travel. This not only reduces costs but also eliminates barriers such as visa restrictions and time constraints, enabling a wider range of students to participate.

The RE/CONNECT project was a response to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet even as international travel becomes regulatorily feasible again, new concerns such as escalations in the Russo-Ukrainian War, increased cost of international flights, unfavorable currency exchange rates, and the cost-of-living crisis, have created a climate of instability in which face-to-face exchange programs remain impossible or undesirable for many. Such problems can be overcome through online platforms, allowing students to connect with peers from different countries and institutions conveniently and at little to no cost.

While it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of online exchanges, lacking the richness and immediacy of face-to-face interactions, they have great potential as a temporary substitute or supplement which can be utilized when and if necessary.

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## Appendix

### Samples of student artwork and descriptive texts



Sample 1: Satomi Toma, “RECONNECT – after the Corona disaster”, stop-motion animation, 2022. I expressed the idea of reconnection between humans as organisms after experiencing the Corona disaster. When wearing a mask began to be recommended due to Corona, I often saw videos that visualized airborne droplets to make clear the risk of infection. When I saw it, I felt dirty, but at the same time, I thought that these droplets are also a part of humans. I felt I was a human organism. There is no one who doesn't spray these droplets. It's the same thing even if Corona disappears. By visualizing the droplets in the Corona disaster, we realized their presence and recognized our physiological phenomenon and appearance as organisms. As Corona gradually calms down, we are slowly starting to take off our masks. But whether Corona is here or not, we are still creatures oblivious to our own dirt. I find it absurd, but at the same time, I love such human creatures.



Sample 2: Mei Mukai, “Storm”, animation, 2021. The outbreak is like a storm. Sometimes rough, sometimes gentle, sometimes vicious enough to flip the world upside down. But we should keep our composure until it passes.



Sample 3: Aya Fukunaga, “Family”, photograph, 2020. Ever since the coronavirus spread, my chances of seeing my grandfather have drastically decreased. He lives in a nursing home. This picture shows my hand and his hand. Every time I meet him, I hold hands at the end. Because of this pandemic, the time I meet him is limited. This picture shows how deep the connection between me and my grandfather is.



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*Production of English Consonants by Yemeni EFL Learners of English:  
The Case of /p/ and /v/*

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**Abstract**

EFL learners commonly strive to attain near-native English pronunciation. Nevertheless, Arab learners of English may incorrectly produce certain sounds of the English language due to their first language interference. The current study examined Yemeni EFL learners' production of the English consonants /p/ and /v/. The study employed a quantitative case study design, and its speakers were two Yemeni EFL postgraduate students. At the time of the present study, the participants were postgraduate students at Utara Universiti Malaysia. The subjects were asked to read three lists of isolated words in random order. Each list included the same 36 words: six words for each target sound in three word positions, to be read three times. The pronunciations were recorded and then evaluated using two methods: (1) rating by four raters; and (2) an acoustic analysis via Praat. The results indicate that the two target sounds are problematic among Yemeni EFL learners. Additionally, the environment greatly influences the production of /p/ and /v/. Two patterns are identified: (1) /p/ is voiced and substituted with /b/; and (2) /v/ is devoiced and substituted with /f/. The findings generally shed light on the pronunciation difficulties among Arab speakers when producing English consonants and specifically confirmed previous findings regarding L2 speech production by Yemeni EFL learners of English.

Keywords: Devoicing, EFL, First Language Interference, Speech Production, Voicing

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## Introduction

In the field of L2 pronunciation, there has been a debate whether English sounds could be produced accurately by Arab learners of English. As argued by Watson (2002), the consonant contrasts: /f/-/v/, /p/-/b/, and /tʃ/-/dʒ/ tend to be troublesome for most Arab L2 speakers of English because such contrasts are not found in Arabic (Al-Sobhi & Preece, 2018; Alteyp, 2019). The main problems emerge from the contrasting patterns of such sounds in both Arabic as well as English languages, which pose challenges in L2 learning (Abdelgadir, 2019). English has 24 consonants, whereas Arabic includes 28 consonants. Arabic is thus a consonantal language. When Arabs learn to speak English, they may commit several errors because of the linguistic variations between Arabic and English. For instance, Arabic lacks some English sounds, including /p/ and /v/ (Abdelgadir, 2019; Javed, 2013). Hence, Arab learners show the tendency to substitute /p/ and /v/ with /b/ and /f/, respectively (Alteyp, 2019; Ashour, 2017; El Zarka, 2013; Mohammed, 2019).

The English voiceless bilabial stop /p/ is absent in Arabic. Consequently, EFL Arab learners commonly use the voiced stop /b/ instead of /p/, using the voicing as a repair strategy (El Zarka, 2013). Such usage of voicing in this context could potentially result in miscommunication or incorrect-message delivery, as in “Can I *bark* here?” instead of “Can I *park* here?” (El Zarka, 2013, p.17), thus hindering mutual intelligibility (Mohammed, 2019). The same trend goes to the English voiced labiodental fricative /v/ that induces most Arabs to apply the repair strategies of devoicing due to its absence in Arabic.

The current study aimed to examine specific issues regarding the production of the English consonants /p/ and /v/ by Yemeni EFL learners in three-word positions. The assessment of the participants’ pronunciation of the two target sounds was made using four raters’ auditory evaluation along with Praat analyses. This has been found in very few previous studies, as many past researchers have mostly used impressionistic methods to evaluate the production of L2 sounds.

The English /p/ and /v/ sounds are not available in Modern Standard Arabic (see Figure 1) and in Mukallaene Arabic used in South Yemen, where the speakers of the current study came from (see Figure 2).

Place→ ↓Manner	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	<b>p</b> <b>b</b>	<b>f</b> <b>v</b>		t d (tʰ dʰ)				k ɡ	(q)		(ʔ)
Nasal	m			n				ŋ			
Tap/flap				(r)							
Fricative			θ ð (ðʰ)	s z (sʰ)	ʃ ʒ				(χ ʁ)	(ħ ʕ)	h
Lateral				l							
Approximant	w			ɹ			j	w			
Affricates					tʃ dʒ						

Figure 1: IPA chart of English and Arabic consonants (sounds in parentheses are present only in Arabic, while highlighted ones are only available in English). The sounds in circles are the target sounds of the current study (source: Kalaldeh, 2016).

	Stop	Fricative	Affricate	Trill	Lateral	Nasal	Semi-vowel
Bilabial	<b>b</b>					<b>m</b>	<b>w</b>
Labiodental		<b>f</b>					
Interdental <sup>3</sup>		<b>θ</b>					
Dental							
Pharyngelized	<b>d<sup>s4</sup></b>	<b>s<sup>r</sup></b>					
Alveolar	<b>t<sup>r</sup></b>						
Alveolar	<b>d</b> <b>t</b>	<b>s</b> <b>z</b>		<b>r</b>	<b>l</b>	<b>n</b>	
Palatal		<b>ʃ</b>	<b>dʒ<sup>5</sup></b>				<b>j</b>
Velar	<b>g</b> <b>k</b>						
Uvular		<b>ʁx</b>					
Pharyngeal		<b>ʕ</b> <b>ħ</b>					
Glottal	<b>ʔ</b>	<b>h</b>					

Figure 2: Consonants in Mukallaene Arabic. Sounds in circles are the target sounds of the current study (source: Al Tairi, 2010)

## Related Literature

### Production of /p/ and /v/ by Non-Arab L2 Speakers of English

Some non-Arab learners of English face difficulties in producing the English consonants /p/ and /v/. For instance, Inyang, Okon and Ebong (2017) examined phonological difficulties encountered by Ibibio speakers. It was reported that 52% of the respondents were unable to produce /v/ and substituted it with /f/. Concerning /p/, 45% of the respondents replaced it with /b/. Additionally, Lengeri and Nicolaidis (2016) reported that /p/ was always confused with /b/ among Greek speakers. Moreover, Puspita, Sudarsono and Susilawati (2017), who investigated the interference of Sambas Malay on producing English consonants, found that /v/ was substituted with /p/ or /f/. Likewise, Begum and Hoque (2016) showed that Bangladeshi learners of English replaced /v/ with /b<sup>h</sup>/ and /p/ with /f/. Such a substitution of /v/ with /b/ was also detected in the production of /v/ by Hausa English speakers (Keshavarz & Khamis, 2017). However, /v/ was substituted with /w/ by Slovak speakers (Metruk, 2018), Turkish speakers (Ercan, 2018), and Chinese L2 speakers of English (Meng et al., 2007).

Some studies have shown evidence for the difficulties in producing /p/ and /v/ in a specific word position. For example, Chakma (2014) revealed that /v/ was most challenging among Thai learners in word-initial position. The sound /v/ is also problematic for Spanish learners when it occurs word-initially (Poll, 2019). Likewise, Rahman Asmaradhani and Sutarto (2002) found that /v/ was mispronounced as /f/ by Indonesian EFL speakers in word-medial and word-final positions. Similar patterns among Indonesian learners were also observed by Ambalegin and Arianto (2018), who revealed that /v/ was replaced with /f/ across all word positions (initial, medial, and final), whereas Stefani and Roba'i (2019) found that /v/ was replaced with /f/ in word-initial and word-final positions. In another related study, Senowarsito and Ardini (2019) observed the substitution of /v/ with /f/ in word-initial and word-final positions among Javanese EFL learners.

## Production of /p/ and /v/ by Arab L2 speakers of English

Most previous researchers have found that the English consonants /p/ and /v/ are problematic for Arab learners of English. For instance, Khalifa (2020) indicated that /p/ and /v/ were among the problematic English sounds for Arabs when learning English. He confirmed that /p/ and /v/ did pose a difficulty for the participants since these two sounds are absent in the Arabic language and found only in borrowed words. Therefore, as a result of their L1 negative transfer, the learners replaced them with /b/ and /f/, respectively, as /b/ and /f/ are equivalent sounds in Arabic. In some cases, the learners produced /p/ without aspiration when it occurs word-initially. Similar results were obtained by Ababneh (2018), who found that Saudi learners faced challenges with /p/ as well as /v/, which were substituted with /b/ and /f/, respectively.

Another related study by Alotaibi (2018) aimed to test the effect of the language variety of Arabic-speaking teachers (in terms of their dialectal accents: Saudi Arabian, Tunisian and Egyptian) on their students' productions of English consonants. Concerning /p/, Alotaibi indicated that this sound was produced by the Arabic teachers as RP (Received Pronunciation), while the students were unable to distinguish between /p/ and /b/. Regarding /v/, Alotaibi found that this sound was produced like RP by Saudi and Tunisian teachers, yet Egyptian teachers pronounced it as /z/ in most cases. Another study by Khayra (2017) suggested that Algerian learners of English faced difficulties to produce English consonants (e.g., /b/ and /p/; /d/ and /ð/; /ʃ/ and /tʃ/; and /t/ and /θ/). Likewise, as revealed by Al Yaqoobi, Ali and Sulan (2016), /p/ and /v/ were among the most troublesome English sounds for Omani EFL learners, especially when they occur in word-final position. The learners tended to replace /v/ with /f/ and /p/ with /b/. It was also found that most errors occurred in producing /p/, while the least errors were found in producing /v/ (see also Thakur, 2020). The Egyptian learners of English also experienced difficulties in producing /p/ and /v/, as indicated by Huwari (2019), who observed that some learners mispronounced /p/ as /b/ and /v/ as /f/ in some words. The Jordanian learners of English also have problems in pronouncing /p/ and /v/ correctly, as proven by Kalaldehy (2016), who found that /p/ was frequently confused with /b/ specifically in word-initial position.

The Palestinian learners had problems in producing /p/ as well. It was revealed by Jabali and Abuzaid (2017) that /p/ was more problematic for Palestinian learners of English when occurring in word-final position, while it was less difficult for them when it occurs in word-initial position. Likewise, Alzinaidi and Abdel Latif (2019) found that /p/ and /v/ were among the most difficult English sounds for Saudi female university learners. Their study demonstrated the challenge of producing /p/ in both word-medial and word-final positions and /v/ in word-initial position. Moreover, Hassan (2014) found that several Sudanese learners of English replaced /p/ with /b/ in certain words like 'pen,' 'happy,' and 'map,' implying that Sudanese learners had problems pronouncing /p/ across all three word positions.

The two target sounds of the present study were also challenging for Yemeni EFL learners. For instance, Hamzah and Bawodood (2019) examined the extent to which minimal pairs could improve the production of English consonants among Yemeni EFL learners. Concerning /p/ and /v/, in the pre-test, /p/ was found to be the most challenging sound since most of the learners were unable to pronounce it correctly. Regarding /v/, half of the learners experienced problems in producing it accurately in the pre-test. Nevertheless, after the intervention, the ability of the learners to produce /v/ was increased, while most learners were

able to produce /p/ correctly. Similarly, as indicated by Al Mafalees (2020), only 20 Yemeni learners produced /p/ accurately, while 80 of them encountered challenges and substituted /p/ and /v/ with /b/ and /f/, respectively. Another study by Baagbah, Jaganatha, and Mohamad (2016) showed that older Yemeni learners experienced more challenges in producing /v/ compared to younger ones (see also Hadjah & Hamzah, 2022).

On the other hand, some researchers showed that /p/ and/or /v/ were less challenging for Arab or non-Arab learners of English. For example, Abdelaal (2017) found that Arab learners were able to distinguish between /p/ and /b/ in terms of aspiration or voicing, refuting the argument that Arab learners of English have difficulty in the production of these consonants (see also Hamzah et al., 2020; Yeldham, 2018).

### **Research Questions of the Present Study**

In light of the past studies reviewed above, the current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How do Yemeni EFL learners produce the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ and the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ of the English language?
2. To what extent does word position (i.e., word-initial, word-medial, word-final positions) affect the accuracy of their production?
3. Do voicing (for /p/) and devoicing (for /v/) take place in their production?

The results of this study will elaborate whether or not Yemeni EFL learners have problems in the production of the English sounds /p/ and /v/. The methodology implemented in the current study is described in the following section.

### **Methods**

#### **Materials**

The current study employed a list of thirty-six isolated words consisting of two target consonants (i.e., the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ and the voiced labiodental fricative /v/) identified as problematic among Yemeni EFL learners of English. The words chosen include the two target consonants in all three-word positions (i.e., word-initial, word-medial, and word-final positions) (see Appendix A).

#### **Speakers**

The speakers of this study were two Yemeni EFL learners: one female speaker (S1) and one male speaker (S2). At the time of the study, S1 was thirty-two years old, whereas S2 was thirty years old. Both of them were born and grown up in Hadhramout in Yemen. They studied English as a foreign language in Yemen for more than ten years. At the time of this study, they were Ph.D. students at UUM majoring in IT (S1) and accountancy (S2). They enrolled in an intensive English course at UUM. Their level of English language proficiency was similar. S1 scored Band 7, while S2 scored Band 6 for the intensive English course at UUM. They had never been to any English-speaking countries and therefore had no exposure to a native environment of the English language.

## Data Collection

The spoken data were recorded using professional recording equipment. First, each speaker was given four minutes to read the words in silence to familiarise themselves with the words. After that, each speaker was asked to read the words in the three lists in natural intonations. Each word was read by each speaker three times.

## Data Analysis

The speakers' productions of the isolated words were analysed, firstly, by four raters who had experience in teaching English. At the time of the study, Rater 1 was a Ph.D. Arab student at UUM; Rater 2 was a master's degree Arab student at UUM; while Rater 3 and Rater 4 were Malaysian Master's degree students at UUM. All of the raters majored in Applied Linguistics. The errors in the production of the two target sounds were evaluated by the raters using an evaluation form (see Appendix B).

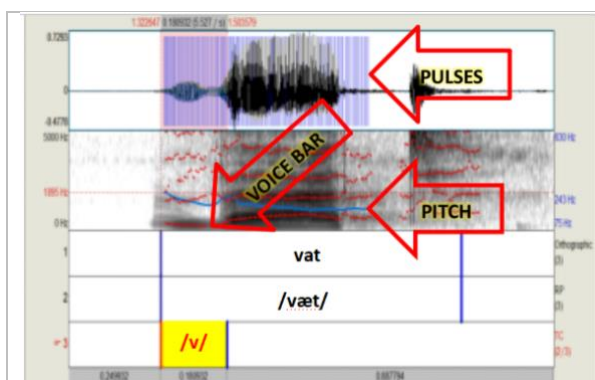


Figure 3: Production of 'vat' by S1 (the target sound /v/ in word-initial position)

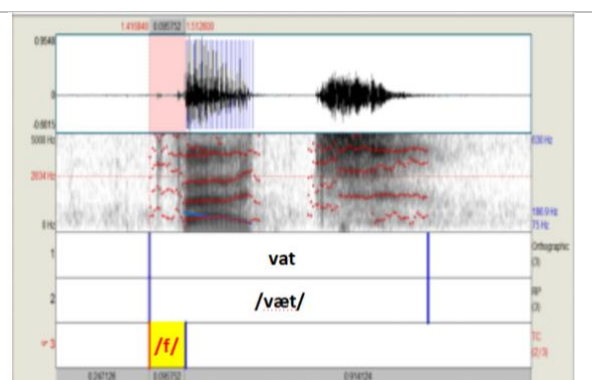


Figure 4: Production of 'vat' by S2 (the sound /v/ was devoiced and incorrectly produced as /f/)

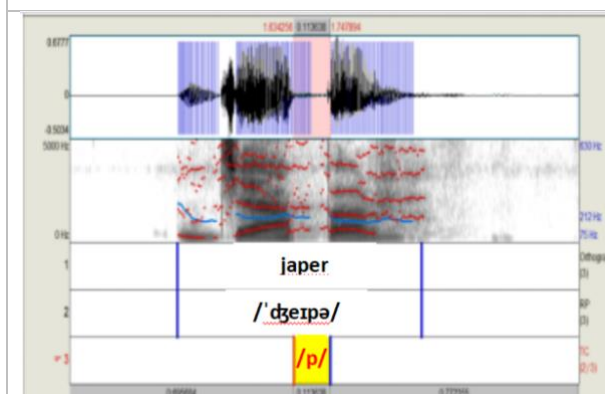


Figure 5: Production of 'japer' by S1 (the target sound /p/ in word-medial position)

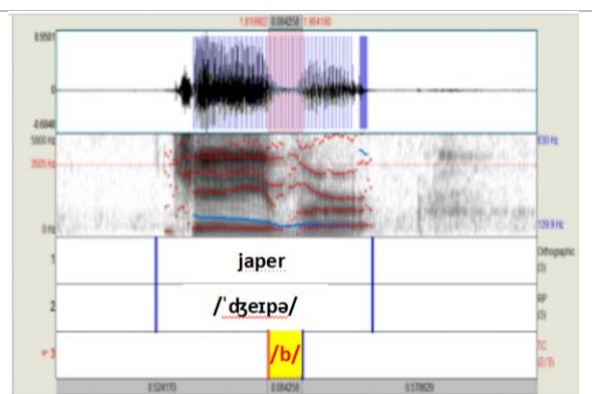
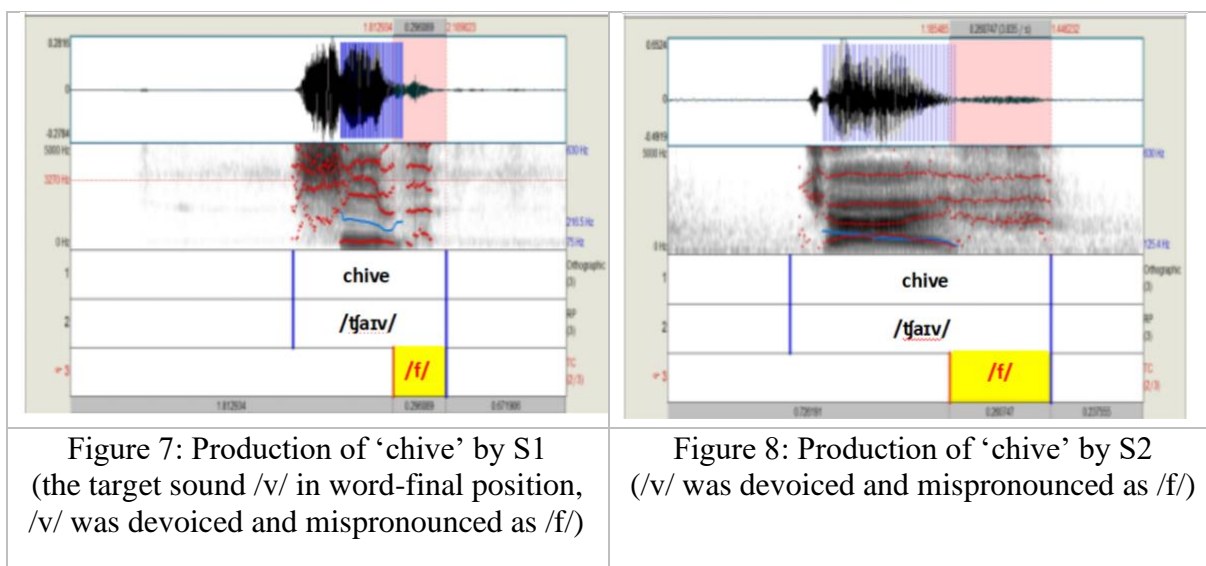


Figure 6: Production of 'japer' by S2 (the sound /p/ was voiced and incorrectly produced as /b/)





The productions of the two target sounds by each speaker were then supported by acoustic-phonetic analyses using Praat (Version: 5.3.56). The researchers aimed to identify voicing or devoicing of the target sounds /p/ and /v/ by visually inspecting the presence of voice bar, pitch, and pulses in waveforms and spectrograms in Praat. The presence of one of them in waveforms and spectrograms indicates the existence of voicing, whereas there is no voicing if all are absent (as exemplified in Figures 3-8).

## Results

### A. Results of Producing /p/ and /v/ as Revealed by the Four Raters

The production of the two target sounds (/p/ and /v/) for each speaker as revealed by the four raters are provided in Figures 9, 10, 11, and 12; and the same findings by the raters are included in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The results from the raters show that the two speakers mispronounced the two target sounds of the present study. As shown in (Figure 9, Table 1), in word-initial position, S1 produced /p/ as follows: completely correct 21%; slightly correct 17%; slightly wrong 17%; and she substituted /p/ with /b/ 33%. In word-medial position, S1's production of /p/ was as follows: slightly correct 29%; slightly wrong 42%; and her substitution of /p/ with /b/ occurred 17%. In word-final position, S1 produced /p/ as follows: completely correct 54%; slightly correct 13%; slightly wrong 21%; and she replaced /p/ with the /b/ 4%.

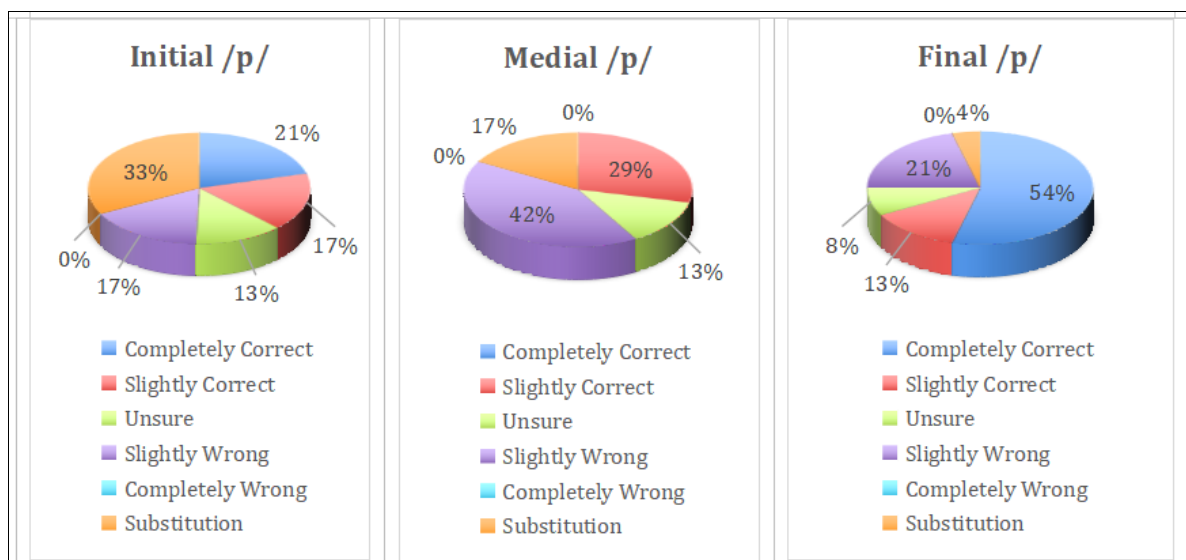


Figure 9: Productions of /p/ in three word positions by S1 (Raters' evaluation)

	Initial /p/	Medial /p/	Final /p/
Completely Correct	21%	0%	54%
Slightly Correct	17%	29%	13%
Unsure	13%	13%	8%
Slightly Wrong	17%	42%	21%
Completely Wrong	0%	0%	0%
Substitution	33%	17%	4%
Sum	100%	100%	100%

Table 1: Productions of /p/ in three word positions by S1

In contrast, fewer errors were found in S1's production of /v/ as she produced initial /v/ and medial /v/ in most words completely or slightly correct. In word-final position, S1 pronounced /v/ slight wrongly 8% and substituted /v/ with /f/ 4% (see Figure 10, Table 2).

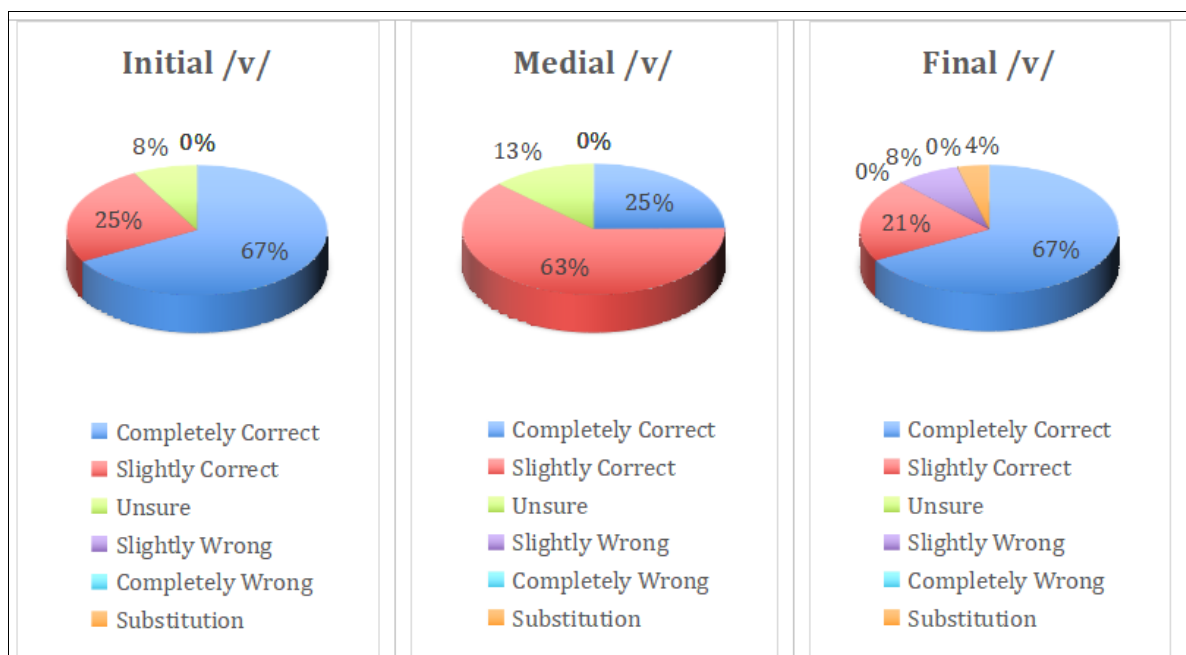


Figure 10: Productions of /v/ in three word positions by S1(Raters' evaluation)

	Initial /v/	Medial /v/	Final /v/
Completely Correct	67%	25%	67%
Slightly Correct	25%	63%	21%
Unsure	8%	13%	0%
Slightly Wrong	0%	0%	8%
Completely Wrong	0%	0%	0%
Substitution	0%	0%	4%
Sum	100%	100%	100%

Table 2: Productions of /v/ in three word positions by S1

With regard to S2, this particular speaker’s production of /p/, in word-initial position was completely correct 46%, slightly correct 25%, slightly wrong 4%, and he substituted /p/ with /b/ 17%. In word-medial position, S2’s production of /p/ was slightly correct 17%, slightly wrong 29%, completely wrong 4%, and he substituted /p/ with /b/ 29%. In word-final position, S2’s production of /p/ was completely correct 50%, slightly correct 4%, slightly wrong 25%, and he produced /b/ instead of /p/ 17% (see Figure 11, Table 3).

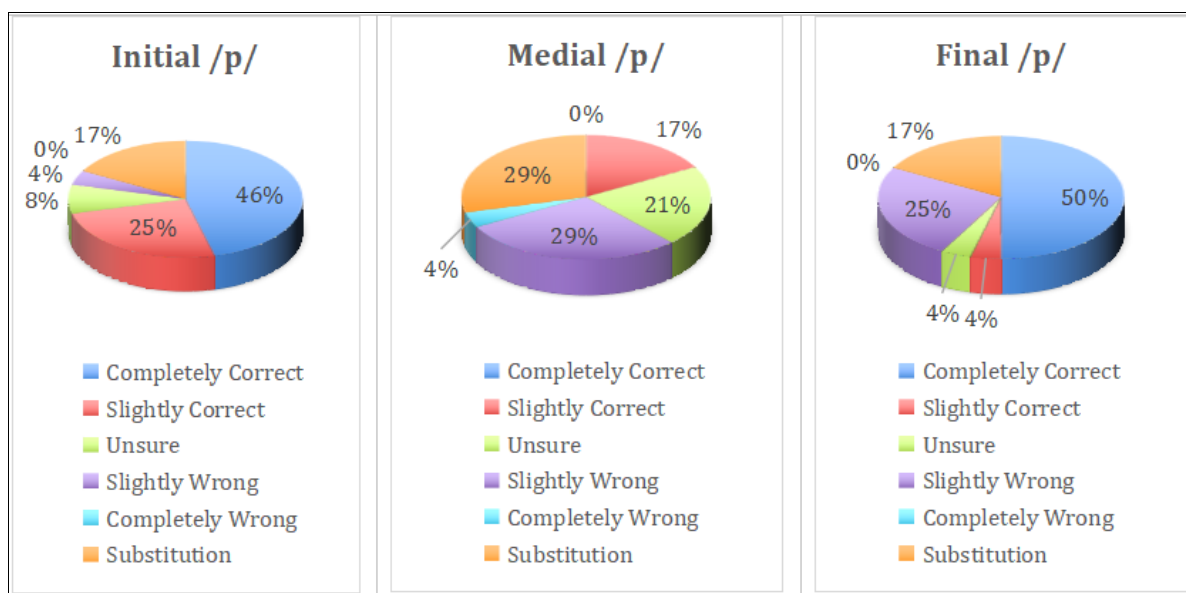


Figure 11: Productions of /p/ in three word positions by S2 (Raters’ evaluation)

	Initial /p/	Medial /p/	Final /p/
Completely Correct	46%	0%	50%
Slightly Correct	25%	17%	4%
Unsure	8%	21%	4%
Slightly Wrong	4%	29%	25%
Completely Wrong	0%	4%	0%
Substitution	17%	29%	17%
Sum	100%	100%	100%

Table 3: Productions of /p/ in three word positions by S2

On the other hand, fewer errors were indicated in S2’s production of /v/. In word-initial position, S2 produced /v/ as follows: completely correct 54%; slightly correct 21%; and slightly wrong 17%. In word-medial position, S2’s production of /v/ was completely correct

63% and slightly correct 29%. Substitution did not occur in words with initial and medial /v/. In word-final position, S2’s production of /v/ was completely correct 21% and slightly correct 4%. However, S2’s production of /v/ was slightly or completely wrong 17%, and he also substituted /v/ with /f/ 42% (see Figure 12, Table 4).

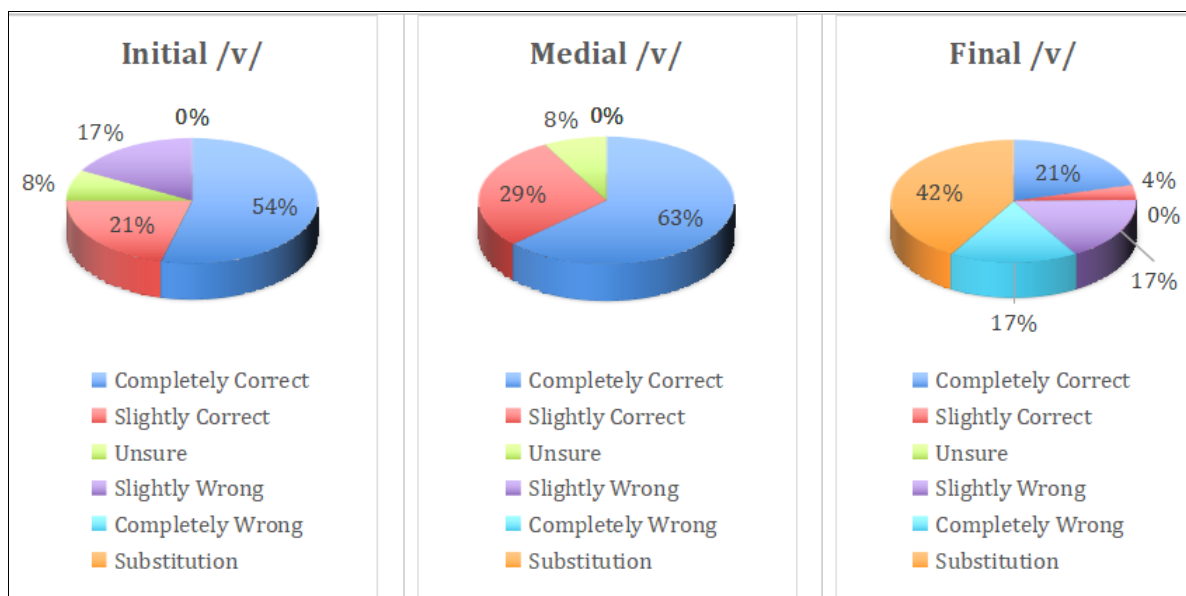


Figure 12: Productions of /v/ in three word positions by S2(Raters’ evaluation)

	Initial /v/	Medial /v/	Final /v/
Completely Correct	54%	63%	21%
Slightly Correct	21%	29%	4%
Unsure	8%	8%	0%
Slightly Wrong	17%	0%	17%
Completely Wrong	0%	0%	17%
Substitution	0%	0%	42%
Sum	100%	100%	100%

Table 4: Productions of /v/ in three word positions by S2

### B. Results of Producing /p/ and /v/ as Revealed by Praat Analyses

Praat analysis demonstrated that the two speakers incorrectly produced the two target sounds of this study. Concerning /p/, this English sound is voiceless, yet similar to other Arab learners of English, the two speakers voiced the /p/ sound in some words (i.e., they produced it as /b/). Concerning the second target sound of this study (/v/), this sound is voiced, but it was devoiced (i.e., it was pronounced like /f/) by both speakers in a number of words.

As observed in Figure 13, S1 voiced the sound /p/ in word-initial position 94%, in word-medial position 17%, and in word-final position 11%. This suggests that the English stop /p/ was more problematic for S1 when it occurs word-initially. However, it was of the least difficulty for her when it exists word-finally.

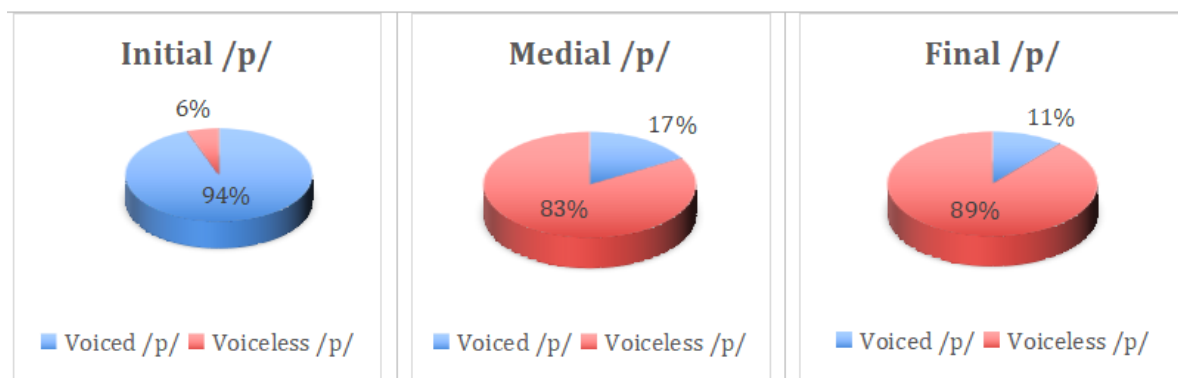


Figure 13: Productions of /p/ in three-word positions by S1 (Praat analysis)

Conversely, the English fricative /v/ was not troublesome for S1 especially when occurring initially or medially in words because her devoicing of /v/ did not take place in these two-word positions. Her difficulty with producing /v/ was found only in word-final position since she devoiced the /v/ sound 61% (see Figure 14).

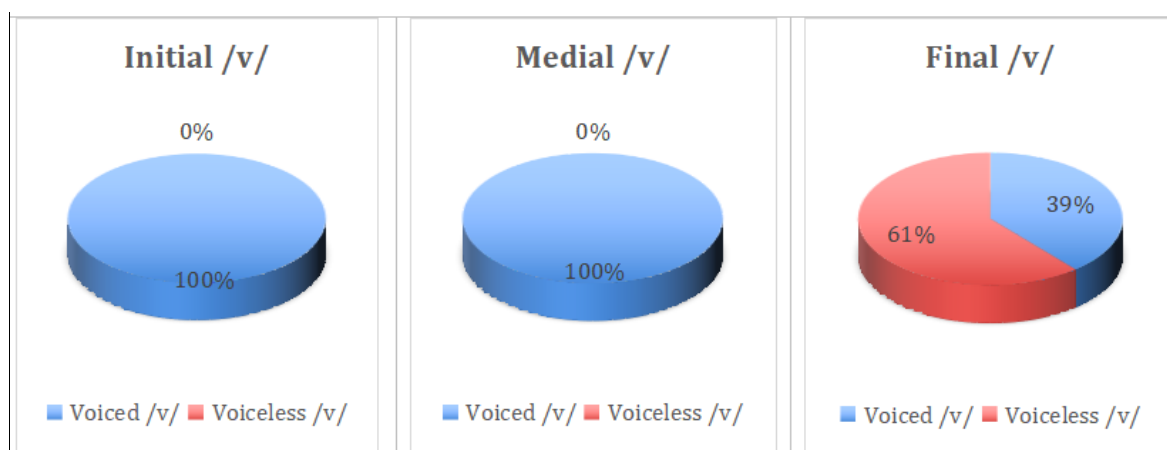


Figure 14: Productions of /v/ in three-word positions by S1 (Praat analysis)

S2 also incorrectly produced /p/ and /v/. Similar to S1, the /p/ sound was most problematic for S2 in word-initial position because he voiced the sound /p/ in word-initial position 78%. However, S2 voiced /p/ when occurring word-medially 61%, while his voicing of final /p/ was only 11%. This implies that, for S2, /p/ was of secondary difficulty when occurring medially in a word, whereas in the final position of words, /p/ was not very challenging for him to produce (see Figure 15).

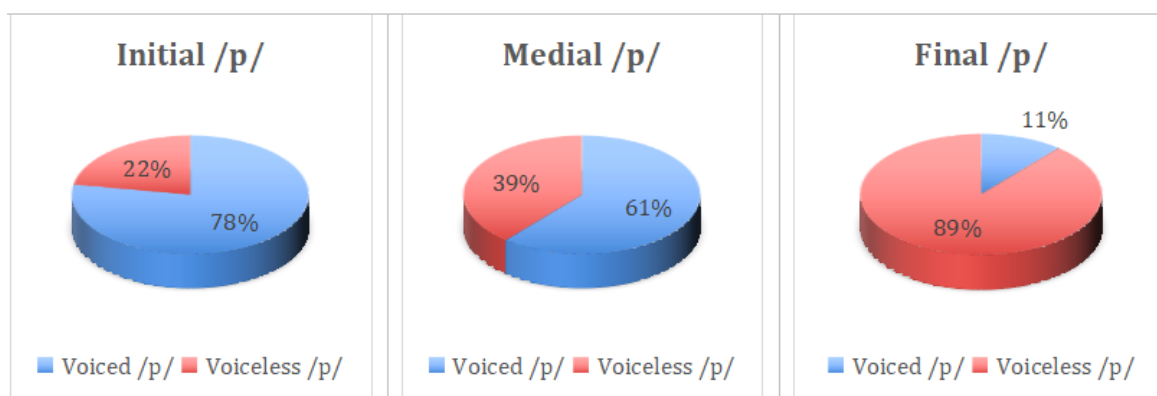


Figure 15: Productions of /p/ in three-word positions by S2 (Praat analysis)

Contrary to this, the real challenge with producing /v/ by S2 was discovered in word-final position because he devoiced /v/ in this word position in all words. He also had difficulties producing /v/ in word-medial position as his devoicing of /v/ occurred 78% in words with medial /v/. His devoicing of /v/, on the other hand, took place only 11% in word-initial position, indicating that it was easier for S2 to produce /v/ when it occurs word-initially (see Figure 16).

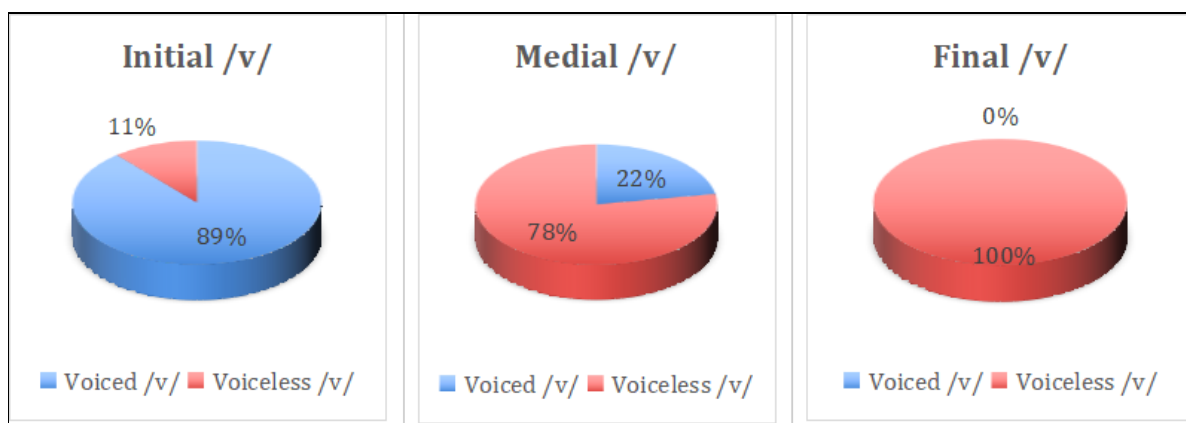


Figure 16: Productions of /v/ in three-word positions by S2 (Praat analysis)

## Discussions

### Difficulty with Production of /p/ and /v/

The first research question aimed to find out how Yemeni EFL learners produce the voiceless bilabial stop /p/ as well as the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ of the English language. In other words, the purpose of this question is to explore whether or not these two English sounds are challenging for Yemeni EFL learners to produce. The findings (provided by both the raters and Praat analyses) lend evidence that the English /p/ and /v/ consonants do cause some difficulties for the two speakers since both of them incorrectly produced /p/ and /v/ in several tokens.

Concerning the difficulties in producing /p/ by S1, it was revealed by the raters that S1's completely correct productions of /p/ occurred only 21% in word-initial position, while her substituting of /p/ with /b/ in this word position was 33%. Moreover, S1 was unable to produce any word with medial /p/ completely correctly, and her replacement of /p/ with /b/ in word-medial position was 17%. Besides, the completely correct production of final /p/ by S1 was 54%, while her mispronunciation of /p/ as /b/ occurred only 4%. Praat analysis also showed that S1 had challenges in the production of /p/ as she voiced the sound /p/ with the percentage of 94% when occurring word-initially, 17% when it occurs word-medially, and only 11% when occurring word-finally.

Regarding S1's production of /v/, as identified by the raters, S1 did not find it difficult to produce /v/ when it occurs word-initially or word-medially since she produced most words with initial and medial /v/ either completely correctly or slightly correctly without substituting it with /f/ or any other sounds. Even in word-final position, she substituted it only 4%. Praat analysis also demonstrated the challenge of producing final /v/ by S1 as she devoiced /v/ when it occurs word-finally 61%, while her devoicing of /v/ did not take place in word-initial and word-medial positions.

Thus, results obtained from both the raters and Praat in relation to S1's production of /p/ and /v/ confirm that: (1) /p/ was more difficult for S1 to produce in word-initial position than in word-medial and word-final positions; (2) /v/ was more troublesome for her in word-final position compared to word-initial and word-medial positions; and (3) Generally, /p/ was more problematic for S1 to produce than /v/.

Concerning the challenges in producing /p/ by S2, as illustrated by the raters, S2 was able to produce half of the words with final /p/ completely correct 50%. In comparison, his completely correct productions of initial and medial /p/ were 46% and 0%, respectively. The raters, however, found that S2's replacement of /p/ with /b/ occurred 29% in word-medial position and 17% in both word-initial and word-final positions. Praat analysis also indicated that the voicing of /p/ by S2 took place 78% when occurring word-initially, 61% when occurring word-medially in words, and only 11% in word-final position.

With regard to his production of /v/, the raters found that S2 substituted /v/ with /f/ only in word-final position with the percentage of 42%. He had fewer problems with the production of /v/ when it occurs initially and medially in words because his completely correct production of /v/ in these two-word positions took place 54% and 63%, respectively. Praat analysis, on the other hand, showed that S2 devoiced /v/ in all tokens with final /v/, while his devoicing of /v/ occurred 78% when /v/ occurs in word-medial position and only 11% with /v/ in word-initial position.

Therefore, the results as found by the raters and Praat analysis regarding how S2 produced /p/ and /v/ can be summarised as follows: (1) Both the raters and Praat analyses revealed the difficulty of producing /p/ by S2 when it appears word-initially and word-medially (i.e., the raters found that /p/ was more problematic for S2 to produce in word-medial position and then in word-initial position, while Praat analysis showed that the challenge in producing /p/ by S2 was found in word-initial position and then when it occurs word-medially); (2) /v/ was more difficult for S2 to produce in word-final position (as revealed by both the raters and Praat); and (3) The raters showed that /p/ was more problematic for S2 to produce than /v/; while Praat analysis demonstrated the great difficulty of producing both /p/ and /v/ by S2. However, when the researchers calculated all tokens produced by the two speakers in which they voiced the /p/ sound and the tokens in which they devoiced the /v/ sound, as shown by Praat analyses, it can be observed that /p/ was voiced in 272 tokens. In contrast, /v/ was devoiced in 250 tokens, suggesting that, in general, /p/ was more problematic to produce by the two speakers than /v/. This result was confirmed by the raters.

To sum up, regarding the first question of this study, the results suggest that Yemeni EFL learners have difficulties with the production of /p/ and /v/. These two sounds have been found to be typically challenging for Arab L2 learners of English (Ahmad, 2011; Ahmad & Nazim, 2013; Al Mafalees, 2020; Al Yaqoobi, Ali & Sulan, 2016; Hamzah & Bawodood, 2019; Huwari, 2019); and also, for non-Arabic L2 learners of English (Begum & Hoque, 2016; Inyang, Okon & Ebong, 2017; Kho, 2011). Nonetheless, the present study verified that /p/ is generally more challenging to produce than /v/. Similarly, Al Yaqoobi, Ali and Sulan (2016) revealed that most errors occurred in producing /p/, while the least errors were observed in the production of /v/ (see also Alfallaj, 2013; Alzinaidi & Abdel Latif, 2019; Hago & Khan, 2015; Hamzah & Bawodood, 2019).

## **The Effect of Word Position on the Accuracy of Producing /p/ and /v/**

The aim of the second question of this study is to examine the extent to which word position (i.e., word-initial, word-medial, word-final positions) can affect the accuracy of producing /p/ and /v/ by Yemeni EFL learners. The findings show that word position significantly affected the speakers' production of both /p/ and /v/. Firstly, as revealed by the raters and Praat analyses, for S1, /p/ was more problematic to produce when occurring word-initially than in the other two-word positions, whereas /v/ was more difficult for her in word-final position compared to word-initial and word-medial positions. Secondly, for S2, the raters found that /p/ was more challenging to produce in word-medial position and then in word-initial position, whereas Praat analysis showed that the difficulty of producing /p/ by S2 was more in word-initial position and then in word-medial position. However, /v/ was more difficult for S2 when occurring word-finally, as found by both the raters and Praat. Such an influence of the word position on the accuracy of producing English /p/ and/or /v/ by Arab L2 learners of English was revealed by other researchers (e.g., Alzinaidi & Abdel Latif, 2019; Binturki, 2008; Hago & Khan, 2015) and by non-Arab EFL/ESL learners of English (e.g., Ambalegin & Arianto, 2018; Senowarsito & Ardini, 2019; Chakma, 2014; Poll, 2019; Rahman, Asmaradhani & Sutarto, 2002; Stefani & Roba'i, 2019).

For instance, Jordanian learners of English almost always produced /p/ like /b/ particularly when it occurs word-initially (and between vowels) as found by Kalaldehy (2016). Moreover, Binturki (2008) reported that the production of /p/ and /v/ by Saudi ESL learners in word-initial position was more accurate than in word-final position. According to him, despite the dominance of the /v/ difficulty in both initial and final positions, it was less obvious in word-final position than in word-initial position. Another study by Hago and Khan (2015) demonstrated that /v/ was not found to be a big problem for the subjects, particularly when occurring in word-medial and word-final positions. In addition, Alzinaidi and Abdel Latif (2019) revealed that more errors in producing /p/ by Saudi EFL learners occurred in word-medial and word-final positions than in word-initial position. Most errors occurring in their production of /v/ were observed in word-initial position. Likewise, /v/ was evidenced to be most challenging among Thai learners (Chakma, 2014) and Spanish learners (Poll, 2019) when it occurs word-initially.

### **Main Types of Mispronunciation**

Two patterns were discovered in this study: (1) /p/ was voiced and replaced with /b/, and (2) /v/ was devoiced and produced like /f/. Voicing the sound /p/ occurred in the productions of the two speakers across the three-word positions while devoicing the /v/ sound was made by S1 in word-final position, and across the three-word positions by S2 (as shown by Praat analysis). However, the raters' auditory evaluation revealed the occurrence of devoicing /v/ by S2 when it occurred word-finally. Similar substitution of /p/ with /b/ and /v/ with /f/ by Yemeni EFL learners was indicated few studies (e.g., Bin Hadjah and Hamzah, 2022; Al Mafalees, 2020). Arab learners of English have been also found to substitute /p/ with /b/ (Ababneh, 2018; Al Yaqoobi, Ali & Sulan, 2016; Hago & Khan, 2015; Hamzah et al., 2020; Jabali & Abuzaid, 2017; Nazari & Younus, 2020); and /v/ with /f/ (Ababneh, 2018; Al Yaqoobi, Ali & Sulan, 2016; Hago & Khan, 2015; Nazari & Younus, 2020). Likewise, non-Arab learners of English have also been found to replace /p/ with /b/ (Inyang, Okon & Ebong, 2017; Lengeris & Nicolaidis, 2016); and /v/ with /f/ (Ambalegin & Arianto, 2018; Inyang, Okon & Ebong, 2017; Senowarsito & Ardini, 2019).



Such a poor performance in producing /p/ and /v/ and substituting them with /b/ and /f/, respectively, by Arab learners of English can be explained by certain theories in second-language acquisition like the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) and the Language Transfer Theory (LTT). As highlighted by Eckman (2008), MDH proposes that areas of the L2 that vary from the L1 but are more marked than the L1 would be challenging. The application of the MDH can indeed assist researchers in explaining the phonological discrepancy between Arabic and English and how such discrepancies may affect the learners' production. Concerning the LTT, Gass and Selinker (1992) remarked that a learner's native language (NL) interference occurs during the process of acquiring a target language (TL). Such interference can be either positive (when leading to errors in producing the TL by learners as a consequence of successful transfer) or negative (when leading to errors in producing the TL by learners as an effect of unsuccessful transfer of specific features found in learners' NL).

Thus, Yemeni EFL learners face challenges in producing the English voiceless stop /p/ and the English voiced fricative /v/ since they are more marked than /b/ and /f/, respectively. The English /b/ is somehow similar to the Arabic 'ب', while /f/ is quite similar to the Arabic 'ف' (see Figure 17).

ر	ذ	د	خ	ح	ج	ث	ت	<b>ب</b>	ا
راء	ذال	دال	حاء	حاء	جيم	ثاء	تاء	باء	ألف
rā'	ḏāl	dāl	ḥā'	ḥā'	ǧīm	ṯā'	tā'	bā'	'alif
r	ḏ	d	ḥ	ḥ	ǧ	ṯ	t	b	'(a)
[r~r]	[ð]	[d]	[x~χ]	[h]	[ɟ]	[θ]	[t]	[b]	[ʔ]
<b>ف</b>	غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز
فاء	غين	عين	ظاء	طاء	ضاد	صاد	شين	سين	زاي
fā'	ǧayn	'ayn	ẓā'	ṭā'	ḏād	ṣād	šīn	sīn	zāy
f	ǧ	ʿ	ẓ	ṭ	ḏ	ṣ	š	s	z
[f]	[ɣ~ʁ]	[ʕ]	[ðˤ]	[tˤ]	[dˤ]	[sˤ]	[ʃ]	[s]	[z]
	ء	ي	و	ه	ن	م	ل	ك	ق
	همزة	ياء	واو	هاء	نون	ميم	لام	كاف	قاف
	hamza	yā'	wāw	hā'	nūn	mīm	lām	kāf	qāf
		y	w	h	n	m	l	k	q
		[j]	[w]	[h]	[n]	[m]	[l~l̥]	[k]	[q]

Source: <https://omniglot.com/writing/arabic.htm>

Figure 17: Arabic consonants

## Conclusion

This study investigated the production of English /p/ and /v/ sounds by EFL Yemeni learners. As revealed by the findings, the two sounds investigated in this study were troublesome among Yemeni EFL learners. Moreover, word position significantly affected the production of /p/ and /v/. This study illustrated not only the challenge in producing the two sounds yet also where the challenge depending on the position of a word. As shown by the results of this study, the two participants faced challenges in specific word positions. Furthermore, two

patterns were discovered in the production of /p/ and /v/ by the two speakers and these patterns were: devoicing /v/ and substituting it with /f/; as well as voicing /p/ and replacing it with /b/. The results have primarily shed some light on the pronunciation challenges that Arab speakers may face when they produce English consonants and have particularly verified prior findings concerning Yemeni EFL English learners. Further studies are suggested by the researchers using larger samples to examine the challenges in the production of /p/ and /v/. Studies adopting a quantitative research method and a mixed-methods approach (e.g., interviewing EFL teachers and students) are recommended for future research to explore the reasons beyond such difficulties.

## Appendix A

Isolated words with /p/ and /v/ in three-word positions

Target Sound	Word Position	Word	IPA Transcription
/p/	Initial	Pat	/pæt/
		Pax	/pæks/
		Pad	/pæd/
		Pal	/pæl/
		Pan	/pæn/
		Pam	/pæm/
/p/	Medial	Caper	/'keɪpə/
		Japer	/'dʒeɪpə/
		Paper	/'peɪpə/
		Taper	/'teɪpə/
		Gaper	/'geɪpə/
		Shaper	/'ʃeɪpə/
/p/	Final	Skype	/skaɪp/
		Snipe	/snaɪp/
		Type	/taɪp/
		Wipe	/waɪp/
		Ripe	/raɪp/
		Stripe	/straɪp/
/v/	Initial	Vat	/væt/
		Van	/væn/
		Val	/væl/
		Vac	/væk/
		Vag	/vædʒ/
		Vas	/væs/
/v/	Medial	Slaver	/'sleɪvə/
		Raver	/'reɪvə/
		Saver	/'seɪvə/
		Haver	/'heɪvə]
		Caver	/'keɪvə/
		Waver	/'weɪvə/
/v/	Final	Chive	/tʃaɪv/
		Five	/faɪv/
		Arrive	/ə'raɪv/
		Strive	/straɪv/
		Dive	/daɪv/
		Alive	/ə'laɪv/

## Appendix B

Evaluation form for the isolated words

Word	Perfectly correct pronunciation				Completely wrong pronunciation		Substitution
	1	2	3	4	5		
1. Pat							
2. Pax							
3. Pad							
4. Pal							
5. Pan							
6. Pam							
7. Vat							
8. Van							
9. Val							
10. Vac							
11. Vag							
12. Vas							
13. Caper							
14. Japer							
15. Paper							
16. Taper							
17. Gaper							
18. Shaper							
19. Slaver							
20. Raver							
21. Saver							
22. Haver							
23. Caver							
24. Waver							
25. Skype							
26. Snipe							
27. Type							
28. Wipe							
29. Ripe							
30. Stripe							
31. Chive							
32. Five							
33. Arrive							
34. Strive							
35. Dive							
36. Alive							

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***Research on the Teaching Practice of Fashion Material Experiments  
Through Exploring the Creative Process of Local Elements***

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**Abstract**

Combining creative professional design courses and using the expressiveness of textile materials to tell stories together with methods of play with new appearances of soft fabrics, this project will explore how to guide students to apply textiles as creative media, involving the design elements of Taiwan's landscape of literature to inspire methods and creative processes. Grouped students will be guided to fulfill the integrated projects of the topical subjects. They will investigate limitations and creative possibilities concerning the exploration of material experiments in a sense that the soft materials are attributed to labor works of the handicraft. Accordingly, the course will lead the students to explore the texture compositions of the fabrics, to review the transformation and accumulation of creativity in the process of project development. Based on the cultivation of students' awareness of local culture and environment, the main concept of the course of 'Practices of Developments and Applications of Fashion Materials' is to explore how the use of textile materials connecting images of local environment through text reading can be fed back in the research of teaching practice. This project will further explore how to connect in-depth the development of perceptual design practice through curriculum schemes; accordingly the manipulations of textile materials convey local concerns, as well as the developments of material practices and design applications which become a medium for revealing the identity of the land.

Keywords: Teaching Practice, Fabric Creations, Local Elements

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## **Introduction**

This paper presents a teaching project run by the author, which is devoted to improving the local connotations connecting developing processes of textile designs, which make it possible to create design objects containing contemporary values.

### **Opportunities for connecting cultural innovation and contemporary value of materials**

It is said that mastering the theme can profoundly explore material connotations from the connection of the stories. Students will be guided to carefully consider the beginning of their project study in the course. They will start with reading the local texts, and combine their practical works of textile practices. The diverse supports of techniques and references can be provided among the groups in the practical session, alongside professional supervision, which respectively concerns solutions for creative methods.

On the one hand, it is essential to practice creative thinking and, on the other hand, it is significant to be proficient in the technical training of textiles in proposing various possibilities of inspirational development combined with material manipulations. Furthermore, at the application level requiring a high standard of execution, this project will lead to students focusing on the study contents and creative themes, together with technical performances and material experiments, by which the opportunity to improve proficiency and completion of the integrated implementation plan could be offered.

Through this paper, I would like to suggest why it is important for this instructional program to explore the connection of textiles designs with local contextual elements in the literary texts. Through this execution of the instructional program, what can be achieved? This paper will present the teaching contents and progresses, in which selected developed cases of students' design works are included. And through this paper, by the developing processes of the cases suggested, I would like to explore how far the expected effects have been achieved. What was not achieved? What are the difficulties that lead to failure to achieve the expected results, and how to further modify the teaching plan in the future to improve the achievement of the set goals of the instructional program?

### **Extracting local elements for the development of material applications**

To achieve the teaching objectives, this paper further proposes the ideal goal, as follows:

- (1) Explore the varied possibility of combining visual design with soft materials—using local elements in the development of practical applications to enhance the narrative performance of textiles.
- (2) To establish the identity of local culture through experimental textile creative methods and strengthen the correlation between textile manipulation of local elements and cultural connotations; teaching materials will be accumulated to become referential examples for students' further studies.
- (3) Guiding students to build up a mode of observing their creative processes through the integration of both peer inspiration and self-reflection.
- (4) The course demonstrates a completed example of idea development, from which students' works may achieve a practical standard which accommodates artistic quality.

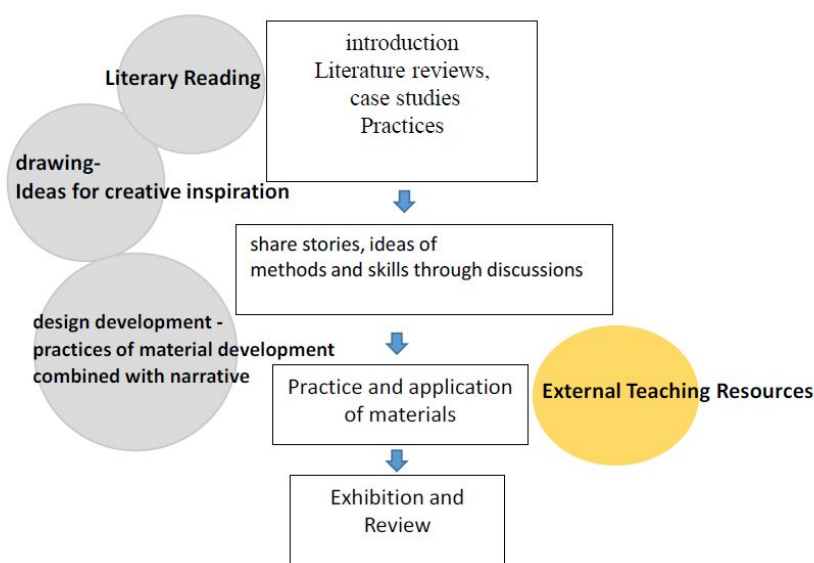


Figure 1: Shu-fang Huang, 2022, Outline of course structure.

Students' practices of textile creations connect local landscapes through the description and interpretation of text study in relating Taiwan literature. By this way, a possibility of building up the methods of connection between textiles and local connotations can be revealed, whereby the practices will bring out contemporary expressions with spirit of places of locals to deepen students' connection with their living surroundings, which become the references for cultivating students in exploring the connotations of innovative value.

Students practice several skills respectively to experiment with an integrated practical plan; they will be directed to observe the methods of individual practices, and will be introduced to a way to combine literary narratives with material developments. The roused stories should be exchanged between peers; that is to say, the series of discussions carried out in the class create mutual inspirations and develop horizontal ways of stimulation between the individual students. Recording and writing creative dairies are required in the process of idea growing, which is as a basis for reviewing their design thinking.

### **Explored design methods of associating the qualities of art beyond characters of decorations**

Design creations with both qualities of applied arts and decorativeness connect cultural motifs; for example, the Dolce & Gabbana series on the fashion catwalk presented the surface designs of clothes with elements of the Mediterranean environment and images of cultural heritage (Dolce & Gabbana, 2019).

However, as early as the early 1970s, Robert Kushner (1949-, United States of America) began to engage in 'decorative' painting, 'He cited the view of culture of the Middle East that "art" and "decoration" are inseparable [...] from the graceful fluidity of the arabesque drapes.'

Kushner first began using textiles and fabrics with acrylic paint in his 1971 performance pieces. In these performances, the fabrics were both functional pieces and art objects when the costumes were installed on the walls as two-dimensional objects. Through his use of fabric, Kushner connected painting, decoration, and clothing, while also blurring

gender issues and questioning stereotypes of artistic practice and materials. (DC Moore Gallery, 2023)

Kushner's 'sensitivity to textiles can be seen in his collections that sit somewhere between "clothes" and "paintings", where his "paintings" are actually wearable before being hung on the wall to be admired' (Lu, 1990: 124). With the combination of creative expression and styles of cultural articulation in addition to a decorative attribution, textiles have become a medium to convey the creator's thoughts.

The idea practice is irrelative to the development of linear thinking; in this paper, the non-linear way of thinking will be applied to promote the methods of contextualizing the individual thinking process of students' design creations; whilst operating various fabric treatments, materials are arranged and combined in specific configurations or conceptual reorganisation. The visual lines, outlines or the patterns are continuously derived from these experiments, which could provide a possibility for creating textile works with rich expression and meaningful appearance.

With regard to the study cases of fabric creations and discussions of design thinking from practical works, 'the play itself may be an idea.' (De Bono, 1971, 98) The discovery of creativity may be obtained in the process of continuous experimentation, which allows the juxtaposition of opportunities to construct a series of things that have not been conceived and arranged and would not be easily constructed at the initial stage of the creative project; the spectators may be able to intervene at another level of observation. Besides, 'idea-sketching is a way of clarifying and recording the inner images (visualising ideas)' (McKim, 2002: 168).

To watch the imagination of material operations to expand the connection of different perspectives can also achieve similar results; by quickly recording various drawing and patching through the process of reading literary texts, text analysis, transformation of images, analyzing distinct perspectives, and developing ideas from the depicted inspiration in a fleeting moment. Accompanied by using familiar materials in daily life, experimenting with the characteristics of textiles may be used as a means to strengthen creative thinking, in order to explore the spatial appearances of materials and clues to the creator's inner perceptions. The use of 'play' makes familiar materials or sophisticated forms connecting with the creators themselves and other sources of special experiences may become shaped.

### **The fields and practices of initiating inspirations**

I. Assisting students in developing original ideas for their design projects. II. Ways of guiding the students' creative formations in relating the process of observation. The customised principles of design are loosened at the beginning of the study, which is replaced with the method of idea 'exploration'. In addition to the reading of narrative in relating local surroundings, well-prepared experimental materials will guide students to open up intuitive observations that may capture the ideas of creation and welcome the elements that can stimulate imagination to carry out the process of design making; finally, through discussion and sharing the implementation experiences among the peers, as well as reviewing the learning outcomes through experimenting displaying their works of results in an exhibition. The process is formed and summarized as follows:

## (i) To reveal a field of inspirations

Creative experiments in the early stage – searching for the sources of creativity, exploring landscape elements contained in the literary which comprehend messages of local environments of Taiwan. The studies at this stage are the basis of creative experiments; the selection of the texts to be read and the places to observe can be related to personal preferences, and will reflect the characteristics of the project in progress.

## (ii) To open up a way of viewing

An advanced stage of idea capturing – sketching. In order not to fall into repeated clichés and uninspired applications, students will be directed to draw sketches of the images and ideas which emerge from their textural reading. By this direction, the sketches can function as practice in gaining specific observations of intuitive perceptual experiences, so training the activation of imagination and arousing the hidden ideas in becoming visualised (McKim, 2002: 168).

## (iii) Exploring multiple ways of forming ideas of observations

Ideas in the developing stage –by utilizing materials of easy acquisition and simple manipulation. To apply methods that are easily approached such as drawings or paper works for instantly practices in order to gain the inspiration in the progresses and of that the ideas may be become contextualized. Taking advantage of the lightness, thinness and the easy folding of paper to study and to capture the transformed images or the multiple aspects of viewing dimensions; in this way the elements of the local environment may emerge from the progress of exploration.

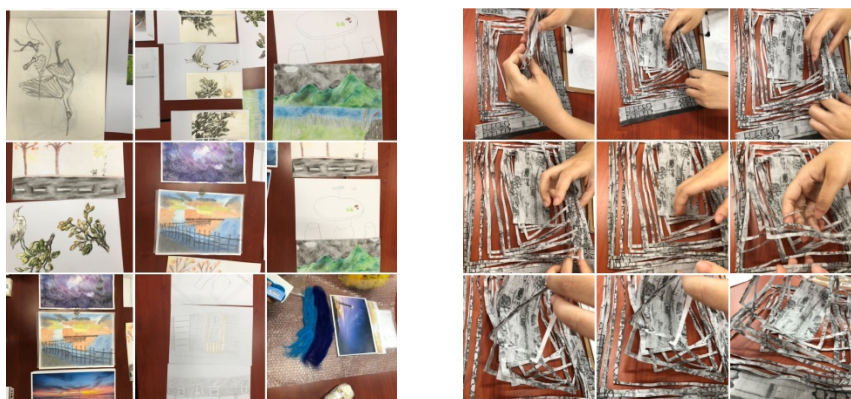


Figure 2 and 3: Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022.

Left: The stage of transforming literary reading into visual developments concerning local environments.

Right: Demonstrating the exploration methods of inspiration to students by means of plane drawings, paper cutting and manipulations.

## (iv) Watching the inner operations of working

The extension of the idea of the soft material – step into the experiments of textiles.

At this stage, students repeatedly practice how to classify and arrange the ideas of making, alongside organising images which are obtained from previous study and patching the ideas

of material manipulating by the guidance of tutors together with the student's self-intuition. Students spend time observing the new forms created by printing, sewing, tearing, softening or folding the fabrics in the experimental process. The studies will receive feedback at any time in connecting the creative works of each stage through manual operations related to inner thinking and practical works as outer operations.



Figure 4: Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022. Ideas forming through the experiments on textile surfaces through printing and material manipulations.

#### (v) The performance of the textiles

The performance of soft materials – to fulfill the proficiency in the manipulation of fabrics and carry out methods of practices when exhibiting the resulting works. At this stage, students confirm the theme of their respective studies and select textile materials for final development. Furthermore, progress will be directed into a completed presentation of fabric designs with regard to a professional expression of exquisite details of works and installations. By this experiment, the explanation of the respective ideas and the exploration of individual experiences concerning design creativity can be communicated through the expression of works in an installation.

In one of the examples, the gained ideas originate from reading the selected literary texts of *Yan Zhi Pen Di*, (胭脂盆地, Rouge Basin) (Jian, 2004) that is described as follows. Observing the bustling and colourful city of Taipei, was attracted by the colourful associations of 'rouge'; as the student read through the texts, a personal experiences and emotions expressed in words were reflected. This is an inclination to a sort of inner reflection, with observation of the interlacing images of space, time, place and seasons; through the brush strokes, the young artist tried to describe the complex emotions contained in the words.

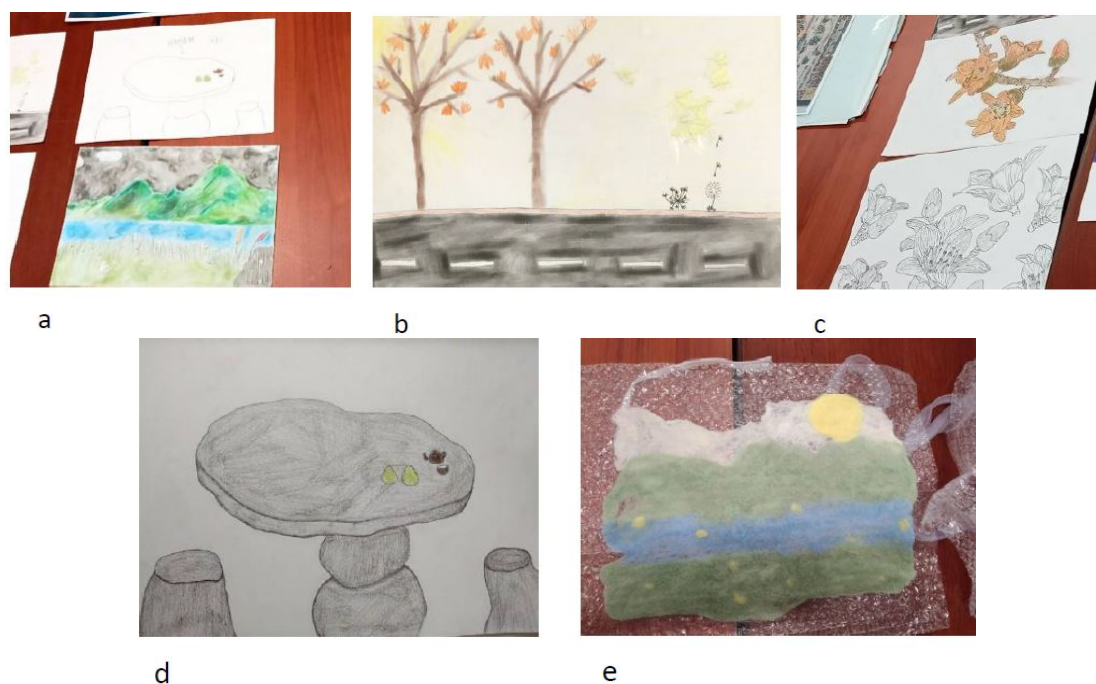


Figure 5: Cai Zhen-yan (蔡甄諺, 2022), creative stage of idea developments of student's experiments. The project was executed under the author's instruction.

The content of the above figures is explained as follows: a. The dialogue between time and space, sketching of stone table (above) and drawing of natural landscapes (below), in which the images gained from reading the literary texts; b. Drawing of imagination through text reading relating the environmental elements, in which the kapok trees are included; c. Application of environmental elements – taking kapok flowers as motifs for practising on pattern designs; d. Further developments of creative ideas – the stone table and stools are filled with the textures and colour of pencil; e. Creative developments concerning material manipulations – to apply ideas of the previous drawings of natural landscapes by experimenting on the felts.

Taking the city of the 'Rouge Colour' as the initial exploration for design creation, the above pictures are parts of the initial developments of a study case: As a dialogue in time and space, in a place where lay a stone table and stools in the description of the texts is a space for people to rest, which echoes the spatial images of people coming and gone by. At the beginning of the study, the student used pencils to draw; for further development, partially coloured on the shaddocks, teapot and teacup, where the color is occupied only a very small proportion in the drawing. Later on, the small yellow plastic tubes and white beads were attached onto the details of the picture for decoration. On the other vision of textual imaginations, environmental elements such as kapok trees and flowers were applied to become motif of pattern designs. This also echoes the seasonal scenes of the blooming of kapok flowers in a muggy and crowded city, as described in the literature reading.

At the beginning, the student simulated a situation and feeling in the literary texts, using pencil drawing for the outline of stone tables and stools; only the grapefruit and tea sets applied colours. In the development process, the student believed that the stone table and stools were the relics of Axi (a character in the texts); therefore, the non-colour drawing of pencil was applied, and there was a sense of contrast between the past and the present (Fig. 5-d). After discussions and suggestions from peers in the course, the stone table and stools

were applied gray with pencils thereafter, which appears a more stone-like texture. She was also satisfied with the effect of this development.



Figure 6: Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022, Cai Zhen-yan (蔡珍彦), 2022, student's works in the exhibition curated by the author.

Compared with the depictions of the city, another study of literary *Lights and Shadows Along the Mountains* is also a textual description, which is full of imageries.

On an ancient path, people used their feet to cross mountains and ridges, stepping their own shadows into the shadows of the mountains, and walked like this for more than 400 years.

On this ancient path, the purple butterflies the size of a palm spread their wings as beautiful as the lights and shadows in the moments, and flew through the years for an unknown amount of time...

The end of each route seems to be a beginning of the other route; the same for butterflies, when a space is closed, the other one will appear before one's eyes... (Guo, Han-chen, 2013)

A student, her experiments combined with imaginal scenes of ancient path, was inspired by the textual description, on which the people figures overlapping with purple butterflies which has special colours and textures. The depictions of images of aboriginal people on the pathways in an ancient scenery surrounded by the lights and shadows of their nature, which are very similar to the twilight. Such a design experiment is where the creative inspiration begins.



Figure 7: Ke, Bei-ling (柯蓓伶), creative stage of idea development of student's experiments. The project is executed under the author's instruction.



The above images show the practice works of combining the ancient pathway with people figures, overlapping with images of coloured and textured butterflies; and the further developments of the study of practicing embroidery applied images with textiles and threads.

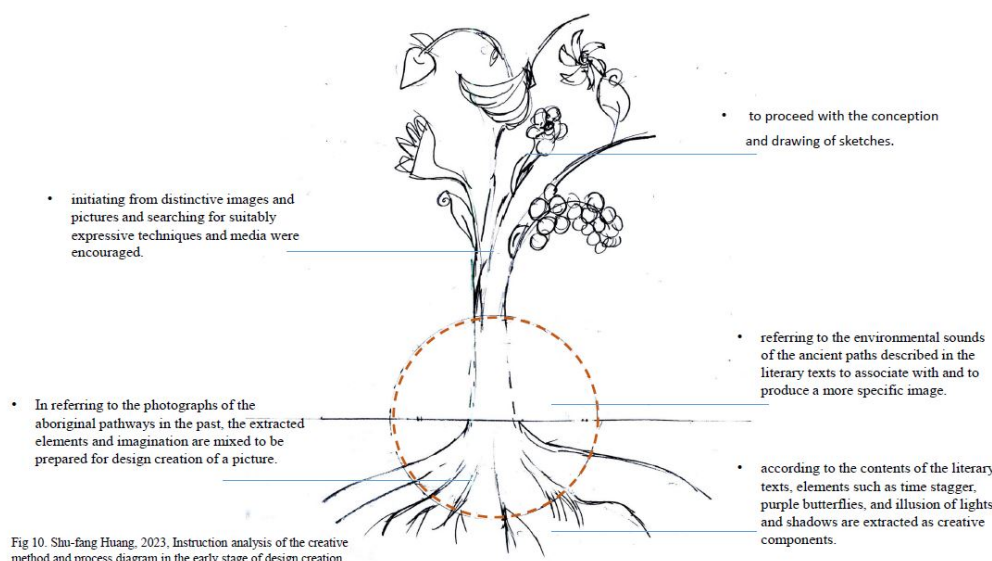


Fig 8. Shu-fang Huang, 2023, Instruction analysis of the creative method and process diagram in the early stage of design creation.

With regard to the instruction analysis of the creative method and process diagram in the early stage of design creation, the further explanation is as below; that, according to the contents of the literary texts, elements such as time stagger, purple butterflies, and illusion of lights and shadows are extracted as creative components. In referring to the photographs of the aboriginal pathways in the past, the extracted elements and imagination are mixed to be prepared for design creation of a picture. Furthermore the student refers to the environmental sounds of the ancient paths described in the literary texts to associate with and to produce a more specific image. The study was initiated from distinctive images and pictures and searching for suitably expressive techniques and media were encouraged, in order to proceed with the conception and drawing of sketches.

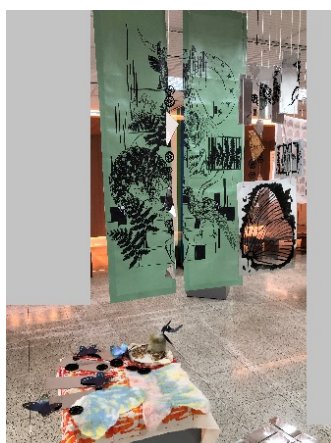


Fig.9. Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022, Ke, Bei-ling (柯蓓伶), 2022, student’s work in the exhibition curated by the author.

In addition to receiving guidance from the course instructor for the creative study, reciprocal learning through peer feedback is also essential to find diverse perspectives, which is significant in helping students in building up individual methods of design so as to widen their ways of viewing.

Under the guidance of this creative method of design, many students have constructed their own creative contexts. Most of them use literature reading and its environmental descriptions for the first time to draw forth ideas into developing concepts of creativities of textiles. However, the introduction of this creative method provides the active inspiration for students' projects that are generally agreed by the students who attend the course. One of them considered that the major inspiration to her is 'let me start to learn to think of the emotion provoked in the literary texts in relation to the creation of the work.' (2022, Questionnaire A) likewise, 'I can analyse the literary texts from different angle and then add my own ideas to proceed with creative work.' (2022, Questionnaire B) The other students show a careful thinking that 'to understand the author's ideas of emotion can be said to be a sort of cultivation of empathy; in the creative process [of mine], I often transformed my viewing into the author's perspective to sense the surrounding' (2022, Questionnaire C).

In addition, the students' mutual feedbacks in the course of study are important. For example; by referring to a no longer existing building in a business zone in Taichung (a city located in west-central Taiwan), it seems that the collected story was once blocked for some reasons in the process of a student's study. After several discussions with instructor and peers, her aspects of study and ways of experimenting practical works changed; along with her constantly accumulated ideas of study and continually examined possible methods through generating some manuscripts, drawings, collages, as well as recording in detail for reviewing creative processes, etc. In looking for accessible possibilities, the student finally developed an individual way of creation and her development become well performed, enabling peers to learn from each other:

The creation process of the theme of 'Dragon Heart Shopping Mall' (Long Xin Shang Chang, 龍心商場) is very attractive project. At the beginning, the creator shown to the audience mates the historical evolutions in the article is only some textual narratives; however she further searches for visual records, historical photos and street scenes. It has been a different experience. Every week, I listened to the peer sharing her story of Long-xin Shopping Mall. Its evolutionary process is like a scroll with the excavation of references by the creator; the viewers perceived the gradual unfolding processes of experiencing ups and downs. Initially from a mere description of texts in an article, the creator gradually collected and accumulated information, until she can present a complete appearance of the study project, and has found some scarce records such as images of tokens utilised in the old times, newspapers and magazines related to the stories of the department store in dates of prosperity, etc., I anticipate that the final work must be very meaningful. (Huang Ke-ying, 2022)

From the feedbacks of the survey respondents, it is clear that the guidance of design creativity given through practical studies of the students in the course allows the mutual disturbance and stimulation to be created through mutual communications among of textual reading, image creations, manipulations of materials and textures. Taking advantage of progress with each step of time, in the teaching field of design, this interactive process has created a sort of vividness, moving along with a lot of expectations.

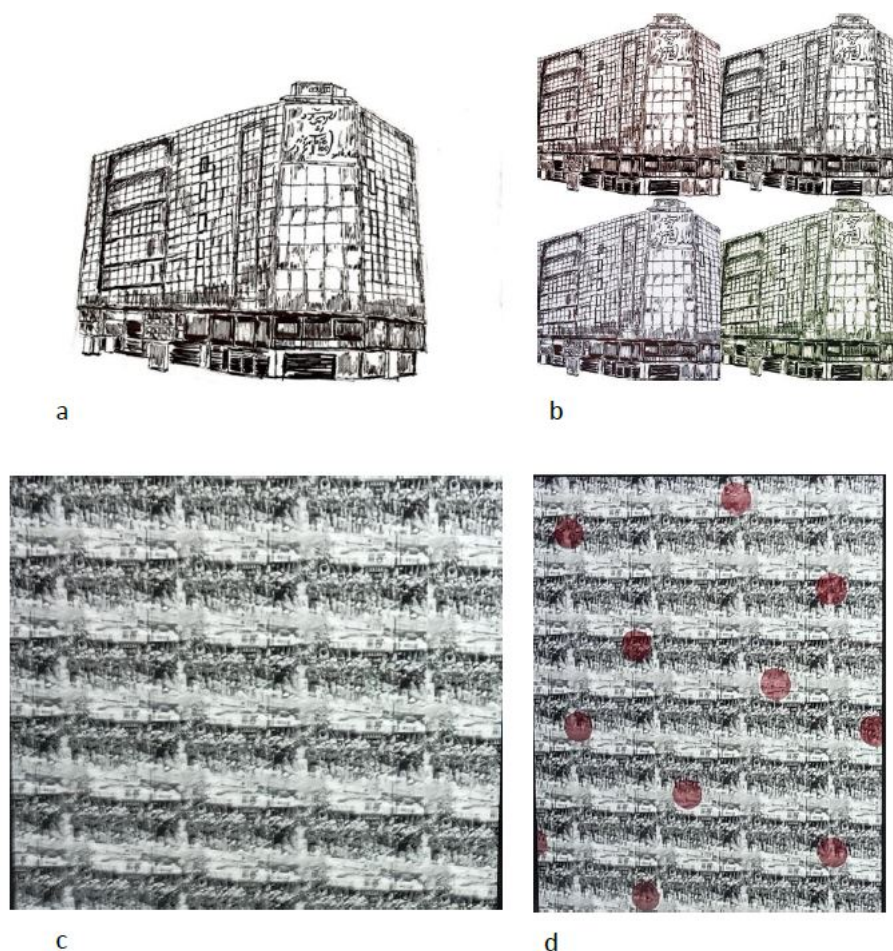


Fig.10. Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022, Huang, Qi-wen (黃琪雯), 2022, the processes of the student’s project.

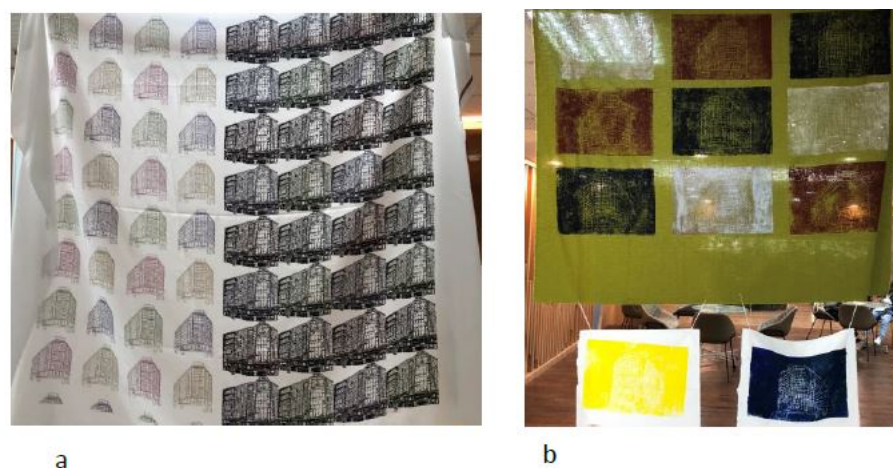


Fig.11. Shu-fang Huang (photographed), 2022, Huang, Qi-wen (黃琪雯), 2022, student’s works in the exhibition curated by the author.

**Conclusion: The possible contribution of the teaching achievements**

By practicing the application of methods revealing inner thinking of design and experimenting with expressions of multi-materials, allows students to explore the potential integration of the material expressions of textiles concerning literary descriptions of

environmental textures relating to the place of locals. By this way, the teaching project helps students explore the creativity of textiles and learn to build their individual methods of design studies.

Students implement an integrated theme-based design plan; in the course, they were encouraged to observe potential developments concerning the exploration in relation to the inspirations obtained from textual reading. Through practicing their workings, students learn respective methods of problem solving in the process of material making. Furthermore, through experimentation and presenting the completed works in an exhibition to review the results of study, the expected outcomes of design works and the developed design methods can be shared to the communities and other teaching applications concerning creative project of designs. The contributions of the teaching project can therefore be reviewed.

In addition, the perceptions, overlapping the unique imaginations, and scenes of the intersection of time and space form new possibilities through reading literary texts, it seems to be different from merely visiting the actual fields without sufficiently associating the textual explorations. Connecting the design developments of fashion materials through literature reading can inspire students to create more profound connotations of design, as well as an opportunity for promoting potential cultivation of identity imbedded in local places for the participants.

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## ***Study of Shared Heritage Through Frescoes on the Walls of Dera Baba Bir Singh***

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### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the shared heritage related to the traditions of Hinduism and Sikhism in the state of the Punjab, India. The coexistence or the intermingling of cultures has been preserved through the beautiful murals which adorn the walls of a shrine known as Gurudwara of Baba Bir Singh. The Gurudwara is located in the Naurangabad village on the Taran Taran-Goindwal Road in Punjab. This shrine was established by Baba Bir Singh (1764-1844). He was a pious saint and hundreds of devotees flocked his shrine on a daily basis to hear him preach the teachings of the Bhagats and the Gurus and the teachings from the Guru Granth Sahib. Enrolled in the army of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he took his dismissal and started to preach the religious tenets. The existence of murals makes this shrine very unique. The murals in the shrine fall in the category of Fresco since the paintings have been executed upon freshly laid wet lime plaster. Water is used as the vehicle for the dry-powder pigment to merge with the plaster, and with the setting of the plaster, the painting becomes an integral part of the wall. The frescoes are divided into the categories of Hinduism which is represented through the themes of the Puranas and the Ramayana and Sikhism which finds a visual representation through the Sikh Gurus. They are a medium to bring together the shared cultures which are also propagated through texts, oral cultures and visual flux.

Keywords: Baba Bir Singh, Frescoes, Murals, Heritage, Punjab, Culture

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## 1. Introduction

This paper explores the beautiful frescoes which adorn the walls of the Samadh of Baba Bir Singh in Naurangabad, located in Taran-Taran in the Amritsar district of the Punjab. This study aims at endorsing the idea of a shared heritage and culture which have been respected and followed by the people who are from the Punjab. The dera of Baba Bir Singh at Naurangabad was the dera (type of socio-religious organization in northern India) of one of the most notable saints from the Punjab. Born in the village of Gaggobua in district Amritsar.

## 2. Baba Bir Singh

He started his journey as a soldier in the army of the greatest ruler of the Punjab, the Sher-e-Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His Lahore court and darbar was the epicentre of all the activities in the Punjab. Baba Bir Singh was a part of some of the most important conquests which were carried out under the Maharaja's reign (some notable ones being at Kashmir and Peshawar). Eventually Baba Bir Singh or Babaji as he was more fondly called took leave from the army and decided to dedicate his life to the growth and the spread of Gurumat.



Figure 1: Baba Bir Singh

Sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there came a time when this dera [1] came to be as prominent as the city of Lahore. The dera is located in the village of Naurangabad and it lies to the south east of Taran-Taran. The dera came to be blessed by a trio of the three of the most notable saints namely Baba Bir Singh, Bhai Maharaj Singh, and Bhai Khuda Singh.

It has also been estimated that around 4,500 people were fed langar every day at this dera. A langar is a holy meal and the practice of serving this to the followers was introduced by the third Guru, Guru Amr Das. The Punjab during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh witnessed a glorious period and Baba Bir Singh had in fact witnessed it all. It was with the passing of the maharaja that Punjab plunged in dark times. There were quick successions and there were also conspiracies being hatched. The transfer of power was in not so able hands and from among these power-hungry people emerged a man Hira Singh Dogra. He was a part of the Lahore durbar and was also the Prime Minister.



The time saw some of the most prominent Sikh courtiers taking refuge with Baba Bir Singh at his fort at Naurangabad. These comprised the two surviving sons of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Prince Kashmira Singh and Prince Pashaura Singh. They were joined by Atar Singh Sandhanwalia and Jawahir Singh Nalwa (he was the son of Hari Singh Nalwa). The passage of time saw the Baba gather a volunteer army, which consisted of 1200 musket men and 3000 horse attendants.

The Dogra chief, the prime minister, took this as a challenge and threat to his position. It was then they decided to attack the fort. Their main aim in doing so they had planned on subduing Baba Bir Singh. The seat of the Baba became the centre of revolt against the Dogra dominance in the Punjab. Hira Singh Dogra on his part dispatched 20,000 men and 50 guns for attacking the fort at Naurangabad. Their intention in doing so was also to capture the two princes, Kahmira Singh and Pashaura Singh. He instigated his army by saying that the Baba had been joined by Atar Singh and this meant that they were joining forces with the British. This led to the army laying siege on the fort or his place of residence on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1844.

The followers at the fort were encouraged to carry out the preparations for the langar and that was to consist of Daal, Parshadey, Kheer and Degh. The followers were also instructed to sing the Gurbani and the Baba himself immersed himself in meditation while being in the presence of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The followers of the Baba were instructed to not retaliate as the attackers were their own brethren. The Guru and many of his disciples were killed in the attack. The force had been led by General Court and his army referred to him as the Guru Maar or the killer of the Guru. Hira Singh Dogra tried to flee Lahore with 4,000 of his most trusted men, but he eventually paid the price with his own life. He was killed by Sham Singh Attariwala and Jawahar Singh on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1844.

This brief description of Baba Bir Singh of Naurangabad helps one in appreciating the compassion, quality of soul and head. After having introduced Baba Bir Singh, it's time to explore and explain the beautiful and precious murals & frescoes.

### 3. Frescos and Murals in The Dera

**Mural:** is any piece of graphic artwork that is painted or applied directly to a wall, ceiling or other permanent substrate. Mural techniques include fresco, mosaic, graffiti and marouflage [2][3].

**Fresco:** Fresco (plural frescos or frescoes) is a technique of mural painting executed upon freshly laid wet lime plaster. Water is used as the vehicle for the dry-powder pigment to merge with the plaster, and with the setting of the plaster, the painting becomes an integral part of the wall. The type of art on the walls and ceiling of the Dera of Baba Bir Singh fall in the category of Frescoes.

A large collection of ancient paintings and also one of the oldest paintings of India can be seen at this dera. There are frescoes in the dera which are based on the themes of Ramayana, Shri Krishna, Bhagwat Gita, Saint Kabir and Guru Nanak.

#### 3.1 God Hanuman

The legendary Valmiki wrote the Ramayana. It has 24,000 couplets, 48,000 lines. The text focuses on the supreme deity Shri Vishnu in his avatar of Rama. It has the honour of being

called the first poem of Sanskrit literature. One of the most popular versions which are available today are by Maharishi Valmiki and Sant Tulsidas which is called 'Ramcharitramanas'. The Ramayana is divided into seven khandas (sections). One of the primary characters who have played a pivotal role in the Ramayana is the God Hanuman (Figure 2).

Hanuman is one of the most popular Gods in the Hindu pantheons. His role as the companion and firm devotee of lord Ram has been beautifully highlighted in the epic of the Ramayana. Born to Anjini and the king of the monkeys 'Kesari' he was also after his mother known as Anjaneya. There are a number of stories which are associated with him. One of the most popular ones being of him leaping into the sky to grab the sun as he confused it to be a delicious yellow mango.

Anjani would fetch fruits for him every morning which he would devour with a lot of happiness. This one time when his mother was away, he woke up hungry and looking at the rising sun, he leapt towards it and decided to enjoy the fruit. The king of the Gods Indra, saw him coming and he decided to chase him away while he was seated on his elephant, the four headed Airavat elephant.



Figure 2: The God Hanuman

In this chase he was injured with Indra's weapon the 'vajra' and that is the reason he is called Bajrang Bali (this implies that the God is as strong and powerful as the vajra of Indra). He was rescued by the God of wind who in turn locked himself with Hanuman in a cave which led to the earth being without wind. The earth became devoid of wind and the Gods pleaded with the God of wind to start flowing again. This then led the Gods to grant boons to Anjaneya and he became all powerful and strong.

As the devotee of lord Ram his obeisance is worth quoting. As an ardent believer of Lord Ram, he did everything he could to support his master. From inquiring about Ram's wife Sita, who had been abducted by Ravana (the king of Lanka) to actually fighting in the battle,

he was always there with his master. There was also this one time when he had acquired the Sanjeevini Booti to cure Ram's younger brother Lakshman. He had gotten the whole mountain on which the booti was to be found.

His devotion and submission are inspirational and the Hanuman Chalisa which has 40 couplets and is dedicated to him is said to have powers which cure people from illness and help them deal with their problems.

### 3.2 Raja Janak

Another very important personality from the Ramayana is Raja Janak (Figure 3). He was the father of Mata Sita who was the wife of the prince of Ayodhya (the son of king Dashrath) and her husband Ram eventually went on to become the king of Ayodhya. Raja Janak is also referred to as Karm Yogi. Raja Janak's actual name was Sirdhavaja.

There was a time when he did not have any offspring. It was then that he discovered a girl, from among the ploughed fields. He had a desire that he wanted to bring her up as his own. There was then a celestial voice which helped him in sealing his decision.



Figure 3: Raja Janak

The father and daughter shared a beautiful relationship and this is why Sita was also referred to as Janaki. The city of Janakpur in Nepal is also named after him. Raja Janak also is a fit example of the idea of living with detachment while living in this world.

### 3.3 Samundra Manthan

The painting under study is a depiction from an episode that finds a mention in some of the most important Puranas notably, the Bhagavata Purana [4], the Vishnu Purana. The Bhagavata Purana has over 18,000 Sanskrit verses and is divided into twelve large sections of books. The fresco is being discussed below:

Once Indra the king of God's, came across a sage by the name of Durvasa. The sage offered him a garland which he accepted. But he put the garland on the trunk of the elephant on which he was riding. The fragrance of the garland was irritating for the elephant and he threw it on the ground and stamped his foot on it. This enraged the rishi as this garland was to be treated as prasada as it was the dwelling of Sri (fortune). The sage Durvasa was famous all over for his cursing. He cursed Indra and all the Devas (Gods) to be bereft of all their strength, energy and fortune.

In the battles which followed this episode, the Devas were defeated and the demons or Asuras who were led by King Bali gained control of the universe. It was now that the gods turned to Lord Brahma, who's the creator. He is said to be a God who has the capability of giving specific boons. He directed them to his counterpart in the trinity namely Lord Vishnu. On his advice the gods extended a hand of friendship towards the demons, and once they have secured the semblance of friendship, both the groups should go ahead and churn the ocean. This was to be done so as to achieve the nectar of immortality or Amrit.



Figure 4: Samudra Manthan

The two groups of the devas and the demons got together and on Lord Shiva's advice they made the 'Mandar Parvat' as the churning rod and the serpent Vasuki, which Siva wears as an ornament around his neck was used as the rope. The mountain of Mandar is symbolic of

our mind (manas). Its stability according to thinkers represents the determination of our resolve.

The next problem to emerge in front of the gods and the demons was that the mountain was unstable and it was sinking in the ocean. It was then that Lord Brahma mentioned to Lord Vishnu that the time had come for him to take the *Kurma* avatar, which is his second incarnation. He took the form of a turtle and the entire weight of the mountain was balanced on its back. The tortoise here represents the state of *Sadhna* where all sense organs are withdrawn and it is with such support that the mind progresses in *Sadhna*. *Vasuki* symbolizes desire and its slumber indicates that only when all our desires go to sleep, can any spiritual progress be said to have really begun. Now the churning process was to commence.

Vishnu accompanied by the gods walked towards the serpent's mouth. An interesting and a very important observation to be made here is that, Lord Vishnu was bearing the weight of the mountain in the form of his avatar and was also leading the Gods. Suresh Narain and B. K. Chaturvedi in their book, '*The Diamond Book of Hindu Gods and Goddesses*' [5], while discussing Lord Ganesha mentions that Vishnu's incarnation does not mean that he ceases to exist in his normal manifestation. He can co-exist at several places and in several forms.

However, on the insistence of the demons the gods took the end of the serpent and the demons took the mouth. The churning of the ocean resulted in some poisonous fumes issuing from *Vasuki*'s nostrils. From amongst the products that came out from the churning of the ocean, the first was the hot and deadly poison *Halahala*. Seeing this the gods and the demons were getting restless and it was then that Lord Shiva came to their rescue. He took the poison in his palms and drank it. With him the snakes also took part of the poison and it was then that he blessed the snakes that from that time forward their worship will also be his. It was then that his consort *Parvati*, stepped into the water to stop the poison from going down his throat. The *Halahala* resembled a blue ornament and it was now that Lord Brahma said that from now on Shiva will also be referred to as *Neel-Kanth*. *Parvati*'s stopping the poison in his throat was an indication towards a wife's love and also because *Narayana* or Vishnu resides in Shiva's heart [6].

Shiva's partaking of the poison finds a mention in the *Bhagavata Purana*: 'Compassionate ones generally undertake a lot of trouble to relieve the others of their suffering. However, this is no pain at all, because relieving others of their suffering is the highest worship of God.' The next to emerge was *Kamdhenu*. This cow is known for providing necessary materials for Vedic sacrifices (milk, ghee etc.). Then came the beautiful horse *Vachaihsravasand*, it was radiant like the white moon. The next to come from the churning was *Airavat*, the majestic elephant. As the demons had already taken the horse, it was now the turn of the Gods to procure an item and so *Indra*, the king of Gods, took *Airavat* as his vehicle. The next to emerge from the churning was the jewel of pure consciousness and it was *Kaustubha*. Thereafter came the wish fulfilling tree of *Parijat*. The sources like the *Puranas* which mention Lord Shiva's story have mentioned that it was through this wish fulfilling tree that *Parvati* had got her daughter *Ashoksundari*.

Then the most beautiful and talented women also known as the *Apsaras* emerged from the churning. *Vishvakarma* gave them splendid ornaments and Lord Brahma a lotus. The next to emerge from the churning of the ocean was Goddess *Lakshmi*. Her coming endowed the gods and everyone present with all their material wealth. She on her part chose Lord Vishnu as her consort. Next emerged a girl with lotus eyes. She was *Varuni* and was taken by the demons.

The last one to appear was Dhanvantari, the founder of Ayurveda. In his hand he had a vase brimming with the nectar of immortality. The texts mention that as soon as the demons saw this vase, they broke the agreement of equally dividing all products. They took it from Dhanvantari and began quarrelling amongst themselves as to who would drink it first. They are said to have taken it away and fought amongst themselves and the Gods having no alternative then again approached Lord Vishnu for assistance.

It was then that Lord Vishnu took the form of Mohini. She was a beautiful woman and the demons on seeing her momentarily forgot about their arguments. She asked the two groups to assemble in a big hall. They were made to sit in two rows. She began feeding the nectar or *amrit* to the Gods first. The demon Rahu however disguised himself as a God and seated himself between the gods of Sun and Moon. His partaking of the amrit exposed him and Lord Vishnu immediately cut his head with a discus or Sudarshana Chakra. The torso where the amrit had not reached fell to the ground and his head became immortal. The head came to be called Rahu. The torso later due to a boon came to be called Ketu.

### 3.4 Saint Kabir

Known for pioneering the unique saint tradition in India, Kabir lived in the fifteenth century. Kabir was one of the most famous disciples of the popular saint poet Ramananda. According to K. S. Narang [7], he was born in 1398, and there has been a controversy over whether he was a Hindu or a Muslim. There are different traditions which have been associated with his birth. His boyhood days were spent in Banaras. His time was devoted towards the chanting of the name of Rama. He was married to Loi (who also finds a depiction in this particular fresco) and she bore him two children Kamal and Kamli. He condemned the evils of the caste system, the rituals, the dogmas, pilgrimages etc. He asked his followers to purify their minds and he preached that God is not found in the temples. He is omnipresent and can be viewed with the purity of one's heart.



Figure 5: Fresco showing Kabir and his wife Mata Loi

Mai Loi and Kabir in Figure 5 are shown weaving. She is spinning on a charkha and they are spinning the cloth material of Khadi.

A living legend of spiritual achievement and social renaissance he hailed from the Julaha community. That was his occupation and with it he fended for himself and his family. Kabir is often referred to as saint, but he as M D Thomas in Sufism and Bhakti Movement Eternal Relevance [8] has written was not a traditional saint who lived on the mercy of the others around him.

### 3.5 Baba Nanak

The fresco (Figure 6) is a visual depiction of Baba Nanak and his followers. Seated in between in the yellow-coloured robe is Baba Nanak. His white beard is a classic indication towards his later years as a preacher at Kartarpur. That was a town which he had set up along with his family and it was there that the tradition of langar had actually started. Baba Nanak, one learns that he was married to Mata Sulakhni who was the daughter of Moolchand Khatri who was from the village of Pakhore near Gurdaspur. Soon after they got married, they were blessed with their elder son who was Baba Sri Chand and then they had their second son Lakshmi Das.

Nanak had taken up occupation in Sultanpur which was his sister's married home and it was there that he was working for the nawab and he had had an encounter with the divine. It was while he had gone for his morning ablutions that he had a call from God and that divine revelation changed the course of his life. This fresco also indicates a man holding a musical instrument which is the Rubab. The man holding it is Guru Nanak's most trusted companion Bhai Mardana. He was the Guru's friend from his hometown of Talwandi and he had joined Nanak at Sultanpur. He gave the tunes to his compositions and those made the followers get attracted towards them.

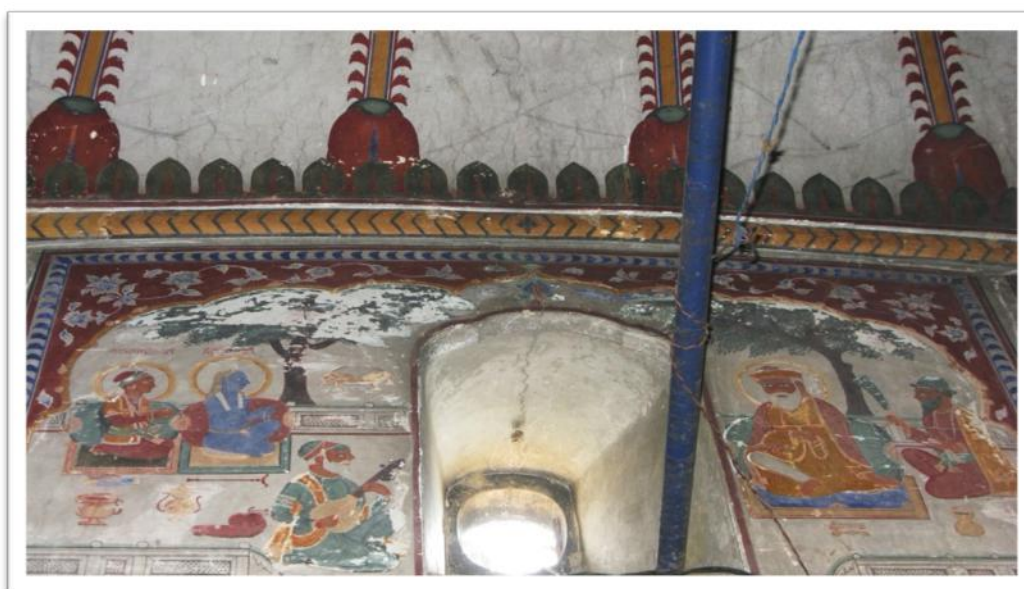


Figure 6: Guru Nanak Dev's Sabha

The man sitting behind Baba Nanak is Bhai Bala. He was another trusted companion of the Guru. A Hindu Jat, he accompanied Baba Nanak and Bhai Mardana on their travels. He finds

a mention in a Janam Sakhi (the texts dedicated to the life and teachings of Guru Nanak) which is dedicated in his name and is called the 'Bhai Bala Janam Sakhi'. The Janam Sakhi mentioned that he travelled with the duo all over India and died at Khadur Sahib sometime in his late seventies in the year 1544.

The fresco also shows a man who is sitting across from the Guru and is only wearing a loin cloth which covers the lower part of his body. That is the artist's imagination of the Guru in conversation with his elder son Baba Sri Chand (1494-1643). He was a deeply spiritual man and upon his father's return to Kartarpur he made it evident to Baba Nanak that although he was deeply spiritual his inclination was deeply rooted in the traditions of the yogis. The father was well aware that his son would tread on the path of the yogis and that he himself would become an ascetic. As is known the Guru chose Guru Angad (formerly Bhai Lehna). The primary reason for this was also his son's inclination towards extreme asceticism. Baba Sri Chand did take up that journey and went on to lay the foundation for his sect which came to be called the Udasi sect. Udasi refers to a 'detached journey.'

### **3.6 Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas**

This fresco is the imagination of the artist about the third Sikh Guru, Guru Amar Das (5th May 1479-1st September 1574) and his successor, the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das (24th September 1534-1st September 1581). They were also related as father-in-law and son-in-law respectively. Guru Ram Das was married to the daughter of Guru Amar Das, Bibi Bhani. Guru Amar Das had chosen Ram Das (he was formerly known as Bhai Jetha) and how this alliance was fixed and what their beautiful relationship between a Guru and a devotee and a future successor was all about is being discussed below.

Born in 1534 in Lahore to Hari Das and Anup Devi, Ram Das was a boy who had many striking similarities with the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak. As a young boy he sought the company of holy men and he also knew the shlokas by heart [9]. Guru Ram das was a seller of parched grams and he is also said to be an orphan, who lost his parents at the age of seven and was brought up by his maternal grandmother (who got him to Basarke, where he came in contact with the third Guru. There are other sources which mention that he was brought up in a well-known neighbourhood of Lahore called the Chuna Mandi.



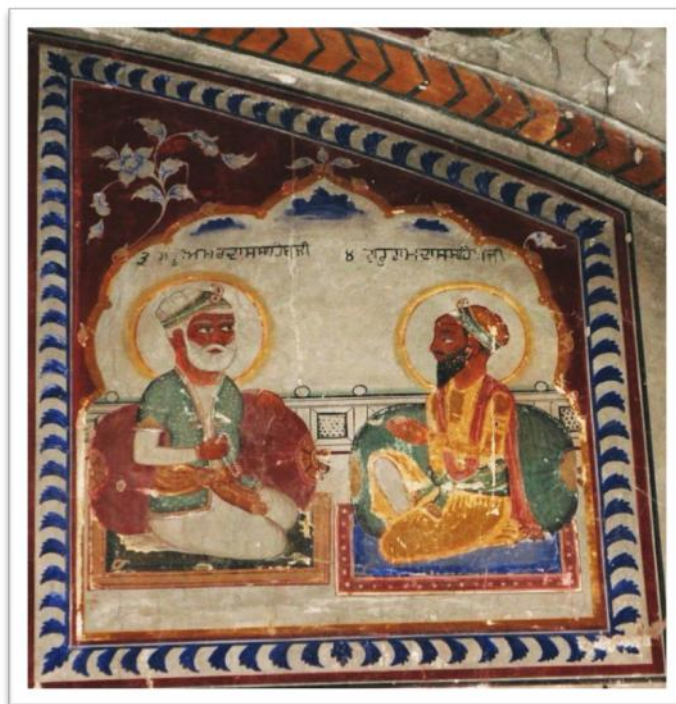


Figure 7: The third Sikh Guru Amar Das and the fourth Sikh Guru Ram Das in conversation.

The third Guru's popularity was soaring and he came to have many followers in Lahore as well. Once there was a jatha (group of people) who were going to Goindwal to seek the blessings of Guru Amar Das. The people had shared with Jetha about the great dera. The devotees who came to the dera, eventually left but Jetha stayed back.

It was while he was there, that the Guru's youngest daughter Bibi Bhani became of a marriageable age. Her mother and the Guru's wife, Mata Mansa Devi was at that time hoping to find a suitable match for their daughter, and it was during once such conversation with the third Guru, that he had suggested the name of Jetha as a suitable match for their daughter. Guru Amar Das asked him to travel back to Lahore, and seek the permission of his parents. Bibi Bhani and Bhai Jetha were then married. Post his wedding also, he continued to serve the Guru selflessly and tirelessly. Jetha was also deputized to be a representative of the Guru at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar [10].

Guru Ram Das was made the fourth Guru in 1574 and he was a Guru for seven years. and it was during his reign as a Guru that he founded and strengthened the Manji system. He regulated the collection from the offerings and for this purpose he appointed territorial deputies who were known as masands. He composed some of the most important hymns and some of them were exclusively for the marriage and childbirth rituals. The pre wedding ceremonies he composed were called the 'ghorian' as he felt that the rustic folklores which people sang earlier were not suitable for the Sikhs. He was also the composer of the marriage rites which are called 'lavan' and those have been composed in 'Raag Suhi'. Another contribution of the Guru was his hard work in bridging the gap between the elder son of Guru Nanak, Baba Sri Chand (the founder of the Udasi tradition, a religious sect of ascetic sadhus centred in northern India) and the Sikhs.

#### **4. Conclusions**

1. The mural paintings in dera of Baba Bir Singh have been made using a technique that qualifies them to be called frescoes.
2. The technique of visual flux has been used for preserving historical facts.
3. Some of the precious murals in the dera have been studied and the related historical facts contained in each of the frescoes have been interpreted.
4. The interpretation of frescoes establishes the fact that the technique of visual flux is a very powerful way of preserving history.
5. The close examination of the frescoes indicates that these are based on the Pahari School of Art (Paintings which originated in the hill states of India).
6. The frescoes discussed in this paper belong to the themes of Ramayana, Puranas, Guru Nanak Dev etc.
7. The interpretation compares well with the written material available elsewhere and the orally available account of the events.
8. The biggest advantage of preserving the facts of history through murals is that it provides space for individual interpretations while written texts are always rigid.

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## *The Play of Contraries in Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis"*

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### **Abstract**

*Persepolis*, a graphic memoir in two volumes by Iranian writer, filmmaker and graphic artist Marjane Satrapi, is the most subversive of contemporary memoirs that defy easy categorization. Unlike other Iranian memoirs riding the wave of popularity following the Islamic Revolution, it stands out as a unique mix of the contraries. The proposed paper examines the ways in which the graphic novel reconciles the seemingly opposite ideas of the popular and the literary, the comic and the serious, the East and the West. Comic, presumably a naive form of literature meant for the amusement of children has been yoked to the serious purpose of asserting the identity of Persian people. In addition, it exposes and mocks the dominant religious narrative of the theocratic Islamic regime aptly represented by its black-and-white graphic images. *Persepolis I* makes use of a child narrator to recount the events following the establishment of the Islamic Republic. It allows the reader a fresh perspective and brings out the absurdity of the regime's decrees. For example, it undermines the veiling ordinance of 1980 by showing young schoolgirls using their headscarves in other ways that are contrary to their supposed purpose to guard female modesty. *Persepolis II* deals with Satrapi's stay in Austria and her return to Iran. Again, her experience in Austria belies the notion of a "liberal progressive" West. *Persepolis* is rich and multi-layered and draws its strength from its play of contraries. Its slippages speak volumes about the complex political situation of post-revolutionary Iran.

Keywords: Graphic, Memoir, Persian, Women, Islamic Revolution

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## Introduction

The Iranian memoir is the most popular form of literature exposed to a wide readership and critical acclaim in the first decade of the 21st century. Life narratives are being written more often, with greater confidence by Iranian diasporic writers with the Western reader in mind. These have stimulated a lot of critical responses as well. Like reality TV, they are experiencing a new high since the Iranian revolution of 1979, observes journalist Nahid Mozaffari. The new wave of autobiographical writing by diasporic Iranian women has witnessed the publication of such works as *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi, *To See and See Again: A Life in Iran and America* by Tara Bahrapour, *Saffron Sky: A Life Between Iran and America* by Gelareh Assayesh, *Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing up Iranian in America* by Firoozeh Dumas, *Journey from the Land of No: A Girlhood Caught in Revolutionary Iran* by Roya Hakakian, *Lipstick Jihad* by Azadeh Moaveni and *Persepolis* and *Embroideries* by Marjane Satrapi.

Most of the Iranian memoirs are rooted in a turbulent period of Iranian history and culture, that is Islamic Revolution of 1979, with the US “war on terror” looming large on the horizon. Invariably, all of them address the issue of the institutionalization of patriarchy following the revolution and its implications for women. However, *Persepolis* beats most of them in popularity except Azar Nafisi’s *Reading Lolita in Tehran* which panders to the Western hegemony and upholds the superiority of the Western canonical texts, notes Nima Naghibi. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines comic books as a bound collection of comic strips, usually in chronological sequence, typically telling a single story or a series of different stories. “The comic book art form consists of sequential juxtaposed panels that represent individual scenes. Panels are often accompanied by text and dialogue in the way of text bubbles which is emblematic of the comics art form” (Comics, Graphic Novels, 2023).

*Persepolis* is unique as it employs a child narrator to recount the events of Iranian history in a comic form. “Probably due to a strict continuous censorship policy, Iran has not produced much in modern forms of comics and graphic narratives since 1979. The few “Iranian” graphic narratives were published by exiled Iranians and Iranian-Americans. The world success of Satrapi’s *Persepolis* deeply irritated the Iranian government and was immediately censored in Iran” (Reyns-Chikuma, Ben Lazreg, 2017, p.764). Satrapi is a filmmaker, graphic artist and writer of Iranian origin who chose to stay back in Paris in view of the curtailment of the civic and artistic liberties in Iran following the Revolution. Her memoir recounts the trauma of exile and alienation within her homeland. Satrapi, an adolescent at the time of the revolution, left for Europe as she realized the precariousness of life for women in Iran. Marjane Satrapi can be rightly called the daughter of the revolution as she attempts to make sense of a regime ruled by clerics and fundamentalists, and its implications for Iranian women. The memoir reacts to the retrogressive moves of the totalitarian government regarding the observation of gender segregation and veiling. The paper undertakes an examination of the form and content of *Persepolis I* and *II* (2003 and 2004) with an aim to unveil the play of many contrasts that form the basic structure of the memoir.

## Islamic Revolution

*Persepolis* laments the loss of a bright, dynamic and progressive culture to the Islamic Republic that acted as a catalyst for the memoir. Iran is a country of paradoxes. Its politically charged climate continuously stimulates cultural and intellectual churning. International brands and turbaned clerics vie with each other for attention on the streets of Tehran. The

history of Iran is narrated as a fall into colonialism followed by anticolonialism and women seem to stand on the fulcrum of this see-saw. Before the 1930s, women's status was seen as the symbol of the modernity of a new nation whereas, in the second period, which is after the 1970s, it symbolized the modernity of the monarch and his progressive benevolence towards women. The mass unveiling order by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1936 was the culmination of Shah's attempts to westernize Iranian society. The act was aimed at subordinating the mosque. Literacy and job opportunities for women increased. They were allowed to vote in 1963. It brought women into the open from behind "walls and veils." Pahlavi's mindless mimicry of Western modernity called *Westoxification* (Gharbzadegi) derogatorily, was criticised by one and all. The unveiling came to be equated as a sign of imperialism and a threat to Iranian identity. According to Milani, she (the Westernized Iranian woman) was accused of "national and sexual infidelity". Shah's ideas of reform imposed from above enraged those marginalized by modernization and eventually precipitated into the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The Shah of Iran "a puppet of England" was dethroned and exiled. It was a watershed moment for women in the history of Iran. The regime sent out contradictory messages to women. They were encouraged to participate in the rebuilding of Iran and Islamist movements after the revolution but their legal rights were severely curtailed, their movement restricted and their freedom clipped. They were expected to be content with their family life. Mandatory veiling was projected as the republic's attempt to protect the faith and dignity of women.

Within a month of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini exhorted women to wear an Islamic form of modest dress. This led to demonstrations, but the regime assured women that the government was not willing to impose veiling and that Khomeini only believed in guiding women. These justifications notwithstanding, veiling was re-institutionalized slowly and diplomatically and by 1980, it was made mandatory in all public offices. This step could only evoke disorganized resistance and ultimately the regime went on to make veiling compulsory for all women in 1983. Under Iran's supreme religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini's leadership, a Sharia-based law was implemented according to which western-wear, alcohol, partying and intermingling of sexes were prohibited. Veiling and gender segregation in public were made mandatory. The transgressors were persecuted, jailed, flogged and humiliated. They were treated like criminals for wearing makeup in public or violating the obligatory dress code. Their criminalization was turned into a spectacle to instil fear in those women who did not conform to the Islamic Republic's gendered disciplinary apparatus and stepped out of its firmly guarded boundaries. Thus, women have been the symbols of colonialism and anti-colonialism, modernity and tradition, revolution and counter-revolution in the recent history of Iran. Iran was converted into a virtual Islamic theme park following the revolution, quips expatriate Iranian Azadeh Moaveni in her exilic memoir *Lipstic Jihad* (2005).

### **Transgressing boundaries**

*Persepolis* transgresses many boundaries of genre and defies easy categorization. It is a disruptive text on many levels. Though narrated from a child's perspective, its intent is serious which is the assertion of the Iranian identity. It forms part of the resistance literature produced by Iranian women in reaction to the socio-political upheavals in their native country. They re-narrativize the past and present to the world images of the "self" contrary to the constructed identities of the Persian women. They also propose to purge the image of Iran in the West as a terror land. *Persepolis* particularly destabilizes the distinction between the East and the West, the literary and the popular, the highbrow and lowbrow, the comic and the

serious. Nima Naghibi remarks, “This unique combination produces a text that regularly juxtaposes the familiar with the alien” (2005, p. 224).

### **Shattering Stereotypes**

The subject in *Persepolis* transgresses many boundaries – spatial, cultural, and personal. Satrapi’s conduct is in sharp contrast with the popular image of a Persian woman who is perceived as shy and docile. In general, Muslim women are portrayed as veiled, vulnerable, and victimized by Muslim men. Nahid Mozaffari in her review of Satrapi’s memoir observes that the model of a shy, pure and acquiescent Persian girl did not stand up to the test of real life and real women that populate Iran and these memoirs (2006, p. 527). Her women are always trespassing in the designated spaces. Satrapi herself neither conforms to the cultural expectations of society nor the Islamic regime’s orders. *Persepolis* challenges the stereotype of a veiled Muslim woman happy in her domestic domain. To represent the two contrasting stereotypes of women, she creates black and white/ Eastern and Western sides of the same person. Satrapi grows up in a liberal atmosphere, feeds on popular culture and rebels just like any other teenager in the West. Satrapi heightens the contrast by using extreme colours for the Eastern and Western stereotypes of women. She does not fit into the Western notion of a pious veiled Muslim woman either. She states in the foreword to the memoir that her aim was to correct the overwhelming image of “women in chadors and guys with guns” in Iran as she claims this image of Iran is far from the truth.

Satrapi rebels against the diktats of the Islamic Republic and directly clashes with the authorities. Such behaviour was conveniently termed as Westernized and met with disapproval and punitive measures by the authorities. “Westernized was a convenient label for any female behaviour that defied oppressive tradition,” observes Moaveni (2005, p. 200). Satrapi belongs to the generation of Iranian intellectual women who faced the loss of freedom and imposition of a rigid Islamic code on their being at a critical point in their lives but manages to laugh at the hypocrisy of the regime, and the schizophrenic way of life in Iran. “Her books are enjoyable, although that is certainly a strange word to use to describe books that tell about murders, torture, and the repression of an entire population, particularly women. But Satrapi has such a sly sense of humour that she makes her points with bitter laughter in the background. That's the only way to bear oppression, she says in some of her graphic stories” (Anne Douglas 2005, p. 63).

As the veil has been inextricably associated with women’s empowerment and disempowerment, it receives a special mention in the graphic memoir as a separate chapter. It has always been the bone of contention between modern Muslim women and authorities and also fields modern Muslim women against traditional Muslim women. This obsession with veiling has been justifiably represented in the text. For Satrapi, mandatory veiling was not a return to Islamic identity as the Republic would have them believe. “I really didn’t know what to think about the veil. Deep down I was very religious but as a family, we were very modern and avant-garde (2008, p. 6).” The Republic reinforced the image of a vulnerable and bashful woman by glorifying the veil. Its slogan – a woman modestly covered is like a pearl within a shell – was a strong reminder of this image.

Satrapi begins her memoir by mocking the sudden imposition of the veil by the regime in the very first chapter “The Veil”. She undermines the veiling ordinance of 1980 by showing young schoolgirls using their headscarves as skipping ropes, as a harness, as a monster mask and in other ways that are contrary to their supposed purpose to guard female modesty (Fig



1). As a student at the art college, she, like other Iranians, learns to decipher the female shape even with their veils on. In the chapter “The Convocation”, she says, “With practice, even though they were covered from head to foot, you got to the point where you could guess their shape, the way they wore their hair and even their political opinions. Obviously the more a woman showed, the more progressive and modern she was (2008, p. 296).” This use of bathos and ironic tone has been maintained throughout the comic.



Figure 1: The Veil

### East and West

*Persepolis* constantly undermines the over-determined categories of the East and the West. The tension between the Eastern and the Western ethos, culture and literary forms is maintained throughout the text. Satrapi shows that the concept of a pure Persian identity and a pure Islamic identity are equally problematic and illusory. Women like Satrapi who inhabit cultural borderlands do not perceive the “Western influence” as a threat to their identity. Their narratives trace the appropriation of the feminist and nationalist identity in Iran. Satrapi claims to have a multicultural identity and refuses to accept the East-West dichotomy. Her graphics reveal how East and West merge in her persona. “*Persepolis* brings East and West together, often in ways that underscore the tensions and contradictions such unions inevitably entail,” remarks Naghibi (2005, 240). She professes her love for her country without feeling threatened by the Western influence. Satrapi is not sorry for her “Western behaviour and appearance.” Her parents are seen wearing Western clothes in *Persepolis*. They are crazy about Pink Floyd – an English rock band and Bee Gees – a pop music group.

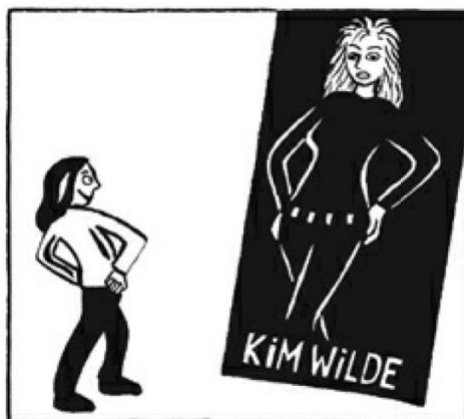


Figure 2: Kim Wilde

Satrapi's consumption of the American punk culture and emulation of its pop star Kim Wilde contrasts sharply with the state agenda of reinstating Iran as an Islamic country. The polar opposite ways of looking at the East and the West are visually complemented through black-and-white graphics. Marji copies Kim Wilde's pose but the two images have a marked difference (Fig 2). Marji has black hair and Kim Wilde is blonde. The image of a veiled woman in the beginning of chapter "The Veil" and that of a blonde in the chapter "Kim Wilde" also betray the parallel-contrast effect.

In the chapter "The Veil", there are two sides to Marjane's self. One half of her is veiled against an Oriental pattern and the other half of her is wearing a Western outfit against the backdrop of symbols of science and technology representing the West. The contrasting images of Eastern Marji and Western Marji recur in many frames throughout the text (Fig 3).

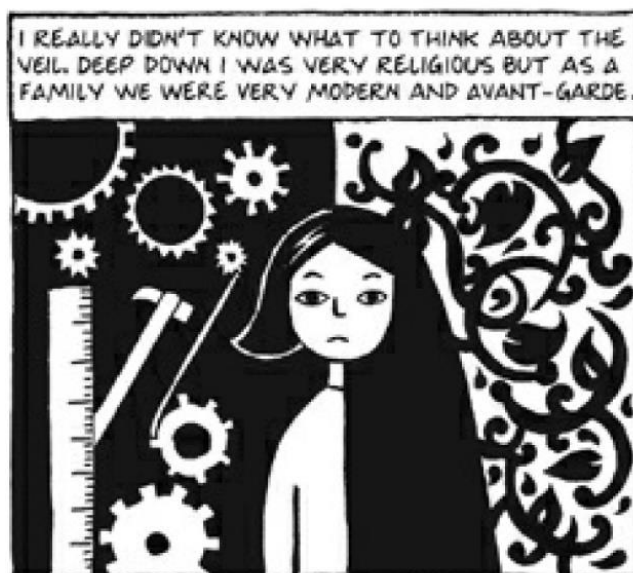


Figure 3: East and West

The "veiled figure of radical otherness" is positioned alongside a "familiar image of the Western underground hip", points out Naghibi. The fact that Satrapi has used the Western autobiographical and popular form of literature to articulate the concerns of an Eastern country is unprecedented and unique. There is no tradition of women's autobiographical

writing in Iran, claims Iranian American critic Farzaneh Milani in her book *Veils and Words*. Women are not supposed to unveil their minds and bodies in Iran. Satrapi on the other hand is bold, articulate, outspoken and well-versed in the art of writing comix. “Underground comix, spelt with an “x” as a sign of their illicit content, were closely tied to the youth counterculture of the late 1960s and early 1970s” (Singsen). “Co-mix” forms part of the North American counterculture of the 1960s that led to the “alternative comix” movement in the 1980s.

### **Comic with a Serious Purpose**

*Persepolis* is a comic with a difference due to its engagement with the contemporary politics of Iran. Its main concern is the authentic projection of Iran within the West whether it is regarding the portrayal of Iranian women or the notion of Iran as the terror land encouraging fundamentalism. Iran’s image suffered another setback after 9/11 with the then US President George W. Bush declaring the country as a spoke in the “axis of evil.” The narrative attempts to dispel the fallacies of the Western observers and introduces the reader to the bright, progressive and liberated Iranian people. Satrapi successfully removes the common misconceptions regarding her own identity, and those of her family, nation and even the West. Satrapi also exposes the claims of a liberal West citing her encounters with the “fanatics of the West.” She initially tries to assimilate in the Western culture during her stay in Austria but asserts her Iranian identity when treated as “the other.”

She successfully employs Western comic form, considered to be juvenile, to create a counter-discourse to both the Islamic Republic and Western hegemonic discourses. “The comic book has traditionally been seen as an immature and thus incomplete form, just as childhood is generally perceived as an incomplete state (Naghibi, 2005, p. 227).” Also referred to as “subliterature” by Nyberg, comics are relegated to low, disposable status. Satrapi resorts to trivialization as a strategy to use an unthreatening form/ genre to represent repression and violence. After the revolution, Iran immediately went to war with Iraq which continued for nearly eight years. At the end of the chapter “The Key,” she uses two frames showing Iranian soldiers being blown to pieces on the top and the panel below it shows her drinking and partying with her Iranian friends (Fig 4).



Figure 4: The Key

“The broken bodies of the child soldiers are mirrored by the exuberant postures of the partygoers; the keys on their necklaces are mirrored by Marji’s ‘punk’ chain necklace; the holes in their shrapnel-ridden bodies are mirrored by the holes in Marji’s sweater, knitted for her by her mother in imitation of the then trendy punk style” (Naghbi, 2005, p. 240). A clever graphic device to show both the violence and apathy of the public during the war with Iraq. Boys as young as sixteen were brainwashed into joining the crusade against Iraq and were given “keys to paradise” making it seem like a religious mission. They were told that if they went to war and were lucky enough to die, this key would get them into heaven. The memoir indirectly criticizes the warmongering of the religious regime in the name of nationalism and the apathy of the public including herself in the same breath as well as on the same page. Satrapi laughs at the hypocrisy of the government as the latter tried to cover the absurdity of war. “They lined us up twice a day to mourn the war dead. They put on funeral

marches and we had to beat our breasts (Satrapi, 2008, p. 96).” Every street in Iran was named after a martyr to appease the families of the victims. Satrapi in *Persepolis* refuses to be dictated to in matters of faith. She often gets into ideological clashes with the religious authorities. While appearing for an interview for admission to an arts college in Iran, she is asked whether she had been wearing a veil while studying in Austria, she replies, “No, I have always thought that if women’s hair posed so many problems, God would have certainly made us bald” (2008, p. 286). Again, an instance of trivialization of the hot-button issue of veiling.

### **Gaps and Silences**

*Persepolis* speaks through its visual images but also its gaps and its “slippages.” The moment the reader seems to have pinned down its meaning, the meaning slips from his/ her grasp. In the context of the Islamic Revolution, child Marji’s innocent acts and questions take on the quality of political subversion. Putting herself at the centre of narration as a child who is trying to make sense of the happenings around her during the Islamic Revolution adds to the complexity of the text. The childlike simplicity of young Marji’s questions, direct and simple language, comic book style and cartoony drawings using basic colours are just camouflage for the rich and multilayered text that is difficult to decipher for the readers. The advantage of using a child narrator is that its mind is like a clean slate, and it is yet to be schooled in social norms and mores. The child Marji is upset that her domestic help is poor and is forced to serve her family. She finds it difficult to accept socially ingrained practices prevalent in Iran since times immemorial. “The bold-lined, black-and-white, and almost rudimentary artwork simply belies the ambiguities and grey areas the text explores. If anything, the assumptions of innocence, naivete, and universality that this combination of a child protagonist and a childlike illustrative style seem to produce are belied by the kinds of slippages in potential meaning they generate,” says Naghibi (2005, p. 242). The child Marji’s simple and adorable desire to become a prophet seems preposterous amid the new-found rigid Islamic apparatus of the state. It belies the harsh reality of the status of women in Iran where only the male clergy are allowed to interpret the religious text. The ironic tone maintained throughout the narrative skillfully drives home the unstated while making it a hilarious read. “These slippages take on a potent political charge in the context of a long-standing and fraught history of Middle Eastern (particularly Iranian) and Western (particularly American) relations” (Naghibi, 2005, p. 224).

### **Conclusion**

*Persepolis* is a highly disruptive and subversive text in both content and form. What makes it endearing and enticing is its endless play of contraries. It compels us to read between the lines and see between its panels. Its comic book style camouflages its rich complexity. It effectively destabilizes the dialectic between the East and the West, comic and serious, highbrow and low brow, liberated West and savage East, suppressed veiled Persian woman and liberated Western woman. The black-and-white images created by Satrapi represent polarization in world politics and mindsets. By highlighting the contrast between its opposing concepts and images, *Persepolis* beckons to the grey areas that have the potential for dialogue and negotiation. Paradoxically, *Persepolis* deflates and reconciles the opposites through its black and white graphics, as different as day and night and surprisingly leads the reader to the grey in-between zone of the truth.

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## *Influence of Romantic Comedies on Young Adults' Perception of Relationships*

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### **Abstract**

The paper “Influence of romantic comedies on young adults’ perception of relationships” focuses on the effect of the consumption of romantic comedies. The goal of the paper is to whether a correlation exists between the consumption of romantic comedies and young adults’ attitudes toward romantic relationships, including their opinions, ideas, expectations, and relationship behavior. The theoretical section introduces romantic comedies as a movie genre. It presents the history of the genre, key practices and approaches, and typical characteristics. The work further describes how audio-visual media can potentially influence the audience, presents major theoretic approaches to audience research, and summarizes current knowledge and results in the field of the influence of romantic comedies. The following practical section shows the process and results of the research, which was done using a mixed approach including mainly interviews with young adults. In contrast to previous research, this work emphasized a gender-equal research sample to describe the influence on men as well, even though they are not the primary target group. The interviews focused on different aspects of romantic comedies’ consumption, respondents’ attitudes toward real romantic relationships, their belief in romantic myths, and their perception of characters’ behavior in romantic comedies. The practical section of the paper includes a brief analysis of the content of selected romantic comedies: Grease (1978), Pretty Woman (1990), Love Actually (2003), 500 Days of Summer (2009), and Friends with Benefits (2011).

Keywords: Romantic Comedies, Romantic Movies, Young Adults, Perception of Relationships, Romantic Relationship, Audience Research

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## Introduction

Film and television production has become a normal part of everyday life and can shape and influence its audience to varying degrees. Based on the content they watch, viewers can form their opinions and ideas about various aspects of life, including the social aspect. The genre of romantic comedies is no exception to this, as it is still very popular in film and television and focuses on the presentation of romantic relationships. This media content also has an impact on its audience and can shape and influence their perceptions of real romantic relationships. At the same time, romantic comedies can create pressure in terms of behavior and appearance. These aspects are presented unrealistically in films, which can lead to high expectations and subsequent unfulfilled and disappointing expectations.

Existing studies suggest a link between viewing rates of romantic comedies and belief in romantic myths and the idealization of relationships. Most studies have focused primarily on examining these phenomena in teenagers. This dissertation focuses on young adults as individuals who are likely to have experienced some form of romantic relationship in their lives. The group of young adults also offers diversity within relationship experiences, with some already married at this point in their lives and others still searching for a partner. This paper also has the ambition to explore a gender-balanced research sample and not just focus on women, who are the target audience for romantic comedies.

### The genre of romantic comedy

Romantic comedy is a typical example of a so-called genre film, which is often considered a typically inferior type of entertainment, especially in contrast to art films. Genre films are made to cater to a mass audience and thus, of course, to make more money. Thus, they adhere to tried and tested archetypes, plots, and characters that have been proven to work in the past (Mortimer, 2010). However, the specific definition of a romantic comedy is quite problematic, as romantic storylines are a part of many films and far from all of them would be classified as romantic comedies. Thus, how romance is highlighted or suppressed in the plot plays a role. A romantic storyline can be the primary focus of a story, but it can also be a side plot to complement another message. This can also be supported by the marketing of the film, for example, the visuals for the poster, where often the central motif is a photograph of the couple, accompanied by a slogan suggesting their romantic connection. Of course, the comedic aspect is also important, just as the emphasis in modern romantic comedies is on tears and evoking emotion (McDonald, 2007). A romantic comedy is a kind of hybrid of romance and comedy, with the main aim of portraying a relationship that usually has a happy ending - a successful culmination of a plot involving the pursuit of love. Although the viewer is exposed to various emotions throughout the film, he or she is swept along by them, expecting that this is only a temporary state and that everything will turn out well. Tears and emotions are thus as much an emotional tool for romantic comedies as fear is for horror films, and the audience willingly exposes themselves to these emotions (Mortimer, 2010).

The comedic subtext can be achieved by using several principles to enrich the romantic plot. Jenkins and Karnick (1995) defined surprise, unexpectedness, and deviation from the normal as one of these elements. The degree of familiarity of the audience helps to build this narrative – if the audience knows more than some of the characters in the story, they are placed in a privileged position from which they can perceive the irony of the character's behavior. This can be used particularly in films that contain a motif of make-believe, such as *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (2003). Another element is the 'gag,' which also uses the



element of surprise and can help flesh out a character. These are distinctive moments that are easy to remember and have the potential to become iconic. In general, however, romantic comedies rely more on an overall lighthearted narrative than on specific jokes.

The very basic narrative formula is „boy meets girl“, a term referring to a simple plot scheme where a boy meets a girl (presumably in a “meet-cute”), the boy loses the girl or can't be with her, the boy eventually gets the girl and they live happily ever after. Most romantic comedies are based on this classic plot, possibly with slight variations or more entanglements (McDonald, 2007).

McDonald (2007) also points out the characteristic elements of ideological messages that romantic comedies communicate. As already suggested within the historical development, the primary and underlying ideology of romantic comedies is the importance of romantic relationships and, by extension, marriage, and monogamy. This extends to the stability of Western society that honors these values. An important aspect of film ideology is the fact that films do not merely mirror reality, but also help to shape it. Within modern romantic comedies, we encounter a wider range of ideologies and social patterns that are presented. These include different types of relationships and families, as well as a departure from the traditional female perspective to a more gender-balanced one that may attract more male viewers as well.

### **The influence of audio-visual media**

One of the main aspects of media that is often discussed is its influence on those who consume it. The influence of the media is usually discussed in a rather negative context, where the media influence their audience in an undesirable way (Meier, Hull, Ortyl, 2009). However, strictly avoiding certain themes is not an ideal solution, as audiovisual content is censored in this way. However, if certain motifs are deliberately omitted, we limit their representation within the depiction of reality. If the media are to represent reality, it is necessary to include the potentially negative and controversial components of reality. The function of media is not only to entertain but also to inform and educate (Henderson, 2007). This includes topics that may be more challenging to portray and communicate. Here, consequently, it is important to place great emphasis on the appropriate portrayal and factual accuracy of the themes communicated. Popular culture is an important part of contemporary everyday life that helps interpret real-life experiences, navigate relationships, and potentially be turned to by audiences for advice (Milmine, 2015).

In the case of romantic and sexual relationships, audiovisual media is one of the main sources of information alongside parents, friends, and school. Different research varies in the percentage of these sources, but many cite television and movies as the most prominent (Harris, Scott, 2002). The desire to obtain information and learn from movies may be purposeful (Hefner, Wilson, 2013). However, often the content of films and television content influence young viewers as a part of a consuming culture, which in turn influences their perception of norms and reality (Collins, Elliott, Berry, et al., 2004). Harris and Scott (2002) preface their article with statistics from the late 1990s when 56% of television content included sexual content (23% directly involved sexual behavior). Collins, Elliott, Berry, et al. (2004) then present results from an examination of television content from the beginning of the millennium, when the percentages rose to 64% sexual content, of which 32% represented sexual behavior and 61% represented verbal mention of sex.

Two main theories have been used to investigate the effect of media on audiences - social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2002) and cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002). Bandura (1986, 2002) describes that according to social cognitive theory, audiences actively observe how relationships and behaviors are portrayed in audiovisual content and seek inspiration for their potential behaviors in this portrayal. While watching films and television content, viewers memorize behaviors that they then use as models for their own decisions. The social cognitive theory works particularly well in situations where the behavioral model is presented by an attractive character or a character with whom the viewer identifies. The chances of imposing and repeating the behavior are further increased if the behavior is presented as desirable in the story, the character receives no consequences or is even rewarded (Bandura, 1986, 2002). A negative consequence of social cognitive theory in the context of contemporary popular audiovisual content is the replication of unrealistic models. Because movies and television shows often rely on unrealistic and exaggerated depictions of relationships and behavior for their success, viewers base their models on inappropriate examples. Achieving the desired effect is thus very challenging because real-life situations may be opposed to film ones, failing to meet viewers' expectations (Johnson, Holmes, 2009). Cultivation theory opts for a passive approach, as opposed to social cognitive theory, which suggests an active approach for viewers to search for behavioral patterns. According to this theory, television has become the primary source of socialization and everyday information for most of the population. As it uses and repeats the same motives and images within its content, it influences its viewers' perception of reality. Cultivation theory thus states that if a viewer is exposed to a particular message, or depiction, for long enough, that depiction will influence their view of the same situations (Gerbner et al., 2002). Originally, the theory was tied to television content viewing in general, but research dealing with cultivation theory demonstrates a link between specific genres and perceptions of reality in a particular area of life, rather than the effect of television viewing on overall perceptions of reality. Thus, according to this theory, viewers who consume large amounts of romantic films and television programs construct their perceptions of real relationships and romance according to how that content presents them (Johnson, Holmes, 2009).

Based on the literature review, the effects of watching romantic comedies (and romantic films in general and romantically oriented television content in particular) can be divided into several main categories that influence viewers' perceptions of reality and, eventually, their behavior, expectations, and values within romantic and sexual relationships.

Meier, Hull, and Ortyl (2009) focus their study directly on the association of relationship values with an individual's gender and sexual orientation. They describe that young women hold more traditional relationship values than men and place more emphasis on the importance of marriage and family life. They are also more likely to expect to enter marriage in the future and that this union will be permanent. However, according to research by Meier, Hull, and Ortyl (2009), these findings were only applicable to heterosexual individuals, who also exhibited strong partner idealization. Even though women are more associated with romantic themes, both within popular culture and real life, the themes and portrayals in romantic comedies also influence gender stereotypes of men. However, when we talk about gender and sexual orientation in the context of romantic comedies, there is usually not much room for diversity. Based on their content analysis, Johnson and Holmes (2009) state that the vast majority of characters in romantic comedies are white, middle-class, heterosexual individuals. If diversity is included in a film, it is unlikely to be related to the central couple. Therefore, gender stereotypes arising from romantic comedies also relate to traditional gender (female and male) with a heterosexual orientation. Men are portrayed within the

romantic content as the proactive ones who initiate all actions. Men are the ones who are supposed to approach the woman, express their interest, ask her out, plan the date, pick the woman up, and guide her through the whole date. At the end of the date, it is also men who initiate potential physical contact, such as a kiss (Rivadeneira, Lebo, 2008). Overall, the plot of romantic stories expects more energy and action from men. In addition to making the first move, they should include compliments to the woman and often "fight" for her - facing the obstacles that the story puts in the way of their love. Thus, men are the initiators of grand romantic gestures (Revilla Sánchez, 2021). Women, on the other hand, are portrayed more passively, as the initiation of a romantic relationship by a woman is not considered appropriate. Women wait for an invitation to go on a date, enjoying the prepared program and possibly responding to the contact initiated by the man (Rivadeneira, Lebo, 2008). Nowadays, the role of women has shifted more and there is no longer such an emphasis on waiting for action from the man; the woman can initiate the relationship or intimacy as well. However, there is still a lot of emphasis on the woman being charming and perfect. A woman should live up to the man's expectations and fantasies so that he has an interest and reason to fight for her and make the effort that is expected of him (Revilla Sánchez, 2021).

The main theme of romantic comedies is naturally romantic and intimate relationships, within which certain values and behaviors are presented. Therefore, frequent viewing of this genre also has an impact on the relationship values and behaviors of the audience. The negative factor of this influence can occur because movies and television shows use exaggerated and unrealistic portrayals of relationship situations to attract viewers (Johnson, Holmes, 2009).

Swindler (2001) examined the romantic relationships of middle-class Americans in her research and based on her observations, she defined four major "romantic myths" that many individuals still hold despite high divorce statistics and an increasingly realistic approach to relationships. The main romantic myths according to Swindler (2001) are Love at first sight, Fatal love, Love conquers all, and Happily ever after. Johnson and Holmes (2009) summarize the influence of romantic comedies as a certain romantic ideal that is made up of assumptions about love that the audience expects from real relationships. They incorporate four myths into this ideal according to Swindler (2001) and add one more - "love is blind" or can overlook flaws.

Dissatisfaction with one's real-life partner because of higher viewing of sexual content is related to idealization, which according to Hefner and Wilson (2013) is the most prominent influence of romantic comedies. Idealization often may not be directly related to intimacy and sex but to the relationship itself, or the romantic aspect of the relationship. The media can create extremely idealistic images of the perfect partner that cannot be fulfilled because of how unrealistic they are. The ability to create unrealistic expectations, such as idealizing the main characters, the partner relationship, and intimacy, is a major problem with romantic comedies and their way of portraying reality. It creates assumptions and expectations that real people and relationships are unable to meet, resulting in disappointment. This can lead to the end of the relationship due to the failure to meet the given expectations and ideals (Milmine, 2015). Television shows and movies present several ideal situations and qualities that are not obvious or even impossible in the real world. An example is the complete harmony of partners, as love implies a relationship of soul mates who can adapt to each other 100%, fit together perfectly, and always know all their partner's needs and preferences. At the same time, in the pursuit of a soulmate, it is possible to allow love to be too blind and overlook flaws that are signals of dangerous or toxic behavior that can escalate into violence (Revilla Sánchez, 2021).

## Study Design and subjects

The research aims to find out whether and how watching romantic comedies affects young adults' attitudes and values in romantic relationships. The aim will be achieved by confirming or disproving the hypotheses established through a literature search and qualitative analysis of key themes in selected romantic comedies - *Grease* (1978), *Pretty Woman* (1990), *Love Actually* (2003), *500 Days of Summer* (2009), and *Friends with Benefits* (2011).

H 1: People who watch more romantic comedies have more faith in marriage.

H 2: People who watch more romantic comedies are more supportive of traditional gender roles.

H 3: People who watch more romantic comedies are dissatisfied in real relationships.

H 4: People who watch more romantic comedies are more likely to believe romantic myths.

H 5: Viewers of romantic comedies tend to idealize and romanticize the behavior of romantic comedy protagonists while watching these films.

Respondents were individuals who were born between 1990 and 2001 and are therefore on the borderline between millennials and Generation Z. In the selection of respondents, emphasis was also placed on the gender balance of the respondents. For the research, respondents were approached by the researcher mainly through social networking sites. As part of the communication before the research, it was verified that they met the above requirements and were provided with the titles of the films under study. The 4 interviews were conducted spontaneously based on the verbal agreement without prior communication regarding the films under study. Less than half of the respondents were in contact with the researcher for the first time in this research, the rest of the respondents knew the researcher in the past. The final research sample consisted of 23 respondents, 11 males, and 12 females. The average age of the respondents was 24.8 years. Respondents came from a variety of socioeconomic and demographic groups. More than two-thirds of respondents are college educated (or in the process of pursuing a college degree) and more than two-thirds come from larger cities with populations over 100,000.

Based on the theoretical research, research objectives, and hypotheses, four main themes were chosen to divide the interview into four sub-sections. The different sections differ slightly thematically from each other and in some of them, a different interviewing approach is chosen. However, in the subsequent analysis and interpretation, data across sections are used as different variables according to the hypotheses set. The first section focuses on real relationships and aims to find out the respondent's values, ideals, and attitudes toward romantic relationships. The second section focuses on beliefs in romantic myths (described in subsection 2.3.4.2). This section is the quantitative part of the interview as it is a closed-ended question with a Likert scale offered. The respondent was presented with each of the romantic myths and asked to rate them on a scale of 1 to 5 based on how much they believe them or find them realistic. The third section of the interview was less personal and focused on eliciting opinions about romantic comedies. The last sections of the interview were again reactionary. Respondents were presented with ten model situations in the form of statements that came from five well-known romantic comedies. However, the statements are generalized, and it is not stated which movie the situation comes from or which characters are involved. Respondents were also told that they did not have to guess what movie the situation was from, but only to give their opinion of the statement - any thoughts, first reactions,

reflections on the romanticism or realism of the situation, whatever. The model situations given in this section are based on an analysis of selected romantic comedies (see Appendix).

## Results

More than a third of the survey respondents identified romantic comedies as their favorite genre, which they often associate with relaxation. Respondents who identified romantic comedies as their favorite genre also watch them frequently (at least once a month) to very frequently (at least once a week). Half of the respondents have a neutral attitude toward romantic comedies. They do not consider them to be their favorite genre, but at the same time, they are not opposed to watching them. However, five respondents in this category have reservations about the romantic comedy genre because of its unrealistic nature, which spoils their overall perception of the genre. They like the romantic narrative and light comedy but find the way it portrays unrealistic ideals problematic. The problem with the unrealistic portrayal of relationships in romantic comedies was mentioned spontaneously by some respondents during the first question about their relationship with romantic comedies. In the specific question about the realism of romantic comedies, two-thirds of the respondents said that they hardly consider romantic comedies realistic at all, but they believe that there is some real basis in them.

Most respondents said they would like to get married or married in the future. Those who said they do not view marriage as a lifelong union have a neutral attitude toward romantic comedies (but one respondent perceived them as unrealistic) and watch them frequently. Two of these respondents would like to get married despite this belief. Other respondents who expressed uncertainty about entering marriage and about its longevity also identified romantic comedies as their favorite genre and watch them frequently. Therefore, H1 cannot be confirmed. Although most respondents were positive about getting married and the lifelong nature of marriage, the data obtained from the survey does not indicate a correlation with the amount of viewing of romantic comedies. Conversely, respondents who do not prefer the romantic comedy genre and do not watch them frequently indicated a willingness to enter marriage and a belief in marriage as a lifelong union.

Two-thirds of respondents said they do not favor traditional gender roles in relationships and find these divisions outdated and obsolete nowadays. These respondents included most male respondents. Two men said they agreed with traditional gender roles in relationships, but only in certain situations and under certain conditions. Respondents also saw a difference between gender roles at the initiation of a relationship and gender roles within a long-term relationship, which includes, for example, taking care of a joint household. In addition to the two male respondents mentioned above, five female respondents expressed similar views on traditional gender roles. They prefer traditional gender roles especially at the beginning of the relationship, as they expect the man to make the first move. At the same time, several of them stated their preference as paradoxical to their other values. Some respondents are in favor of gender roles even in the context of a long-term relationship, but they think that roles should be divided equally and not put significantly more burden on either of the couples. Respondents who said they agreed with traditional gender roles mostly identified romantic comedies as their favorite genre and watch them frequently. At the same time, however, a few respondents are also fans of romantic comedies and watch them frequently but were resistant to gender roles in relationships as an outdated concept. The correlation between watching romantic comedies and belief in traditional gender roles as defined by H2 cannot be confirmed based on the survey data.

Most respondents indicated that they had experienced relationship dissatisfaction in their lives related to unmet expectations. The most common reason for disappointment due to unmet expectations was the personality development of one or both couples. This factor was mentioned primarily in connection with development during adolescence. Development was also related to a change in personal values and likes. Some respondents also mentioned age-related development in the context of relationship stagnation, where they moved on, but the relationship remained the same and was taken for granted. Another highly cited reason was lack of communication, insincerity, and unrealistic expectations of the relationship (for example, believing that it is possible to change the other person in the relationship). Therefore, based on these data, it is not possible to confirm H3, i.e., the association between watching romantic comedies and relationship dissatisfaction. Based on the rationale of the respondent's answers, the reasons for dissatisfaction were mostly based on other reasons.

For the interview, the romantic myths were formulated into statements that respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, depending on how much they believed them and found them realistic. The average value of belief in romantic myths is 3.6. The highest mean value, 4.3, was given to romantic myth D about the existence of soul mates. The lowest average value, 2.8, was given to myth C, which claims that love will overcome all obstacles. Above-average belief scores were obtained by 11 respondents. However, these respondents included respondents with very positive but also neutral or negative attitudes toward romantic comrades. Thus, H4 cannot be confirmed based on the survey data.

The last section of the interview was devoted to modeling situations based on the analyzed films. The respondents were asked for their reactions and opinion on the behavior of the film protagonists in the situations. As part of the content analysis, the respondents' answers were coded into three categories, which are illustrated in the table - positive and agreeing opinion ( $\checkmark$ ), neutral opinion ( $\Theta$ ), and negative and disagreeing opinion ( $\times$ ). The situations in the table are marked with the same letters as in the interview scenario.

	$\checkmark$	$\Theta$	$\times$
A	3	3	17
B	7	8	8
C	1	5	17
D	0	11	12
E	5	5	13
F	3	7	13
G	11	0	12
H	0	2	21
I	0	5	18
J	20	0	3

Based on the table and the answers of the respondents, this hypothesis can be confirmed. When inappropriate and toxic behavior was taken out of the context of romantic comedies, it was mostly rated negatively or questionably by respondents. At the same time, neutral and realistic behaviors (e.g., situations F and J) were identified and discussed as realistic on this basis. However, when watching romantic comedies, viewers tend to overlook, idealize, and romanticize inappropriate character behavior, even though in reality it would potentially be likely to be condemned.

## Conclusion

The interviews were analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively, using content analysis. Most of the hypotheses were refuted as a correlation between romantic comedies' consumption and researched behavior and opinions could not be found based on this concrete research sample. Each of the first four hypotheses was generally disproved by the responses received. Only in a small number of cases did the respondents demonstrate the attitudes that had been hypothesized. The only hypothesized opinions that were identified in the sample were the idealization and romanticization of characters' toxic behavior, which is criticized when put out of a romantic context.

This study was not able to prove a direct correlation between respondents' consuming romantic comedies and developing given behaviors or opinions, but it did confirm that romantic comedies influence respondents' overall views on and expectations of romantic relationships. This effect was mentioned during the interviews by several respondents. According to respondents of this study, romantic comedies are seen as unrealistic and their characters' behavior is heavily idealized, which can lead to a negative influence on respondents' experience of and expectations for romantic relationships.

This study took previous research results as a starting point and extended them by assessing different demographical groups. Specifically, the research sample included respondents of an age that had not been previously studied and male, as well as female, respondents. Surveying male respondents was important because, though they are not the primary target audience for romantic comedies, they are influenced by their narrative as well, either directly through watching them or indirectly through women's expectations. Even though this paper could not prove that consuming romantic comedies led respondents to adopt concrete behaviors and opinions, it did observe an influence on their attitudes towards romantic relationships more generally. Identification and description of this influence could be a topic for future research.

## Appendix

Model situations based on analyzed films:

- A. A woman changes her character and physical appearance to make herself more suitable for her partner.
- B. A romantic relationship in the workplace - within a superior X subordinate hierarchy, not between colleagues.
- C. A man expresses his love to his best friend's wife, whom he has loved for a long time and has only watched from a distance.
- D. A man can use the money to buy his wife's love with expensive gifts and thus own her.
- E. If a man pursues a woman long enough, even though she is not interested, he eventually wins her and is rewarded for his patience, persistence, and for being a nice guy.
- F. A form of relationship with friends with benefits, even though one of them wants to have a relationship.
- G. When describing the same situation, such as telling friends about a date, men tend to ask about intimacy and women about the romantic and material aspects of the relationship.
- H. The sex-obsessed man blames his sexual failure on women who are not interested in him and sees them only as sexual objects.
- I. The man tells the woman how she should behave and speak.
- J. Idealization of the relationship partner - belief in one's idealistic idea of a partner. A man has an idealistic idea of his partner in his head, but this is not confronted with reality through appropriate communication.



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***Predictability of Mindfulness and Connectedness to Nature on Pro-environmental Behavior of Undergraduate Students***

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**Abstract**

The purposes of this research were to study the predictability of mindfulness and connectedness to nature on pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students. The samples were 395 undergraduate students at Chiang Mai University. Three questionnaires including the mindfulness scale, connectedness to nature scale, and pro-environmental behavior scale were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis were performed to analyze data. The results showed that connectedness to nature could predict pro-environmental behavior at the .05 level ( $\beta=.421$ ). Also, mindfulness could predict environmental behavior at the level of .05 ( $\beta=.104$ ). Furthermore, connectedness to nature and mindfulness could significantly predict pro-environmental behavior ( $R^2=22.4$ ). In conclusion, if students enhance mindfulness and connectedness to nature, they will consequently enhance more pro-environmental behavior.

**Keywords:** Pro-environmental Behavior, Mindfulness, Connectedness to Nature

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## Introduction

In the modern world, environmental issues are serious problems which are the direct effects of human activities. Basic human needs and desire for comfort and convenience have urged humans to make advances in science and technology to consume natural resources more conveniently and easily. Also, there has been the development of manufacturing processes to produce both capital and consumer goods, which causes environmental pollution such as water, air, and noise pollution. Besides, the consumption produces waste such as solid waste, waste water, and air toxics that contaminate environment. To prevent degradation of natural resources and environment, various parties encourage humans to preserve natural resources and environment. The preservation of natural resources and environment can be done in several ways, both directly and indirectly. The direct methods can be carried out at the individual, organizational, and national level such as to reduce, reuse, refurbish, remedy, apply and substitute. To monitor and prevent are methods used to guard against harm to natural resources and environment such as monitoring disposal of garbage or sewage in rivers and constructing wildfire lines. For the indirect methods, Stewart (2007) states that there are several ways to preserve natural resources and environment such as the improvement of qualities of citizens through promoting environmental education. The provision of proper environmental education can be carried out with learners of all ages in school and in educational institutions. Patterns of behavior demonstrating the protection of nature can be called 'pro-environmental behavior.'

Stewart (2007) categorizes pro-environmental behavior as conscious behavior that an individual exhibits to reduce negative effects occurring in nature and man-made environment such as using less energy and reduce waste in manufacturing. Due to the fact that pro-environmental behavior is a conscious attempt, it could always be affected by an individual's outer and inner stimuli. The behavior is related to morality, ethics, or social norms. Groot & Stege (2009) give an interesting explanation suggesting that pro-environmental behavior benefits other people while the actor did not gain advantages, referring that the actor is a sacrificer. For example, the actor who decides to use public transportation will not find it as convenient as private transportation; however, society and environment are beneficial because the act reduces pollution and congestion. Or, for the case of waste segregation, the actor must provide space to sort garbage or seek information about how to properly segregate waste, which requires an individual to devote time as well as give up the convenience of old habits and then perform the new act that benefits society. Apparently, pro-environmental behavior can reduce negative effects or increase positive effects on natural environment. Several studies discover multiple factors contributing to pro-environmental behavior and mindfulness is found to be one key factor among these factors (Brown & Kasser, 2005).

Mindfulness is considered as an important factor relating to human behavior. Buddhism defines mindfulness as a mental state with readiness to notice presented things and realize how to treat them (Payutto, 2009). The intention to be mindful is reflected via experiences and patterns of exhibited behaviors. Generally, being mindful involve a specific experience which is the experience that an individual directly encounters. There are thoughts or emotions that emerge through the experience and become the individual's attitudes which may lead to improved regulation of behavior in the similar context (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000). Concerning pro-environmental behavior, mindfulness regulates the behavior by means of increasing awareness in choosing pro-environmental behavior i.e., considering between recycling soda cans and throwing them in a trash bin.

Besides mindfulness, connectedness to nature is found to be another factor encouraging an individual to engage in pro-environmental behavior which causes minimal negative effect on natural environment, thoughts, and an individual. Chaichantipyuth (2011) defines connectedness to nature as a state in which an individual possesses the following aspects: be aware of connectedness among all things, realize that all things are one, perceive oneself as a part of nature – not separate oneself from nature, value and respect all things equally – not merely resources that exist to serve human needs, and realize that all things are interconnected and interdependent. The realization of connectedness to nature will lead to conservation behavior. Connectedness to nature reveals the sphere that gives a sense of belonging to the natural world, including the nature which represents the ideas about ‘self’ (Schultz, 2002). An individual who is connected strongly to nature is likely to cause minimal harmful effect on environment because the individual’s self has been embedded in nature; meanwhile, harmful behavior will be the main part endangering the individual’s self (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). Hoot and Friedman (2011) investigated the relationship between specific and general interconnectedness on beliefs and pro-environmental behavior and found that the specific indicators, connectedness to nature and consideration of future consequences were related to an individual’s beliefs and future pro-environmental behavior. Likewise, Mayer and Frantz (2004) stated that connectedness to nature contributed to the expansion of self which eventually led to empathy, holistic worldview, and environment protection. Moreover, connectedness to nature contributed to environmental conservationism and behavior without the intention to exploit nature. In addition, Frantz, Mayer, Norton, and Rock (2005) found that connecting oneself to nature promoted an individual’s awareness which influenced the perception of connection between oneself and environment; which eventually influenced conservation behavior.

In the context of university, environmental concerns have become the primary issues stating in policies and strategies of several universities. Chiang Mai University is one among these universities that plan the strategies emphasizing conservation of nature and environment. These strategies aim to improve knowledge, technology, and innovation via biotechnology, digital technology, and other related technology to develop practical environmental and energy innovation. Also, they aim to cultivate culture and improve environmental and energy capacity to promote sustainability for university communities, including students, faculties, and university staff as well as for the communities outside the university. Moreover, each faculty is required to adopt these strategies in developing their action plans. For example, the Faculty of Humanities, Chiang Mai University establishes the Strategic Goal 1 Environment and Energy Innovation: It is required to be a leader in promoting, managing, increasing capacity, and sharing knowledge as well as sustainable technology and green innovation; for example, to reduce the use of plastics and foam at the faculty, campaign for maintaining cleanliness of spaces inside and outside buildings as well as managing all types of waste, and encourage students; faculties; and staff to be aware of environment preservation – to save water and energy and reduce the use of paper. These are carried out via putting up posters, advertising via the faculty official website, conducting class activities, conducting student activities, and engaging the faculty staff to clean spaces around the faculty (Planning Division of Office of the University, 2016). It can be seen that university students are human resources directly related to the university’s policies and belong to the important group whose pro-environmental behavior must be promoted accordingly. Also, it has been noticed that Chiang Mai University focuses on launching campaigns and providing knowledge and information, which might not be sufficient for the cultivation of pro-environmental behavior. That is because an individual’s decision on exhibiting behavior is originated from the conscious level affected by the individual’s outer and inner factors.

Accordingly, the researcher is interested in investigating predictability of mindfulness and connectedness to nature on pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students at Chiang Mai University. That is to investigate factors predicting the students' pro-environmental behavior as well as to provide important information for the staff, faculties, or related units at each faculty in planning the cultivation of students' pro-environmental behavior.

### **Objectives of the study**

To investigate the predictability of mindfulness and connectedness to nature on pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students.

### **Hypotheses**

Mindfulness and connectedness to nature could co-predict pro-environmental behavior.

### **Materials and Methods**

#### ***Population and participants***

The study population was 28,800 undergraduate students from each faculty group (e.g., Health Science, Science, and Humanities and Social Science) at Chiang Mai University enrolling in the semester 1/2019. Stratified random sampling was performed, Yamane formula (1967 cited in Srisa-ard, 2017) was used to calculate the sample size ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), 395 participants were yielded.

#### ***Instruments***

The instruments used in this study were divided into four sections:

Section 1: General information consisted of five items inquiring about gender, age, year of study, faculty, and major.

Section 2: The Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS) Thai version developed by Silpakit et al. (2011), it was a 5-point rating scale, including seldom, rarely, occasionally, often, and almost always. There were 20 items divided into two components: 1) awareness and 2) acceptance. The researcher tried out the mindfulness scale; Cronbach's alpha of .727 was found.

Section 3: Connectedness to Nature Scale (CNS) Thai version developed by Chaichantipyuth (2011), the scale was built on Mayer & Frantz (2004)'s work. It was a 5-point rating scale, including strongly disagree, disagree, partially agree and disagree, agree, and strongly agree. There were 24 items divided into four components: 1. perceive that one is connected to nature, not separate from natural environment; 2. perceive that one is connected to all things in nature as well as value and respect all things equally, not merely resources that exist to serve human needs; 3. realize that all things in nature are interdependent; and 4. realize that all things are connected in the manner that they support existence of one another. The researcher tried out CNS; Cronbach's alpha of .935 was found.

Section 4: Pro-Environmental Behavior Scale Thai version developed by Wongpinpech (2018), it was a 5-point rating scale, including never, rarely, occasionally, often, and regularly. There

were 22 items divided into five components: 1. electricity consumption, 2. water consumption, 3. consumption of environmentally friendly products, 4. commute, and 5. solid waste management. The researcher tried out the scale, Cronbach's alpha of .889 was found.

### *Analysis*

1. Descriptive statistics, including percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD.), and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used to investigate general information regarding the participants and the study variables.
2. Multiple regression analysis (MRA) was performed to test the hypotheses.

### **Results**

#### **1. General information regarding the study variables: mindfulness, connectedness to nature, and pro-environmental behavior**

Table 1: Mean and SD of mindfulness, overall and by component

	Mean	S.D.	Level
Mindfulness	56.3	.48	Moderate
Components of mindfulness			
1 Awareness	66.3	55.	Moderate
2 Acceptance	46.3	62.	Moderate

Table 1 shows that the participants' mindfulness, both overall and in each component were at moderate level.

Table 2: Mean and SD of connectedness to nature, overall and by component

	Mean	S.D.	Level
Connectedness to nature	76.3	40.	High
Components of connectedness to nature			
1 perceive that one is connected to nature, not separate from natural environment	62.3	48.	Moderate
2 perceive that one is connected to all things in nature as well as value and respect all things equally, not merely resources that exist to serve human needs	80.3	45.	High
3 realize that all things in nature are interdependent	89.3	52.	High
4 realize that all things in nature are connected in the manner that they support existence of one another	58.3	45.	Moderate

Table 2 shows that the participants had high level of overall connected to nature. Considering each component of connectedness to nature, it was found that the participants had high level of 'perceive that one is connected to all things in nature as well as value and respect all things equally, not merely resources that exist to serve human needs' and 'realize that all things in

nature are interdependent.’ Meanwhile, the participants had moderate level of ‘perceive that one is connected to nature, not separate from natural environment’ and ‘realize that all things are connected and support existence of one another.’

Table 3: Mean and SD of pro-environmental behavior, overall and by component

	Mean	S.D.	Level
Pro-environmental behavior	87.3	.49	High
Components of pro-environmental behavior			
1 electricity consumption	04.4	.64	High
2 water consumption	18.4	.58	High
3 consumption of environmentally friendly products	59.3	.73	Moderate
4 commute	55.3	.82	Moderate
5 solid waste management	85.3	.63	High

Table 3 shows that the participants had high level of overall pro-environmental behavior. Considering each component, it was found that the participants had high level of ‘electricity consumption’, ‘water consumption’, and ‘solid waste management.’ Meanwhile, the participants had moderate level of ‘consumption of environmentally friendly products’ and ‘commute.’

## 2. Predictability of mindfulness and connectedness to nature on pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students

### 2.1 Assessment of assumptions for MRA

Table 4: Correlation coefficient and variance inflation factor (VIF) of the study variables

	Mindfulness	Connectedness to nature	Pro-environmental behavior	VIF
Mindfulness	1	**408.	**276.	199.1
Connectedness to nature		1	**464.	199.1
Pro-environmental behavior			1	

\*\*p = 01.

Table 4 shows that pro-environmental behavior had positive relationship with mindfulness and connectedness to nature at the statistical significance level of .01. Considering the relationship between the independent variables, it was found that mindfulness and connectedness to nature were positively related at the statistical significance level of .01. Also, VIF value was found to be lower than 5.3, indicating that the data had no multicollinearity issue (Wiratchai, 2010). Also, data distribution assessment showed that the data were normally distributed. Accordingly, this data set met the assumptions for MRA and was adequate for the next analysis.



Table 5 Analysis of predictability of mindfulness and connectedness to nature on Pro-environmental behavior performing stepwise MRA

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients (B)	Standardized coefficients (Beta)	t	P-value
1. connectedness to nature	517.	.421	8.641*	.000
2. mindfulness	107.	.104	2.138*	.033
Constant=1.540 R.=473 R Square.=224 F=56.56 ; p-value = .000				

\*p<.05

Table 5 shows that mindfulness and connectedness to nature could co-predict pro-environmental behavior at the statistical significance level of .05 ( $F = 56.56$ ;  $p\text{-value} = .000$ ). For the t-ratio of connectedness to nature and mindfulness, the statistical significance level of .05 was found; indicating that changes in connectedness to nature and mindfulness significantly influenced changes in pro-environmental behavior. Connectedness to nature and mindfulness accounted for 22.4% of the variance in pro-environmental behavior. The regression models predicting changes in pro-environmental behavior are presented below:

The regression model with unstandardized coefficients (B)

$$\hat{Y} = 1.540 + 0.517(\text{connectedness to nature}) + 0.107(\text{mindfulness})$$

The regression model with standardized coefficients (Beta)

$$\hat{Z} = 0.421(\text{connectedness to nature}) + 0.104(\text{mindfulness})$$

## Discussion

The result of this study which reveal that connectedness to nature and mindfulness accounted for 22.4% of pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students at Chiang Mai University supports the hypothesis. It indicates that if a person has greater connectedness to nature and mindfulness, they will perform higher pro-environmental behavior. Connectedness to nature is a concept involving an individual's perception of their level of connection to nature. Typically, connectedness to nature is described as a traditional belief which frames or guides the emergence of other beliefs about nature, including environmental projects and policies as well as concerns about environmental issues. In general, explicit feeling of connection to nature is beneficial in the manner that it helps protect environment and promote sustainability. Mayer and Frantz (2004)'s study revealed that connectedness to nature could urge an individual to engage in pro-environmental behavior which produced minimal harmful effect on natural environment as well as on one's own thoughts and identity. It was believed that connectedness to nature was the key component of the promotion of ecological behavior. In addition, Hoot and Friedman (2011)'s study indicated that connectedness to nature was related to an individual's future environmental beliefs and behavior. Similarly, Geng et al. (2015)'s study confirmed the positive role of connectedness to nature in promoting environmental behavior. The study showed that direct and indirect connectedness to nature had positive relationships with pro-environmental behavior. Also, Anderson and Krettenauer (2021)'s study showed that emotional connectedness to nature was the strongest predictor of pro-environmental behavior.

For mindfulness, it is found that mindfulness affects behavioral choices; which is related to the realization of specific experiences. Mindfulness can promote change and sustainable behavior.

A mindful individual is aware of surrounding environment and likely to pay attention and gather information about environmental effects. Also, the individual seeks an option with minimal harmful effect to environmental nature regardless of a great hindrance to exercising the selected option. According to Amel et al. (2009), it was found that mindfulness predicted sustainable behavior. Results of the study showed that everyday actions were automatic and mindfulness helped connect 'self' with the world, which encouraged pro-environmental behavior. The component of mindfulness, acting with awareness was related to the likelihood of increased pro-environmental behavior. That is consistent with Chatzisarantis and Hagger (2007)'s study discovering that mindfulness facilitated acting with intention and reduced effects of hindrances to behavior enactment. Being mindful provided the individuals with intention to enact sustainable behavior the increased opportunity to take action as planned. Brown and Kasser (2005) explained that practicing mindfulness and fostering true values were related to greater ecologically responsible behavior. To mindful reflect on one's own internal states, covert behaviors, and set of values focusing on true self rather than outer goals seemed to concurrently benefit both an individual and ecological well-being. Similarly, Tang et al. (2017)'s study showed that mindful learning affected pro-environmental behavior intention both positively and negatively. The aforementioned information is the evidence indicating that mindfulness and connectedness to nature could co-predict pro-environmental behavior.

## **Conclusions**

According to the results of this study, it can be concluded that connectedness to nature and mindfulness significantly co-predict pro-environmental behavior of undergraduate students. Thus, related agencies could apply this information to develop guidelines for the promotion of pro-environmental behavior among undergraduate students. For example, activities that encourage the students to realize and accept their own experiences as well as activities that facilitate the students to get close to nature to enhance positive attitudes towards nature and to be part of nature should be provided. Mindfulness practice should be included to promote the students' mindfulness in the meanwhile.

## **Recommendations**

The results from this research provide valuable information for developing strategies to promote and cultivate environmental behaviors among students in the future. This can be achieved by organizing activities that foster students' self-awareness and acceptance of their own experiences, as well as providing opportunities for students to engage closely with nature. These activities aim to foster a positive perspective toward the environment, instilling a sense of unity between students and nature. Additionally, it is recommended to encourage mindfulness practices alongside these efforts to further enhance students' self-awareness and promote a mindful attitude among them.

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*Politeness Strategies Among University Students in Myanmar*

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**Abstract**

This present research investigates the politeness strategies used by Myanmar university students while they are trying to request something from others. To collect the primary data, the researcher conducted surveys of 200 students from 12 Universities during the 2019-2020 academic year. The collected data are classified by Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies. This research aims to examine whether there is a significant difference between male and female students in the use of politeness strategies and the correlation between language, gender, and culture. The statistical analysis results revealed that male students (over 60%) prefer negative politeness strategies and female students prefer positive politeness strategies more than negative ones.

Keywords: Politeness Strategies, Students, Male, Female, Gender

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## **Introduction**

A university student is a student who enrolled in a college or university to seek advanced knowledge. Burmese university student life can generally be defined as starting around 16-18 years of age and ending around 23-25 years of age. According to Erikson's psychosocial development theory (Erikson, 1994), this duration is a transitional age from childhood to adulthood. The adolescent mind is in a major stage of development between the morality learned by the child and the ethics to be developed by the adult. In this stage, adolescents search for a sense of self, what they want to do or be, and their appropriate gender role.

If we classify university students according to gender, they can be divided into two groups: male and female students. Gender roles have a lot of effects on the way a person's language usage. When people communicate with each other, gender is often taken into consideration as a priority to choose the most appropriate form of language they will use. "You are a girl and you are not supposed to say like this." "How could a man say something like that?" There are restrictions in verbal communication depending on the social situation of gender. The language we use is governed by social norms—politeness, impoliteness, appropriateness, inappropriateness, etc. It can be assumed that university students have reached an age where they can perceive and consider such traditional criteria of society.

What kind of politeness strategies do these young university students use the most to express their demands? Who cares more about the other person's situation, male or female? Who cares more about avoiding offense and keeping up with social harmony? This research is intended to answer these questions and it's based on the correlation between gendered culture and politeness strategies. The survey data required for the research is collected through questionnaires and interviews.

## **Review of Related Studies**

### **Previous Theoretical and Practical Studies on Gender and Language**

Male and female are different except that both of them belong to the "Homo Sapiens" species. They are different in their external body structures and their way of thinking, behaving, and responding. Boys are more likely to take risks, play rough, strive to dominate, confront others, and resist revealing their weaknesses to each other. On the contrary, girls have a greater willingness to listen to and participate in a talk about emotions. According to Maccoby (1998), girls are more open than boys to listening to their play partners, cooperating with them, and avoiding confrontation with them (p. 298).

Women are more capable of keeping a conversation going than men. Most women can talk about several topics at once. Sometimes they can describe various facts and emotions in just one sentence. Men's sentences are short and direct to the point, solution-oriented, and peppered with facts. When having a conversation with someone, women often observe the other person's expression and level of interest. When compared to women, men are weak in multi-tracking ability and simultaneous responding (Allan & Barbara, 2000). Men are more likely to put forward non-personal information. They tend to present only one clear thought or idea at a time. On the other hand, women emphasize their concerns in social relations and also use gestures to show that they are listening carefully (Thein Naing, 2007).

Following Shahrzad and Raouf (2017), women prefer to avoid conflict even more than men. They also would rather use the fake consent method or implied consent method than directly informing. In conversation, they often guess the other person's interest by saying childish words, seeking constant agreement, and joking around. Shahrzad and Raouf studied politeness strategies used in text messaging. They collected 300 English and Persian text messages sent by 40 BA and MA university students studying EFL. The chi-square procedure was utilized in their research to prove the validity of the sample analyzed data.

Based on the observations of these researchers, women seem to prefer politeness and peacefulness as they want to avoid conflict with the other party and try to observe the speaking partners' interest in the topic in conversation. As for men, genetically, they are strong human beings based on their body structure, so it seems that they have the desire to dominate and talk more straightforwardly than women. For that reason, the politeness strategies used by men and women in communicating with each other may be different.

### **Previous Theoretical and Practical Studies on Politeness Strategies**

Robin Lakoff (1973) states that conversation has two main rules. Rule number one is to be clear and rule number two is to be polite. Lakoff is one of the first linguists who introduced the theory of politeness. She stated the "Politeness Principle", in which she added a sub-set of three rules: (1) don't impose, (2) give options, (3) be friendly. We must keep in mind not only the message we are trying to pass on but also the feeling of our conversation to maintain the social relation. Lakoff defined linguistics politeness as a pattern of social behavior designed to reduce conflict in interpersonal relationships.

People are inseparable from social relations. To consider the other person's feelings or maintain the relationship, we must pay attention to their faces when we communicate with others. In pragmatics, "face" indicates the public self-image of a person. The politeness theory raised by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson (1978) related to the face. As stated in their theory, there are two types of faces: positive and negative. A positive face is a desire for one's self-image to be acknowledged, appreciated, and recognized by others. The speaker is working hard to meet the needs of the audience by using slang or jokes. To prove that they belong to the same cultural group or to gain more agreement in conversation, they may also use white lies, gossip, small talk, token agreement, pseudo agreement, etc. The word 'negative' here doesn't mean bad, it's just the opposite pole from 'positive'. (Yule, 1996, 61). Negative face is reflected in the desire to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be forced by others. The speaker aims not to influence, not to assume, or not to force the listener to do something.

To maintain someone's face, politeness strategies are used even in daily conversations. The types of proper politeness strategies vary from culture to culture. It is because the cultural norms accepted by each nationality are different. In Myanmar and most Asia countries, "Where do you go?", "Where are you from?", "Did you gain weight?" "Have you eaten yet?", "Are you in good health?" such kinds of questions are common greetings and we don't need to answer these questions seriously. However, in some Western countries and European countries, these kinds of greetings may be considered personal inquisitive questions.

Linguistic politeness means speaking properly and appropriately through the social relation between speaker and listener. Brown and Levinson (1978) stated politeness strategies; bald on record, off record, positive politeness, and negative politeness. Speakers choose a specific

strategy for performing face-threatening acts or according to which they structure their communicative contributions.

**Bald on Record Strategy**

In the following sections, we will discuss four excellent implementation strategies in turn and the first one is the bald on-record strategy. This strategy approaches all forms of direct command and the speaker openly expresses his wishes without embellishment. In other words, it is a direct way of speaking without reducing the rules. The speaker expresses the information directly, clearly, and precisely, without the desire to maintain the face of the other person or to minimize the efficiency of FTA. Direct imperatives are distinct and clear examples of bald on-record usage.

For example:

- (a) သတိထား။  
Watch out!  
(in case of great urgency)
- (b) ပန်းကန်တွေဆေးပြီး ထမင်းစားပွဲသုတ်ထားလိုက်ဦး။  
Clean the dishes and wipe down the dining table.  
( command/ S is powerful and does not fear non-cooperation from H)
- (c) ဆရာကြီးလို့ သုံးခါခေါ် ပြီး အရိုအသေပေးလိုက်စမ်း။  
Call me master three times and show your respect.  
(socially acceptable rudeness in teasing or joking)

**Off-Record Strategy**

Off-record strategy is an indirect way of speaking rather than referencing directly to keep the other person’s face from being rude. The listener must think about what the speaker wants to inform, find the overall meaning, and conclude the intention of the dialogue.

Linguistic realizations of off-record strategies include metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate without doing so directly, so that the meaning is to some degree negotiable (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.69).

For example:

- (a) သူက မြွေဟောက်မ။  
She is a cobra. (c.i. She is poisonous like / is as dangerous as / is truly outrageous as a cobra.)  
(Using metaphors)



- (b) မင်း တော်တော် တော်တာပဲ။ (စာမေးပွဲကျပြီးနောက်)  
 You are so great. (after he had failed the exam)  
 (Be ironic)
- (c) ဒီနေ့ နေ့လယ်စာ ဘယ်လိုနေလဲ။  
 ကြက်သားဟင်းလေးကတော့ ကောင်းပါတယ်။ (တခြားဟင်းများ မကောင်းပါ။)  
 How was your lunch today?  
 Chicken curry is delicious. (c.i. The others are not good enough.)  
 (Understatement)
- (d) မင်းပိုက်ဆံက မင်းပိုက်ဆံ၊ ငါ့ပိုက်ဆံက ငါ့ပိုက်ဆံ။ (မင်းပိုက်ဆံက ငါ့ပိုက်ဆံမဟုတ်ဘူး)  
 Your money is yours, my money is mine. (c.i. Your money is not mine.)  
 (Using tautologies)

**Positive Politeness Strategies**

Positive politeness is redress directed to the addressee’s positive face, his perennial desire that his wants (or the actions/acquisitions/values resulting from them) should be thought of as desirable. (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.101) Positive politeness strategies are usually found in familiar relations like groups of friends.

This kind of strategy is a way of expressing a desire to get along with someone. It can be said that it is a form of communication that focuses on the need for friendship and the need for cooperation. Positive politeness strategies include the following: attending to the hearer, exaggerating with the hearer, having a strong interest in the hearer, using in-group identity markers, seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement, gossiping, joking, presupposing with small talk, offering or promising, being optimistic, including both the speaker and the hearer in the activity, giving or asking for a reason, etc.

For example:

- (a) မင်း အဝတ်တွေ လျှော်ဖွပ်ပြီး လှန်းထားလိုက်ဦးနော် (အချစ်လေး/ ကလေး/ အသည်း)။  
 Do the laundry, (darling/ baby/ sweetheart).  
 (Use in-group identity markers)
- (b) အဲဒီကောင်မလေးက လှတယ် မဟုတ်လား။  
 လှပါတယ်။ သိပ်တော့ အလှကြီးမဟုတ်ပေမယ့် ရှုပ်ဆိုးပန်းဆိုးတော့ မဟုတ်ပါဘူး။  
 That girl is pretty, isn't she?  
 Yes, she is. ...uhm not very pretty, but not ugly.  
 (Use token agreement and avoid disagreement)
- (c) ငါနဲ့ အပြင်သွားရအောင်။ ဘာဘယ်တီး ဝယ်တိုက်မယ်။  
 Hang out with me and I will buy you some bubble tea.  
 (Offering or promising)

(d) ငါ့အိမ်က ပိုက်ဆံမပို့သေးလို့ မင်းဆီက ခဏ ချေးထားဦးမယ်။

My family has not yet sent money, so I will borrow from you for a while.  
(Giving reason)

### Negative Politeness Strategies

Negative politeness is redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his desire to have his freedom of action unhindered and his attention unimpeded (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p.129). It commands people's respect and refrains from harassing them. Positive politeness is shown by the shortening of distance and negative politeness is indicated by social distance and respect for status differences. Indirect directive questions are distinct examples of negative politeness.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), negative politeness can be carried out by following strategies: Being Conventionally Indirect; Questions, Hedges; Being Pessimistic; Minimizing the Imposition; Give Deference; Apologizing; Impersonalizing S and H; Stating the Face Threatening Acts (FTA) as General Rule; Nominalizing; and Going on Record as Incurring a Debt.

For example:

(a) စိတ်မရှိဘူးဆိုရင် ငါ့ကို ခဏလောက် ကူညီပေးနိုင်မလား။

Would you please mind a minute to help me? (Being Conventionally Indirect)

(b) ငါ့ကို မင်းအိမ်ခေါ်ပါဦး၊ ခေါ်မယ်မဟုတ်လားဟင်။

Take me to your home, will you? (Using Hedges)

(c) ပေါင်မုန့်လေး တစ်ချပ်တလေလောက် ရနိုင်မလား မေးချင်လို့ပါ။

I want to ask you if I can get just a slice of bread.  
(Minimizing the Imposition)

(d) မင်း စိတ်မရှိဘူးလို့တော့ မျှော်လင့်ပါတယ် ဒါပေမယ့် ချေးထားတဲ့ပိုက်ဆံပြန်ပေးပါဦး။

I hope you don't mind me saying this, but pay the money you borrowed back.  
(Apologizing)

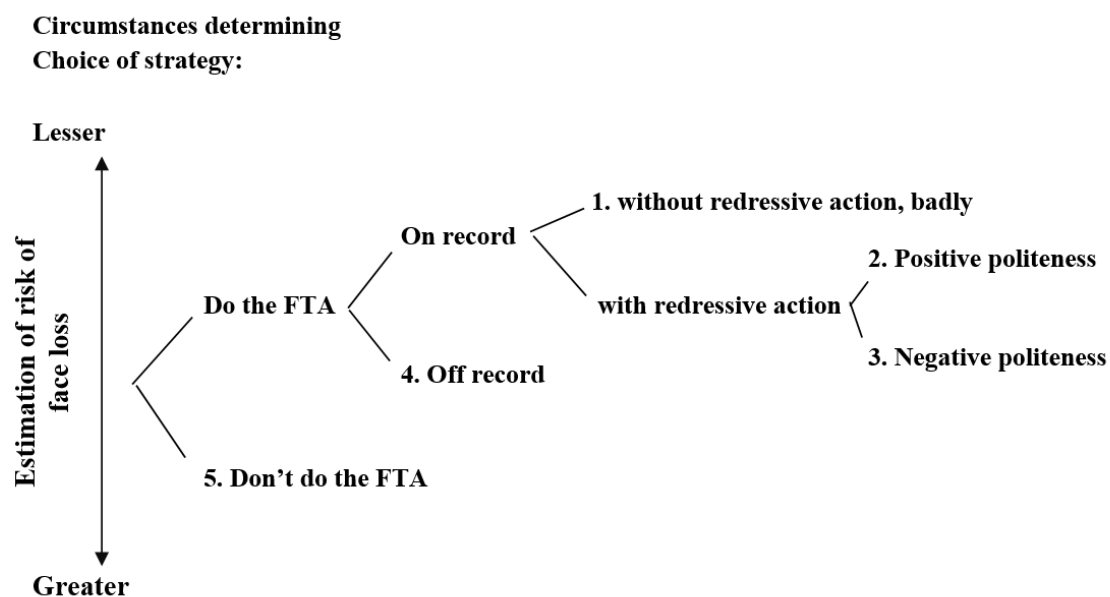


Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's (1987) model for politeness strategies

## Method

### Procedures for Data Collection and Data Analysis

This quantitative research is designed through these steps: conducting surveys, analyzing the collected data, re-examining frequencies by sample data-based inferential statistics, and making conclusions.

100 male students and 100 female students, a total of 200 students from 12 different universities: University of Mandalay (UM), Yadanabon University, Mandalay University, Mandalay University of Foreign Languages (MUFL), University of Medicine (Mandalay)(UMM), University of Pharmacy (Mandalay), University of Dental Medicine (Mandalay), University of Computer Studies (Mandalay) (UCSM), Computer University (Mandalay) (CU), Mandalay Technological University (MTU), Technological University (Mandalay) (TUM), Sagaing University of Education (SUOE) and University of Co-operative and Management (Sagaing) were conducted surveys and the age group of the respondents ranged from 17 to 24 years.

In surveying with questionnaires, students' responses were divided into (3) types of help-seeking conditions: Borrowing money from a friend; Asking a friend to go out; Renting clothes from a friend. We analyzed the collected data based on Brown and Levinson's politeness strategies, which were mentioned above. Afterward, we applied sample data-based inferential statistics to test whether the results we obtained from data analysis were solid and significant or not. To confirm whether there is a significant mean difference in the results of the two paired samples, we used the paired sample t-test approach in comparing and analyzing data. In both cases, we have the same subjects/items in both groups. Each subject has a pair of measurements. A paired t-test determines whether the mean difference of these pairs equals zero (no effect).

## Result and Discussion

No.	Politeness Strategies	Samples from Survey Questionnaires	M	F
1.	Bald on record	M 096 Loan me. F 057 Loan me money.	3%	3%
2.	Off record	M040 Do you wanna donate to me? F028 Donate me a bowl of rice or a cup of milk tea.	1%	5%
3.	Positive politeness	M 027 Brother-in-law, lend me money. I will pay it back. F 055 Love, lend money to this pretty one.	34%	52%
4.	Negative politeness	M 016 If you are okay, lend me some money? F044 I'm sorry, but could you lend me some money?	62%	40%

Table 1: Borrowing money from a friend

No.	Politeness Strategies	Samples from Survey Questionnaires	M	F
1.	Bald on record	M 005 Let's go out. F 094 Let's go out!	13%	10%
2.	Off record	-	-	-
3.	Positive politeness	M 027 My dear friend, let's go out. I will feed you. F 009 Hey beauty, stop hiding in the room. Let's go out.	28%	47%
4.	Negative politeness	M 059 If you have time, could you go out with me for a while? F 033 If it's okay with you, could you come over there with me?	59%	43%

Table 2: Asking a friend to go out

No.	Politeness Strategies	Samples from Survey Questionnaires	M	F
1.	Bald on record	M 036 Lend me your shirt. F 094 Lend me your coat.	5%	3%

2.	Off record	-	-	-
3.	Positive politeness	M 074 I want to donate my handsomeness, so borrow me your shirt. F 019 My sister-in-law, I don't have any warm clothes, so please borrow some.	35%	63%
4.	Negative politeness	M 049 If you don't mind me, could I wear your pants? F 018 I'm sorry my friend, but could you lend me some clothes.	60%	34%

Table 3: Renting clothes from a friend

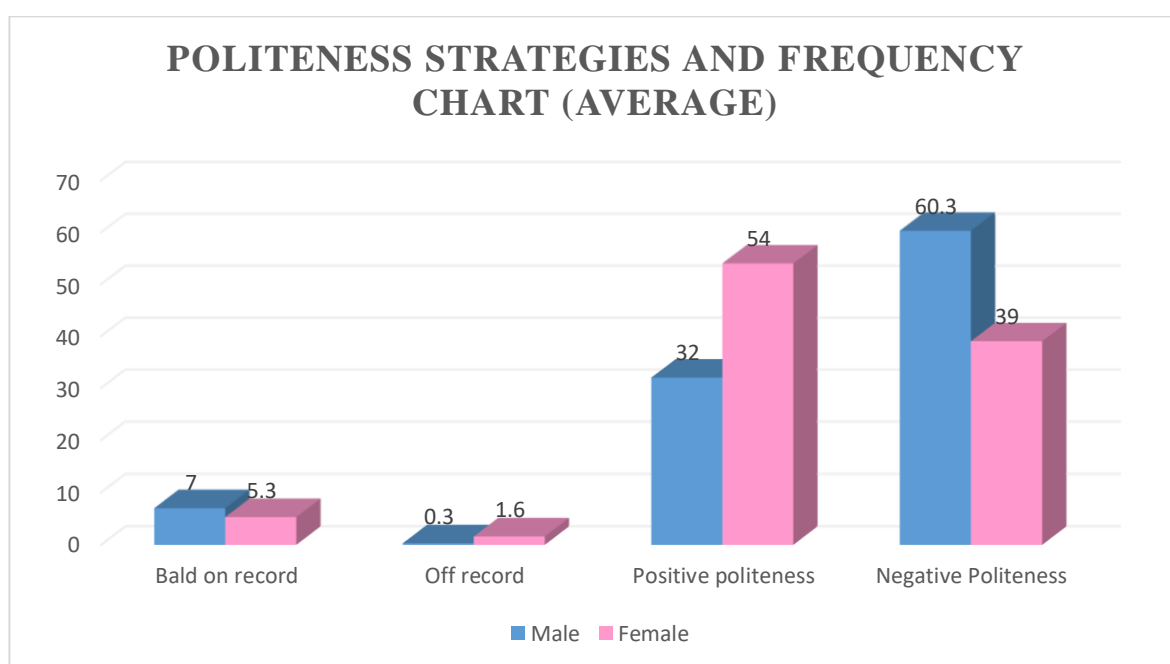


Figure 2: Politeness strategies and frequency chart (average)

According to the survey, the majority of male students use negative politeness strategies. They ask the permission of the addressee first: "If it's okay, ...", " If it's all right,...", "If you are okay, ...", "If there's anything left,...", "If there's more,...", "If there's some time,...", "If you don't mind,..."; and then express what they want. Instead of making specific demands, they approached it in a way of politeness that can be negotiable or adjustable.

For example:

M 049 If you don't mind me, could I wear your pants?

M085 I would like to rent a shirt. A shirt that you don't wear is also fine. And, I'm sorry to ask like this.

M076 I'm afraid to ask for your help, my friend; if you have any money, lend me some.

To be patient and concerned is a practice of Burmese politeness that considers the feelings of the other party. Women also use negative politeness strategies. However, compared to men, the amount is small and only 39 percent is used on average. Men use negative politeness strategies up to 60.3%, so the difference is 3:2.

**Paired Samples Statistics**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Male	60.3333	3	1.52753	.88192
	Female	39.0000	3	4.58258	2.64575

**Paired Samples Test**

Pair	Male - Female	Mean	Paired Differences				t	df	Significance	
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
1		21.3333	5.03322	2.90593	8.83011	33.83655	7.341	2	.009	.018

Table 4 & 5: Paired Sample T-Test Results (Negative Politeness Strategies)

The output indicates that the mean for the Male is 60.33, and for the Female is 39.00. The null hypothesis states that the mean difference in negative politeness strategies used by males and females is 0. And the alternative hypothesis states that the mean difference in negative politeness strategies used by males is greater than by females. If the p-value is less than or equal to the standard significance level of 0.05, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. In the results, our p-value (0.009) for the paired sample t-test is less than the standard significance level. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in the use of negative politeness strategies by males and females. Specifically, our sample data support the notion that men use negative politeness strategies more than women do.

Some ask for a request directly without concerning the other party’s feelings or conditions. Speaking in this way is often found in close relationships between the speaker and the listener, as well as in relationships with different statuses, such as seniors and youths, superiors and subordinates, etc. Here too, these politeness strategies used by men and women differ slightly.

Male		Female	
M007	Come on, follow me.	F071	Hey buddy, let’s hang out together.
M085	You, join me.	F087	Let’s go! Have fun together with us.
M087	Buddy, go out with me.	F094	Let’s go together.

Table 6: Examples of positive politeness strategies used by male and female

As shown in the examples above, even where they speak directly, men tend to be more straightforward and women speak in the sense of working together as a group. It can be said

that women are eager to be harmonious. Many of them used positive politeness strategies to request something from others.

For example:

Samples from Survey Questionnaires	Positive politeness strategies
F098 You know, clothes mean something you have to share with your friend. So, you have to borrow me your cardigan. F092 Go out with me because I'm pretty and crowds will follow me and I'm afraid, so you have to escort me. F039 By lending 20,000 kyats to this Friday-born girl, let's get rid of your bad luck.	Using jokes based on mutually shared backgrounds to put the hearer at ease
F095 Sweetheart, I already like your skirt. Rent me. F015 Honey, let's go somewhere with me. F055 Hey dear, lend money to this pretty girl.	Using in-group identity markers to soften the difference between herself and the hearer
F026 The trainee is tomorrow and my shirt is still in the laundry. Please, borrow me yours. F022 I would like to buy a shirt, so go together with me and help me to choose. F056 I don't have enough money for this book, so lend me 10,000 kyats, please.	Giving reason to show why she wants and what she wants
F091 If you lend me this shirt, I'll share this dessert. F044 Sister, I will buy a cold one for you. Please accompany me. F036 Sissy sissy, lend me money. I will pay you back.	Using an offer or promise to demonstrate her good intention and to satisfy the hearer

Table 7: Examples of positive politeness strategies used female

Female students are fond to use such kind of positive politeness strategies and the most common form is using in-group identity markers to soften the difference between herself and the hearer. Male students also use positive politeness strategies to show harmony. It is 32% on average. The commonly used form is giving a reason to show why he wants and what he wants. It's shown that men tend to focus on facts rather than emotions.

As for women, it can be said that social relations and cooperation are more important. The average frequency is up to 54%. Therefore, it can be proposed that women are more willing to be in harmony with the other person than men when expressing their needs and asking for help. When we check whether the proposition is correct or not, the result is as follows.

### Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Female	54.0000	3	8.18535	4.72582
	Male	32.3333	3	3.78594	2.18581

### Paired Samples Test

		Mean	Paired Differences				t	df	Significance	
			Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Female - Male	21.66667	5.50757	3.17980	7.98510	35.34823	6.814	2	.010	.021

Table 8 & 9: Paired Sample T-Test Results (Positive Politeness Strategies)

The output indicates that the mean for the Females is 54.00, and for the Males is 32.33. The null hypothesis states that the mean difference in positive politeness strategies used by females and males is 0. And the alternative hypothesis states that the mean difference in positive politeness strategies used by females is greater than by males. In the results, the p-value (0.01) for the paired sample t-test is less than the standard significance level of 0.05. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in the use of positive politeness strategies by females and males. The paired sample t-test results support the notion that female students use positive politeness strategies more than male students do. Women emphasize the desire to cooperate with the other person and it can be concluded that they use positive politeness strategies more than men.

## Conclusion

Politeness strategies can be chosen and used differently depending on the context and the time. Depending on the other person's social status, there may be changes. This paper examines the politeness methods used by university students when asking for mutual help.

According to the survey, University students in Myanmar are more likely to ask for help directly. However, rather than using an open way of speaking, they often express harmony or gentleness. Most female students tend to use positive politeness strategies when seeking help or a request from someone. It is 54% on average. In conversation, female students express a desire to be friendly with the other person. They tend to emphasize that it is not a burden to help them in the direction of cooperation. It can be said that female students are more powerful in the case of organizing and speaking to make them want to help.

Male students prefer to use negative politeness strategies more than the other strategies. On average, it is up to about 60.3%. Men are naturally stronger than women. They tend to be in the place of the leader and the caretaker. Because of that nature, in conversation, male students



tend to speak condescendingly so as not to infringe on the other person's freedom and interests. Based on this survey, male students seem to be willing to have their freedom of action unhindered and their attention unimpeded.

Talking vaguely and hinting methods are rarely used. It may be because of the relationship between friends and friends. On average, female students use up to 0.3% and male students use 1.6%. They are also in the age group that tends to want independence, so they seem to prefer a way of saying what they want clearly without being too vague.

In conversation, male students tend to express freedom and social distance; female students tend to express the desire of shortening distance and cooperation. In this paper, we can see the influence of gender and social conditions on the use of politeness strategies. Depending on various social conditions, the way of choosing and using politeness methods can also change. So, in addition to the situation of asking for help, asking for permission, refusing, and insisting: various forms of social relations can be analyzed.

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***Flesh, Bones, and Meat: Approaching the Becoming-Cow in Julio Medem's Cows***

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**Abstract**

This paper takes as the starting point the lifelong obsession of the protagonist for the cow that further introduces an uncanny relationship of symbiosis between man, cow, and camera in Julio Medem's *Cows/Vacas* (1992). Enlightened by Deleuze's and Guattari's writings on becoming-animal in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (1981), this paper explores how moving images depict this strange entanglement between the cow and the protagonist as well as three generations of two families in a way that resonates with Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming-animal. In particular, this paper examines how cinematic devices present the human body and animal body in an intriguing and deconstructive way and how the camera continuously switches between the points of view of human, cow, and camera in *Cows*. By employing a delicate close reading of moving images, this paper argues that *Cows* exemplifies the embodiment of Deleuzo-Guattarian *becoming-animal* in cinema by virtue of cinematic devices and further presents a *becoming-vasca* (Basque) by providing an alternative beyond-human perspective to revisit Basque history and identity.

Keywords: Becoming-Animal, Deleuze, Julio Medem, *Cows/Vacas*, Basque

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## Introduction

From the Butterfly Dream in the Zhuangzi to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, the tracing of becoming-animal has been ongoing in a discontinuous way in literature as well as in artworks. Nonetheless either in Zhuang Zhou's dream of becoming a butterfly or in Gregor's becoming "some kind of monstrous vermin" after waking up from uneasy dreams (Kafka, 2009, p. 29), the becoming itself is nonetheless missing in a Deleuzo-Guattarian sense, since the becoming-animal does not refer to human transforming into a real animal either in physical reality or in dreams or fantasy. As one of the most intriguing and recondite concepts in Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy, becoming-animal usually involves real animals, but it rather highlights the becoming itself that refers to the entanglement, assemblage, or symbiosis between man and animal, which means becoming-animal is always in the middle, without beginning or end. Thus, becoming-animal cannot be presented in cinema simply by using special effects as one might conventionally assume.

In this regard, the Basque-born Spanish filmmaker Julio Medem's first full-length feature film, *Cows/Vacas* (1992), presents an uncanny and symbiotic relationship between the protagonist and cow within the film's highly naturalistic cinematography. Set in Medem's homeland, the Basque region of Spain, the narrative of *Cows* unfolds from the Carlist War and ends during the Spanish Civil War, revolving around an *aizkolari* (Basque trunk cutter), Manuel Irigibel, and the three generations of his family and his lifelong rival's. As the main character in the story, Manuel never fully recovers from his war experience of feigning to be dead by covering his face with the blood of his neighbor in order to survive, while only a cow witnesses his act of cowardice. Since then, Manuel develops his lifelong obsession with cow and spends the rest of his life drawing cows. At the end of the film, the same cow that witnessed Manuel's survival impossibly reappears after sixty years and witnesses the survival of Manuel's grandson, Peru, by virtue of a similar act of cowardice in Spanish Civil War.

Unlike conventional surrealist films that deal with the relationship between human and animal, *Cows* does not endow the cows with divinity or superpowers except for the ending scene but rather keep them as silent witnesses with eyes that seem to see through everything, which further has a strange effect on the way Manuel sees and lives his life. Such gaze is further endowed with more advanced powers when cow's vision, human vision, and camera-eye become discernible with the constant switch of points of view. This paper explores how the moving images depict the strange entanglement between the cow and the protagonist as well as three generations of two families by approaching it with Deleuzo-Guattarian becoming-animal. Meanwhile, with the focus on the gaze and point of view shots, this paper further explores how the moving images present the history of two families as well as Basque history from the Third Carlist War to the Spanish Civil War through the cow's eye, camera-eye, and human eye.

## Following the Dying Rats

*Becoming-animal* is one of the *becomings* that Deleuze and Guattari develop along with their other key concepts such as rhizome, deterritorialization, and affects. Instead of its literal meaning, *Becoming-animal* does not refer to human "becoming" a real animal or human imitating animal, or human sympathy for animal. Unlike Zhuang Zhou's butterfly dream, for Deleuze and Guattari (1987), becomings-animal are "perfectly real" (p. 238), whereas by "real" they clarify that the only reality of *becoming-animal* is the *becoming* itself, "the block of *becoming*" (p. 238), which has no term, no beginning or end. Becoming-animal is rather an

“unnatural participation” happening between man and animal, as Deleuze and Guatarri (1987) exemplify this ambiguous concept with Lord Chandos’ experience with the dying rats:

Fascinated with a “people” of dying rats, and it is in him, through him, in the interstices of his disrupted self that the “soul of the animal bares its teeth at monstrous fate”: not pity, but *unnatural participation*...It is a composition of speeds and affects involving entirely different individuals, a symbiosis; it makes the rat become a thought, a feverish thought in the man, at the same time as the man becomes a rat gnashing its teeth in its death throes. (pp. 240, 258)

By using the case of Chandos, Deleuze and Guatarri evocatively differentiate becoming-animal from man’s pity for animal or resemblance: becoming-animal is fundamentally linked with a *desubjectification*, a deconstruction of both man and animal that opens one up from the interior, thus approximating the indiscernible zone of man and animal (before being-man and being-animal). What is happening between Chandos and the dying rat is not pity but affects passing from one to another in the *desubjectification* of each of them.

In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze (2003) further exemplify becoming--animal in a more concrete way by illustrating Bacon’s paintings. According to Deleuze, Bacon is a painter of meat, while flesh and bone continuously confront each other rather than being coordinated. By quoting Bacon’s experience with the butcher shop of feeling surprised that “I [Bacon] wasn’t there instead of the animal” (Bacon, as cited in Deleuze, 2003), Deleuze further explains Bacon’s path of constituting a becoming-animal by drawing the meat, “Pity the meat! ... Every man who suffers is a piece of meat. Meat is the common zone of man and the beast, their zone of indiscernibility...the man who suffers is a beast, the beast that suffers is a man” (pp. 23, 25). For Deleuze, while Bacon constantly makes the body of his figures undergo deformations and dismantle the face, he rediscovers the meat, which reveals the “animal spirit of man” (2003, p. 20), or, as Deleuze further elaborates in *A Thousand Plateaus*, “something absolutely inhuman ... in human beings” (1987, pp. 170-171). Furthermore, such pity for the meat does not refer to the pity in general but is related to “a deep identity” between man and animal that is immediately experienced in the body at certain “extreme moment when [one felt] he or she was nothing but a beast” (Deleuze, 2003, p. 25). In other words, such pity that the meat is able to evoke is fundamentally associated with Deleuzian affects, forces, and intensities, which go beyond individual perceptions and affections. Meanwhile, the revelation of the meat is not only related to suffering but also liberation, “delightful invention, color, and acrobatics” (p. 23), in such a way *becoming-animal* distorts the body and dismantles the face, while allowing the body to re-open itself up to forces and enabling it to escape from its organism and entangle with inhuman beings, which further links to Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of the Body without Organs.

### **Pity the Meat!**

Although *Cows* also includes a considerable amount of gore footage, Medem did not follow Bacon’s path of deforming the body with animal traits, which will inevitably involve special effects so as to bring the narrative largely into the realm of surrealism. Opening with a set of brutal, explicit, and highly realistic war footage, *Cows* restrainedly relate the beginning of the story of magical realism: when the battle is lost and all his comrades are either dead or fatally shot, the protagonist Manuel, in order to escape death, feigns to be dead with the blood gushing out from the neck of his neighbor Carmelo Mendiluze, who is severally shot but yet alive. Although Carmelo dies soon afterward, Manuel has been interrogated by Carmelo’s

condemning gaze and repeatedly rants saying “I’m not dead” until Carmelo takes his last breath. Then, the next sequence explicitly presents the “desubjectification” of human bodies: the corpses of soldiers are inspected, stripped, and carried to the cart, in a way those fleshs are no different from dead animal’s flesh. The death and the brutality of war bring about the ultimate destruction of the formation of the subject, the ultimate “desubjectification.” Nonetheless, those heavy naked corpses are already dead meat, which no longer possesses the condition of becoming.

Meanwhile, as Manuel makes a restrained and painful expression because his bare leg is crushed by the cart, we confirm the fake of his own death has been successful. Then we see his body is loaded onto the cart together with the bodies of his comrades, whereas at first, we cannot distinguish his body since it is stacked with other corpses without any distinction. Nonetheless, the next sequence graphically embodies a becoming-animal in a similar way to Bacon’s paintings. When Deleuze specifies the tension between the bone and the flesh that must be achieved in order for the meat to be revealed, he describes “the body is revealed only when it ceases to be supported by the bones, when the flesh ceases to cover the bones.... In meat, the flesh seems to descend from the bones, while the bones rise up from the flesh” (2003, p. 22). Likewise, the moving images exemplify this descent (*fall [chute]*) of flesh and the rise of bones in an explicit way. We see Manuel attempting to raise his body from the corpses, struggling to raise first his arms, then his legs, which are equivalent to the bones, while the flesh, carrying all the sufferings and vulnerability of the human body, descends from them. Then, when he struggles to stretch his upper body out of the cart towards the ground, his body presents an ultimate *fall* of the flesh by hanging upside down from the cart. All the flesh falls from the bones towards the earth, while his legs, stuck in the pile of corpses, are straining to pull his bones upward (Figure 1). Then finally, his clumsy body falls to the ground from the cart, and he has to keep struggling to raise his arms in order to support the flesh to crawl forward since his crushed leg (the bones) can no longer support the body. As such, the bones and the flesh constantly confront each other and in such a way his body becomes a piece of meat. Then, in the next shot from a low-angle perspective, we see a white cow appear from nowhere, mysterious and solitary with fly-swarmed eyes. Manuel looks up into the cow’s eyes in the same way the cow is looking at him, which is not out of sympathy nor pity for himself but rather pity for meat. He looks at the cow, feels his body as meat, and feels pity for the meat because he is experiencing himself as meat.



Figure 1: Manuel’s Escape

Jo Evans (2009), inspired by Medem's talk in an interview with BBC4, points out that the scene of Manuel escaping from the cart is Medem's direct reference to Goya (Figure 2) as the representation of Manuel's "steal[ing] a new life for himself" and "symbolic rebirth as a coward" and further argues "Manuel's escape is structured as a perverse, self-ordained rebirth from the dead bodies of his Carlist comrades" (pp. 128-129). Evans's observations and reading of the scene provide us with an alternative perspective to revisit the deeper symbolic meaning of Manuel's escape and its linkage with the foundational Basque myth and the problematic Basque identity. Medem's adaptation of Goya takes advantage of cinematic devices thus making the moving images much more powerful and beyond the symbolic level. It is also worth mentioning that the first shot after the film titles consists of a long take that slowly pans from a full shot of piles of cow carcasses to a long shot of the Carlist soldiers in the trenches of Biscay preparing for the battle to a medium shot of Ilegorri, the young errand boy, talking to Carmelo about Manuel's participation in the battalion. We have no way of knowing how the cow escapes the same fate of death as his companions and how it miraculously reappears after sixty years to witness the survival of Manuel's grandson. Nonetheless, the idea of multiplicity and deconstruction of individuality is embodied here in the two sequences that echo before and after: in extreme moments, humans die like animals, losing all their corporeal recognition and becoming dead meat, while Manuel and the solitary cow witness the survival of each other.

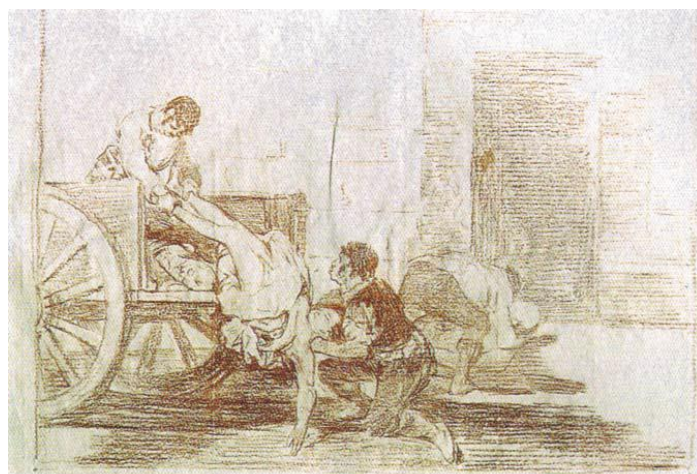


Figure 2: *Cartloads to the Cemetery: Disaster of War (1812–1815)*

“Pity the meat!” Such deep identity of Manuel and the cow is further embodied in Manuel's paintings when he becomes a gentle, eccentric amateur painter of cows. It is the meat that Manuel spends the rest of his life painting instead of those cows so that all the cows in his paintings do not physically resemble the real ones and he would draw cows when they are not even there. He paints the meat, the meat suffers, and, as a result, the cows in his paintings are always suffering, wounded, and bleeding while the cows he raises have never been wounded at all, except when he himself cuts the hooves of the dying cow when it is seriously sick.

### **The Eye of the Other**

Despite that the narrative of *Cows* is apparently to a large extent inspired by Basque myth that many elements and settings in the moving images present strong symbolic implications, the film's treatment of the strange entanglement between Manuel and cow is established on as much mythical and symbolic level as cinematic level. Medem constantly employs intriguing switches of point of view in the sequences of seeing and being seen, as if the eye becomes a black hole or a tunnel that transfers the subject to an elsewhere. In the sequence of Manuel and

the cow looking into the eyes of each other for the first time, the camera first switches from the medium shot of the cow to a medium close-up of Manuel, then to a close-up of the cow's fly-swarmed eye. Then, the camera slowly zooms into the pupil of the cow until the black screen and then zooms out from the middle to the long shot of aged Manuel painting in the field of his house thirty years later.

A more intriguing point-of-view sequence appears when Manuel welcomes the huge new cow, named Pupille, as one of the trophies of his son's victory in the woodcutting competition. We first see Manuel looks over the cow, saying, "You look pregnant, let's see what's in there." Then, from an objective point of view, we see he looks into the cow's eye while grabbing its horns. Curiously, the camera then switches to the subjective point of view of the cow in which Manuel's face gradually zooms out, becomes a crescent moon-like hole in the black screen, and flies away from the frame, while a full shot of the sun rising from the distant mountains imperceptibly fades in the black background. (Figure 3) Meanwhile, it is also intriguing to note that the sound of the cow's heartbeat and digestion can be heard intensely and strongly while the visual image switches to the subjective point of view of the cow.



Figure 3: The crescent moon and the sunrise

In Deleuze's (2003) discussion in *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Bacon's figures present "the way the body escapes from itself; that is, the way it escapes from the organism.... It escapes from itself through the open mouth, though the anus or the stomach, or through the throat" (p. 50), thus constituting a body without organs (BwO) and experiencing a *becoming-animal*. Among Bacon's paintings, represented by the Screaming Popes series, while the face is dismantled, it is the mouth that becomes an indeterminate organ and opens a hole through which the body escapes from itself. Unlike its literal meaning, the Deleuzian body without organs does not refer to the absence of organs in the body but is rather "defined by the *temporary and provisional presence* of determinate organs" (Deleuze, 2003, p. 48). In other words, while the deformed body escapes from the hole that opens from the mouth, the body liberates itself from the organism, the mouth ceases to perform its determinate organic function and becomes a "temporary and transitory organ[s]" (p. 48).

Likewise, we have no way of knowing how Manuel could tell the cow is pregnant simply by looking at its face and how he could see and "hear" its interiority with his gaze. Notwithstanding, through the deliberate switch of points of view and use of sound effects, the moving images present the eye of both Manuel and the cow beyond its organic (optical)



function. When Manuel's gaze meets the cow's, the eye ceases to be an indeterminate organ: it becomes not only optical but also acoustical and haptic (in a way the sound effect is so powerful that the heartbeat of the cow is almost *touchable*.) Like Bacon's asignifying traits, the cinematic device endows the eye with the function of hearing, touching, and even foreseeing, ceasing to be assigned as a fixed organ.

Furthermore, Medem's exploration of the beyond-organic function of the eye does not stop at the gaze between man and cow. As Manuel's fascination with the non-human vision soon leads him to become obsessed with the camera, he instructs his grandson, Peru, to steal the tripod camera from the photographer who comes to take the family photo, which further allows Peru to develop his interest in photography. The introduction of the camera's vision further complicates the points of view in *Cows*. When the Irigibel family has their family photo taken for the second time, the women of the family have a curious conversation: "—Who will take the photo? —The camera itself, won't it?" (Medem, 1992)

This intriguing dialogue is reminiscent of André Bazin's discussions on the objectivity of the camera, which reproduces reality as a non-living agent and presents a non-human vision. Bazin (1967) further writes, "All the arts are based on the presence of man, only photography derives an advantage from his absence" (p. 13). Although we do not see how the camera automatically takes the photo, but only hear the shutter sound at a certain moment when we gradually see the whole family from the camera eye in a zoom shot, the moving images present how the camera problematizes the point of view of the visual image. After we see the whole Irigibel family from the viewfinder of the tripod camera, the image switches to the subjective vision of the camera that sees the eye of Peru from its interiority, which resonates with the cow's internalized vision of Manuel. As such, the camera, with its advantage of objectivity, presents its double visions: it sees simultaneously the cameraman behind the camera and the view in front of its lens, while one cannot see inside the camera as it essentially exists as a tunnel, a "hypertrophy of the eye" in Deleuze's words, which complements our way of seeing with a more advanced non-human vision.

The subsequent sequence after the shutter shot further exemplifies how the camera sees differently. First, the image quickly switches from the black screen to a full image of a close-up of the moon (Figure 4), which gradually transitions to a close-up of the death of the male praying mantis after copulation with a fade-in effect. (Figure 5) All those images are framed by the photographic lens and are supposed to be captured by Peru with that tripod camera. Then, with another switch of point of view, we are finally able to see who are behind the viewfinder in a static low-angle objective shot: Peru, a literal camera-man whose whole face is covered by the camera, Manuel, his granddaughter Cristina, and the cow. Then, as Manuel seriously repeats to his grandsons, "This is very important, watch closely...so important...This is most important...It's carrying off a snakeskin...Yes, very important. Never forget it" (Medem, 1992), the visual image switches between the medium shot of four of them and a series of close-up shots from the circular lens of the photographic eye: that of a lizard dragging a snail, of a beetle carrying a snakeskin, and of the worm crawling over poisonous mushrooms.



Figure 4: the close-up of the moon



Figure 5: the close-up of the death of the male praying mantis after copulation

With such treatment of the camera point of view switching, all the eyes are looking in the same direction with the same scrutinizing gaze as if the characters, the camera, and the cow are sharing the same vision and see identically, while the view in the photographic lens is too detailed to be of human vision from such distance. Meanwhile, we can also note how Peru holding the camera that obscures his face curiously resembles the outline of the cow's head (Figure 6), which further implies the entanglement of the human gaze, camera eye, and cow's eye.



Figure 6: the camera-man and the cow

Far from telling a Basque story simply from the cow's, it is more likely that the moving images constantly switch points of view to achieve a non-human, beyond-human perspective, while with each gaze the eye becomes a black hole or a tunnel that transfers the subject to an elsewhere. As such, by virtue of the cinematic device, the body escapes from itself through the eye as an indeterminate organ and liberates itself from its organism, through which the body undertakes non-human becomings. Meanwhile, the intervention of the tripod camera's vision from its viewfinder raises the spectator's awareness of the camera-consciousness and the autonomy of cinematic devices themselves. As such, we travel from the human/cow vision to human/camera-eye vision to human/camera vision to an omniscient cow/camera/human/cinema vision, and yet such vision keeps varying as an ongoing entanglement of animal-human-machine without end.

### **From Becoming-*Vacas* (Cows) to Becoming-*Vasca* (Basque)**

In his discussion on the interaction between animals, machines, and postnational identity in *Cows*, Nathan E. Richardson (2004) keenly notes that cows (*vacas*) are an anagram of Basque (*vasco/a*) in Spanish, while *vacas* as the film's title also involves an "always plural, never patriarchal" implication (p. 203).<sup>1</sup> Richardson's observations further confirm the profound linkage between the cow and Basque identity that is embedded in the film. Nonetheless, spanning the decades between the two significant wars in Spain, *Cows* neither chooses to develop the narrative from a macro perspective nor turn the story into a "Basque history" in the eyes of someone. With the constant switch of point-of-view shots, *Cows* avoids any single perspective from overwhelming the film narrative. It seems that, for Medem, what is problematic is not just the Basque identity in relation with the official Spanish discourses, but also the "authorship" of Basque discourses: who has the right to tell the Basque stories, the Spanish officials? The Basque people? A third party? From whose eyes can we get closest to a "true" Basque history? From this perspective, *Cows* does not offer a solution to the long-standing controversial questions revolving around Basque identity but rather complicates it. In *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guatarri (1986) write about the same dilemma of the double impossibility of writing for minor nations by using the Jewish literature of Warsaw as an example:

The impossibility of not writing because national consciousness, uncertain or oppressed, necessarily exists by means of literature...The impossibility of writing other than in German is for the Prague Jews the feeling of an irreducible distance from their primitive Czech territoriality. And the impossibility of writing in German is the deterritorialization of the German population itself, an oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses, like a "paper language" or an artificial language; this is all the more true for the Jews who are simultaneously a part of this minority and excluded from it, like "gypsies who have stolen a German child from its crib." (p. 16)

For Deleuze and Guatarri, the impasse is never solely with the identity of minor nations but profoundly extends to the language of their discourse. As a result, a deterritorialized language, "a foreign language in a dominant language" has to be created (Deleuze, 1989, p. 223), hence the birth of Prague German, while it can only be a minor language for minor uses. While Deleuze and Guatarri positions minoritarian as one of the key aspects of becomings, becoming-

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<sup>1</sup> The connection between *vacas* and *vasca* should not be over-interpretation considering Medem's constant interests in playing games with names (palindromic names such as Ana and Otto) and film titles (*Room in Rome*) throughout his oeuvre.

minor keeps the subject in a permanent state of minority and at the same time endows it with deterritorialized nomadic power of continuous variation.

Likewise, the assemblage of human/cow/camera in *Cows* not only offers us a non-human, beyond-human eye to revisit the Basque history and identity, but also continuously creates an ever-changing alternative eye that allows us to see a *becoming-vasca*.

### **Conclusion**

From becoming-*vacas* to becoming-*vasca*, *Cows* negotiates the reconciliation of Manuel and the two families throughout decades as well as that of the Basque identity in a bigger framework. the assemblage of cow/human/camera involves blood, earth, and memory, while the identities of the characters, as well as that of the Basque Country, continuously float in becomings. The cinematic device reveals a deeper identity between the main character and cow through the gaze, while the eye becomes an indeterminate organ as a block hole that allows the body to escape from itself and further constitutes an assemblage of man/cow/camera, which allows the spectator to alternatively revisit the Basqueness from the eye of the Other.

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***Systematic Literature Review: Learning Design Using the Flipped Classroom Model to Improve Learning Outcomes and Student Participation***

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**Abstract**

With the help of anytime, anywhere access to online technologies, the flipped classroom learning approach focuses on students' needs to improve learning efficiency. One style of learning is called a "flipped classroom," which combines face-to-face synchronous interaction with online, individual learning. This study aims to analyze the use of the flipped classroom model to improve learning outcomes and student participation. The research method used is Systematic Literature Review (SLR) developed based on the PRISMA method. The search strategy is adapted to similar research and involves several variables, namely year of publication, journal index, research material methodology, and research results. Data collection is done by documenting all articles with similar research in reports. The articles that will be analyzed in this study are 25 journal articles obtained from the Scopus database using Harzing's Publish or Perish application over a period of 5 years, from 2018 to 2022. The data obtained is presented in a qualitative descriptive manner. The results of the study prove that the use of the flipped classroom model in online learning in various countries is useful for increasing student learning outcomes and participation.

Keywords: Flipped Classroom, Learning Outcomes, Student Participation

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## Introduction

The digital revolution is having an important impact on education. This influence is also causing changes in education, such as in terms of teaching and learning approaches. There are substantial effects of digitalization on education. Even with the most recent advancements in educational software and digital technologies, schools and teachers are still having trouble finding effective ways to incorporate technology into curricula and prepare students for the future. This idea of digital literacy aids academics, researchers, and education administrators in comprehending and addressing the needs of educational institutions and students in a digital society (Pangrazio et al., 2020).

The flipped classroom is a relatively new learning strategy. This learning strategy is growing with advances in technology, such as internet access and other supporting software. In traditional learning, educators deliver material, then to increase understanding of the material, students will do assignments at school and are given homework. In the flipped classroom, students participate in watching videos, and Powerpoint int and accessing learning resources provided by educator media such as e-learning. Flipped classroom pedagogics has become a widely used approach within blended learning (Ölmefors & Scheffel, 2021). Promoting active learning, which encourages students to actively engage with learning materials, participate in class, and collaborate with other students, is the most efficient way to increase teaching effectiveness (Tang et al., 2017). In its broadest sense, the flipped classroom is an instructional strategy where homework and instruction are switched, and where learning occurs outside of the traditional classroom setting (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020).

To achieve all the goals of learning in schools, it is necessary to apply creative methods. The selection of learning models must be considered. One of them is the Flipped Classroom learning model, seen from the learning steps that can train students to be positive in utilizing technology, train students to discover lesson concepts independently, and, have the maximum time for learning. It is said to be able to maximize time because it utilizes activities at school and home. At home, students study material in the form of videos provided by the teacher. While at school students carry out group discussions to develop their potential. Positive use of technology is carried out when accessing learning videos, and videos to gain knowledge or material. So that the role of technology is very useful in the world of education and increases knowledge.

The high interest in Flipped Classroom is also due to Covid 19. The lockdown policy prohibits learning in schools by physical contact. Transferring online classes using the Flipped Classroom method as part of a mixed learning strategy is a good decision. Flipped Classroom deals with online learning materials, mixed learning preparations, class discussions, student-centered learning, active student participation, and influencing the improvement of student learning outcomes (Gerber & Eybers, 2021).

The author finds that there is a lack of clarity in the literature about Flipped Classroom and how effective it is developed. It was also found that there was a decrease in student achievement and participation in learning (Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2022a). Inequality and the digital divide are also in the limelight as adequate mobile data is required to participate in online classes. The motivation and background for this research is the need to understand exactly how Flipped Classroom can be used as a method to improve learning outcomes and student participation and how to design the next Flipped Classroom method approach.



Based on this, the authors try to answer three research questions as follows:

Research Question1 (RQ1): How is the overall research in Flipped Classroom in research methodology, country, and Scopus rank?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What are the conclusions from the available literature?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What are the research gaps in the existing literature?

## **Methodology**

The author uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) research methodology with the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009) to summarize the findings of similar studies in the form of literature. From the PRISMA method, 30 articles were obtained which would be reviewed and analyzed.

## **Data Sources and Search Strategy**

The author collects data obtained from the Google Scholars and Scopus databases through the Harzing Publish or Perish (PoP) software (Harzing, 2014). For searches from the author's database using the keyword "Flipped Classroom" in the article's timeframe from 2018 to 2022 because it is vulnerable that year there is an outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic which encourages learning from home so that there is an increase in the use of online learning media. Most of the studies use English as the main language of instruction in their articles.

## **Selection Criteria**

The author has selected articles for review based on selection and eligibility criteria according to the research focus. Only research articles with full text will be reviewed by the authors. In addition, the authors for selecting data are published in Scopus Q1-Q4.

## **Inclusion**

All articles that are directly related and fit the criteria have been selected to find areas of focus.

## **Exclusion**

Articles that are not directly or indirectly related to learning design using the Flipped Classroom model to improve learning outcomes and student participation in schools and those that are not related to the following themes are excluded from the analysis. In addition, articles that did not have full text were not published in Scopus Q1-Q4 and where research was not carried out in schools were also excluded.

## **Study Selection**

A search on January 8, 2023, identified a total of 1844 articles from the Google Scholars and Scopus databases. Duplicate records (n = 298), Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 686), and records removed for other reasons (n = 358), concluded that the total number of articles issued was 1342 articles, leaving 502 articles.

## **Screening**

Screening is done first by reading the title and abstract, discussions that are inappropriate and not related to the theme are deleted. This screening resulted in the deletion of 419 articles and then the remaining 83 articles.

## Eligibility

In the first literacy, it is mandatory to read full-text articles to eliminate unrelated articles, this resulted in the deletion of 38 articles and the remaining 45 articles.

In the second literacy, the author thoroughly searches for articles that describe theory, data, and keywords that contribute to this research. So that at this stage the resulting article and 30 articles remained for later to be reviewed in this study.

Figure. 1 shows the educator's article screening process, and the resulting articles reviewed.

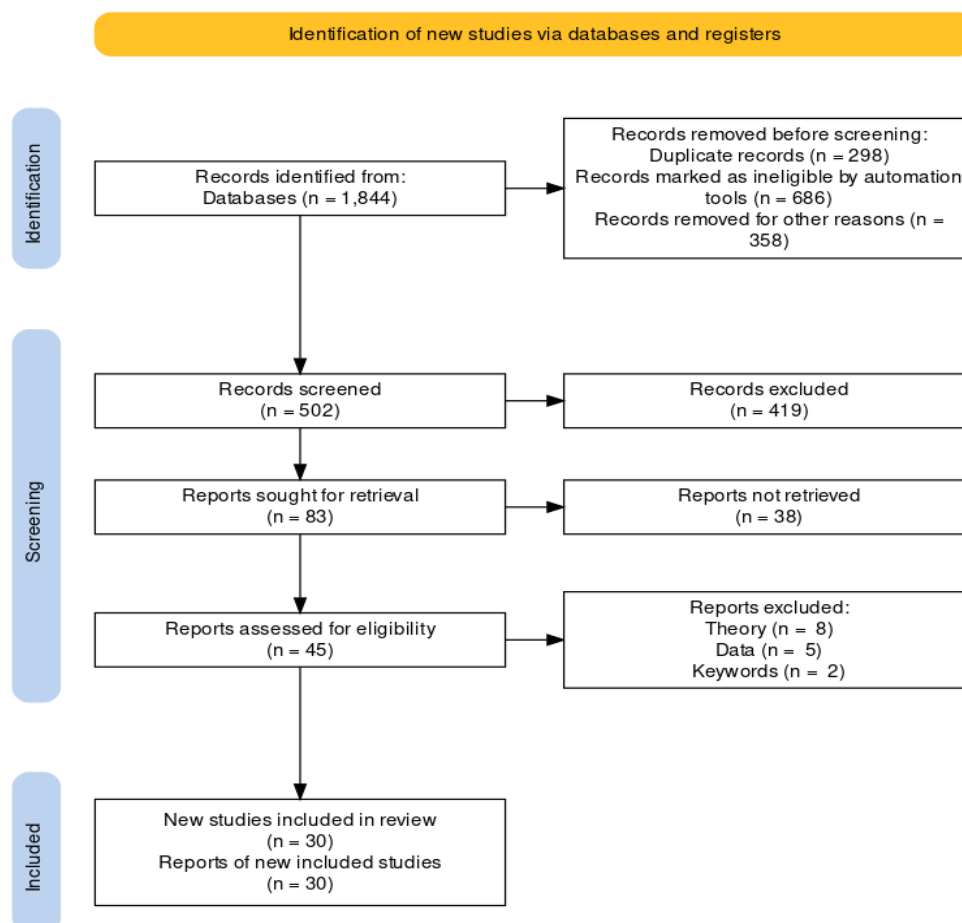


Fig 1. PRISMA

## Result and Discussion

Before answering the selection research questions, the authors have collected 30 articles that will be discussed to find out the learning design using the flipped learning model to improve learning outcomes and student participation. We can see the available articles from 2021-2022.

RQ1: How is the overall research in Flipped Classroom in terms of time, research methodology, country, and Scopus rank?

For the first research question, the author grouped the selected articles into several categories, namely based on year, research method, based on country, and Scopus rank in the selected articles.

### Research grouping based on the year

The author makes 2 dimensions: impact on learning (referring to improving student learning outcomes and student participation in learning). In this research, the author found 30 articles relating to this matter.

Grouping research based on the selected year is only in 2021 and 2022 because this year the use of Flipped Classroom to support learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic has increased, Flipped Classroom has been proud as a learning model that utilizes web-based learning [8]. The number of articles selected in educators 12 articles, 2022 there are 18 articles.

Year of Publication	Article
2021	12
2022	18

Table 1. Distribution of the published articles according to the publication year

### Research grouping based on the country

According to the picture shown in Figure 2, it can be concluded that the authors who studied the Flipped Classroom model in schools from the top two countries are Turkey and Indonesia. This is due to the need in the world of education that it raises research related to this the Flipped Classroom model in learning in schools, each country has its own of developing it. Countries such as Australia, Saudi Arabia, China, Germany, India, Iran, Japan, Korea, Nigeria, Pakistan, Spain, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates also contributed articles related to the Flipped Classroom method for 2021 and 2022.

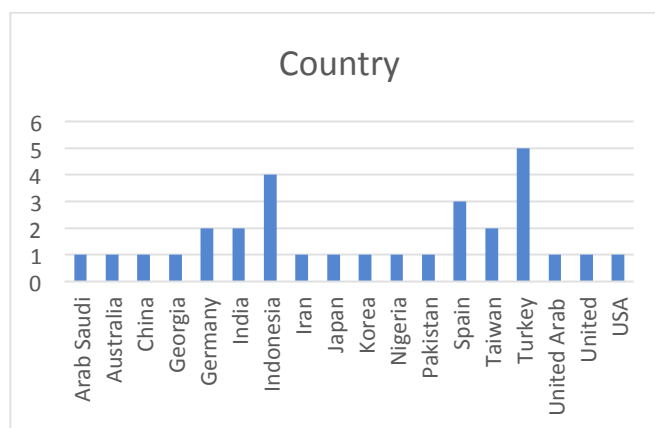


Fig 2. Studies by Country

### Research grouping based on the research method

From Figure 3 it can be concluded that there are 2 types of popular research methodologies used by researchers in Flipped Classroom research, namely quantitative descriptive methodology and qualitative descriptive methodology. Based on the select periods, research using quantitative descriptive methods was the most widely used method, namely 21 articles, while 9 other articles used qualitative descriptive methods. Quantitative methods include surveys and experiments, while conceptual papers include content analysis.

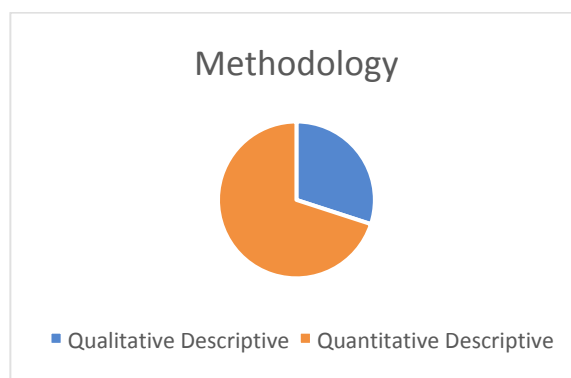


Fig 3. Studies by Research Method

### Research grouping based on the Scopus Rank

Details of the distribution of articles related to Flipped Classroom with qualitative and quantitative approaches are presented in Figure 4. From this figure, it can be seen that the results of studies related to Flipped Classroom were mostly published in Q1 with the number of articles selected, namely 19 articles, published in Q2 with 5 articles and published in Scopus Q3 with 6 articles. Meanwhile, there were no selected articles published in the Scopus Q4 journal.

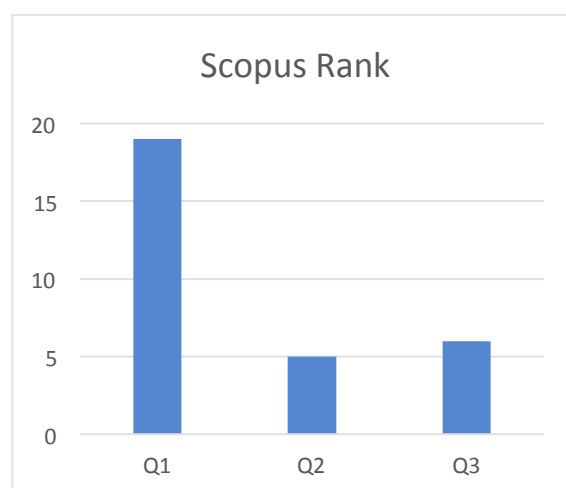


Fig 4. Studies by Scopus Rank

RQ 2: What are the conclusions from the available literature?

To answer RQ2, the researcher analyzed each article: the researcher divided the findings into 2:

1. The learning design uses the Flipped Classroom model to improve learning outcomes.
2. The learning design uses Flipped Classroom to increase student participation in learning.

### Flipped Classroom to improve learning outcomes

From the selected articles reviewed, it was found that Flipped classrooms affected the improvement of student learning outcomes in online learning. Flipped classroom embodies student learning methods that can be understood, the model used has higher performance than traditional methods (Wang, 2021). This increases student learning outcomes as evidenced by

quizzes, midterm exams, and final exams. Flipped Classroom improves academic and learning memory. In this model, students use technology such as a laptop and p smartphone to do in-class activities such as listening to lectures, watching the teacher in action outside of the classroom, and watching and listening to pre-recorded video lessons on their own (Tutal & Yazar, 2021).

The results of other studies also prove that Flipped Classroom influences improving learning outcomes, students have a good view of the Flipped Classroom model in learning, it is and also said that there is a statistically significant achievement in post-test scores than those who do not use the Flipped Classroom model (Shooli et al., 2022). In secondary education the Flipped Classroom model also has positive benefits for improving learning outcomes, the findings also discuss implications for educational practice(Wagner et al., 2021). The benefits of active learning are participating in involving students in education for sustainable development (Howell, 2021). The right pedagogies are necessary for effective Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) students in transformative learning. These pedagogies incorporate experiential, group-based, learner-centered activities as well as reflective and active learning.

Research conducted by M.CarmenRuiz-Jiménez et. al (Ruiz-Jiménez et al., 2022) concluded that student attitudes can also be used as a key to understanding the increase in student academic results in a learning environment with the Flipped Classroom method. Both aspects (perception and attitude formative assessment) explain the perception of student learning outcomes. This leads us to conclude that student attitudes are a key element to encourage more and better learning which enhances their performance. In this way, it provides further evidence for the literature on the positive effects of Flipped Classrooms on the teaching-learning process.

Research conducted by Elif Polan et. all Results from structural equation modeling showed a positive correlation between engagement and FLR and student accomplishment in the online flipped classroom, but a negative correlation between social anxiety and achievement. The study also showed that in the online flipped classroom, engagement was the most important predictor of success (E. Polat, Hopcan, & Arslantaş, 2022). Similarly, the research conducted by Polat & Karabatak concluded that, When compared to other classroom models, the flipped classroom greatly improved students' academic achievement, academic happiness, and overall sense of belonging (H. Polat & Karabatak, 2022).

The newly emerging methodological shift in education is being aided by the internet. The flipped classroom is one of the methods that the Internet is used for. When contrasting this methodology with the conventional one, research has demonstrated that there are benefits. Significant variations in how academic performance has improved with the flipped classroom approach. The outcomes further demonstrate how the flipped teaching approach successfully fosters student engagement, autonomy in learning, and interpersonal and collaborative interactions (Torres-Martín et al., 2022). Utilizing the flipped classroom in addition to improving learning outcomes, also closing achievement gaps, and increasing student engagement and critical thinking, the application of the flipped classroom model in high school (SMA) writing courses influences the quality of writing, engagement, and student perceptions of and experience with flipped classrooms (Florence & Kolski, 2021).

To benefit from higher-order learning chances during collaborative in-class learning that builds on the newly learned knowledge, individual assumptions, and misconceptions,

students are typically encouraged to watch an educational video before an in-class session. With this constructivist-based instructional strategy, students apply the information and abilities they learned from the instructional video in practical activities and group discussions with their classmates (Förster et al., 2022). Behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, learning achievement, and HOTS like problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity all improved as a result of the use of the Flipped Classroom, according to the results of quantitative and qualitative evaluations (Huang et al., 2022).

Research conducted by Cecilia Obi Nja et. al. The research utilizing a sample t-test revealed that when chemistry was taught using a flipped classroom, pupils had a positive attitude about the subject. The study also aimed to compare pupils who were taught using the flipped classroom technique to those who were not. The results of the academic accomplishment inquiry showed that pupils' academic performance was much higher than that of the traditional group (Nja et al., 2022). In line with the research conducted by Steven B. Rothman, A survey measures the student perceptions and reactions to the flipped class style compared to the traditional classroom, and a statistical analysis examines the effects of different teaching methods on student exam performance (Rothman, 2022). In addition, the use of Flipped Classroom can also be integrated with other media, as a whole, integrating PowerPoint is shown to help strengthen the learning process based on Flipped Learning to increase student understanding. (Ishartono, 2022), Further evidence that flipped instruction affected students' learning performance and perspectives came from comparing the mean scores of the groups receiving standard and flipped instruction (Shana & Alwaely, 2021).

Apart from using Powerpoint, students who get Flipped Classroom-Digital Game-Based Learning (FC-DGBL) have a better understanding of the concept of Genetics than students with traditional learning models. (Ristanto et al., 2022) effective in improving student learning behavior towards deep learning, self-efficacy, SDL, collaborative learning skills, and critically analyzing basic concepts using Flipped Classroom (Padugupati et al., 2021). Research conducted by Rapi et. al states. The findings show that students who learn with project assessments based on the flipped classroom approach and students who learned with conventional evaluations simultaneously and partially differ in their critical thinking abilities and learning outcomes (Rapi et al., 2022). The research conducted by Badriah Algarni concluded that there was no effect of using Flipped Classrooms in increasing student achievement (Algarni & Lortie-Forgues, 2022). Meanwhile, research conducted by Palazon e al (Palazón-Herrera & Soria-Vilchez, 2021) concluded that students who had studied under the flipped classroom model achieved higher academic achievement globally, expanded pedagogic learning innovations through Flipped Classrooms (Xiao & Adnan, 2022), and assisted independent learning.

### **Flipped Classroom to increase student participation in learning**

Blended learning, which combines traditional classroom instruction with online learning resources, may be a viable strategy for encouraging a more active and regular learning process while accommodating students' flexible time and location.

The use of Flipped Classrooms in learning at school also plays a role in increasing student participation or active involvement of students in learning, as based on the results of research conducted by Polat et.al (E. Polat, Hopcan, Albayrak, et al., 2022) which concluded that there was an increase in students' active participation in learning. While there were gender-specific differences in online involvement, there were no differences in the forms of feedback.

However, it is crucial to have a well-developed interactive design and to promote social interaction in mathematics teaching and learning if you want to successfully flip learning. When students failed to do the pre-class assignments and had a poor opinion of flipped learning, engagement was found to be significantly impacted (Cevikbas & Kaiser, 2022b). Research conducted by Kusuma et. al The result showed a significant effect of e-portfolio in flipped classrooms on students' speaking performance. Furthermore, students showed active behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement (Kusuma et al., 2021).

This research study highlighted a paradigm shift that is significantly altered by fusing technology and education. In the area of education, there has been significant progress toward changing how people learn. Teachers, students, and parents are now using technologically based methods at home and school as a result of the revolutionary improvement in the educational profession. Overall, it can be said that many students preferred the flipped classroom strategy to conventional education (Mujtaba Asad et al., 2022).

Teachers and students have an important role in the successful implementation of Flipped Classroom in learning (Oh et al., 2022) so that it can implement the Flipped Classroom model is an active learning strategy to increase student participation and achievement (Navin Ganesh, 2021). Research conducted by Karaođlan Yılmaz it was concluded that the mobile-based Flipped Classroom was recommended to be used to help increase student engagement and motivation (Karaođlan Yılmaz, 2022). When comparing the FCM to the conventional face-to-face approach, students' composite levels of motivation showed a statistically significant difference, with the self-efficacy subscale showing the only statistically significant change (Dixon & Wendt, 2021). It has been claimed that to expand the number of science degrees conferred by higher education institutions, empirically supported teaching strategies that boost learner engagement are essential.

RQ 3: what are the research gaps in the existing literature?

The purpose of this Systematic Literature Review is to identify learning designs using the Flipped Classroom model to improve learning outcomes and student participation and identify existing gaps. In this part of the study, researchers compared various literature in various countries, methods, and years and analyzed aspects that had not been present in previous studies.

Based on the researcher's analysis, the number of articles that focus on the use of the Flipped Classroom method in schools is 1844 articles over 2 years, namely in 2021 and 2022. For research methods, most of the studies used quantitative research methods and conceptual documents. Quantitative methods consist of surveys and quasi-experiments. Meanwhile, qualitative research involves content analysis such as interviews. Based on the analysis of existing studies, there are findings from many authors who focus on primary and secondary education, whereas there are only a few studies that concentrate on universities, but the author only selects studies in schools to be studied. The reason for choosing primary or secondary school students, not higher education, is because Flipped Classroom is effectively used at the school level. This Systematic Literature Review shows that most of the articles are focused on the use of Flipped classrooms to improve student learning outcomes. Other research also concludes that the use of the Flipped Classroom model is to increase student participation during the learning process.

The Flipped Classroom learning model is intended to make learning in class more effective and efficient. The Flipped Classroom model provides what is generally done in class and what is generally done as homework then flipped or swapped. So students outside the classroom study the material before entering class, then when in class students do exercises or discuss or solve problems accompanied by the teacher. In addition, this learning model can make students more active in interacting with teachers. This is supported by the results of research conducted by Malek Jdaitawi (Jdaitawi, 2019) Conclude that Students in the flipped group consider by considered higher levels of self-regulation and social connectivity than those in the standard group, according to an ANOVA study. According to the results, kids who experienced flipped classrooms significantly outperformed their counterparts in the traditional group in terms of self-regulated learning and social connectivity. The outcomes show that the flipped classroom approach can be utilized to encourage independent learning and strengthen students' social connections. Other research also concludes that the Flipped Classroom model is a relatively new teaching strategy that tries to increase student engagement and performance by moving learning outside the classroom through technology (Clark, 2015).

In all areas, humans require technology. Education is one of them. It can be difficult to successfully incorporate technology into learning programs, and schools and instructors in particular must be careful whether so. The analysis that the purpose of the flipped classroom model is to continue to help improve learning outcomes and active participation of students at school even though the learning situation must be carried out outside the classroom. Several countries from the results of this literature research have proven this.

## **Conclusion**

Technological developments in the era of globalization and the Covid 19 pandemic that attacked the world have a direct impact on the quality of education today so cannot be avoided in teaching and learning activities. One of the efforts that can be made to develop the potential of students is through the level of education that can be done in the teaching and learning process, by facilitating and encouraging their learning activities.

The use of Flipped Classroom can be used as a solution to maintain the quality of learning and still have an impact on increasing learning outcomes and active student participation. The author has found various benefits of using the Flipped Classroom method. Therefore, the author suggests future researchers consider other digital-based learning models to be developed. This subject is used to pique interest and inspire learning. Despite this, not all pupils have access to technology, and senior teachers continue to face technical difficulties. As a result, the school has essentially resolved how to solve this issue to help kids and staff. This is so because technology has become essential in this digital age.

The systematic literature review process was based on the quality criteria that have been described and took the PRISMA protocol criteria as a reference. The findings show that the flipped classroom method plays a fairly positive role in learning at school, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Conclusively the success of the Flipped classroom model is influenced by teachers, learning innovations, and technological facilities such as the internet, cell phone etc. which can support learning using the Flipped Classroom model. Future researchers must adopt other models and approaches with various methods to way to increase learning outcomes and



active involvement of students in the learning process using technology so that they can predict active learning for student improvement and education improvement in the world. Recommendations are given based on the gaps that exist in previous studies. Future research should also add new variables such as technological constraints, parental support, or the use of Flipped classrooms to increase student creativity.

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***Systematic Literature Review: Implementation of Digital Leadership in Education in Several Countries***

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**Abstract**

Digital leadership is strategic leadership by utilizing technology, especially digital assets to achieve organizational goals. The purpose of this research is to find out how digital leadership is implemented in various countries. The research method used in this study is the SLR (Systematic Literature Review) method. Collecting data by collecting similar research articles with research purposes. The articles used in this study were 30 journal articles after selection that were obtained from the Crossref database using Harzing's Publish or Perish application in the last 5 years, from 2018 to 2022. Based on this research, it was found that digital leadership capabilities by a leader have a significant positive impact in supporting an effective learning process which has implications for the achievement of pre-planned educational goals. This study concludes that it is necessary to apply digital leadership capabilities in the world of education in order to improve the quality of education and achieve more optimal learning objectives.

Keywords: Leadership, Digital, Globalization, Digital Leadership

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## Introduction

The emergence of digital technologies, as represented by artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, cloud computing, big data, edge computing and 5G, not only leads a new round of economic and industrial transformation, but also reshapes society and fundamentally changes organizational governance (Peng, 2022). Changes and developments in science and technology that are increasingly advanced in the current era of globalization have given birth to a new lifestyle, where life has been filled with competition so that people and organizations in it need to improve themselves to keep up with the changes that are happening. Technology and the internet have driven innovation and new opportunities by digitizing customers, companies, products, services, and processes (Junita, 2019). Global changes like this also affect the world of education which must be able to adjust or adapt to existing changes in order to achieve educational goals that have been set previously, this is in accordance with research conducted by Kanyarat Suksaen (Suksaen & Trirat, 2021). Inequality in terms of digital skills is a challenge faced by organizations, both companies, governments and the world of education to ensure productivity and effectiveness in carrying out tasks in the era of globalization and during Covid-19 (Saputra & Nugroho, 2021).

The development of knowledge and technology must also be balanced with adequate human resource capabilities in order to utilize these developments effectively and efficiently. In the world of education, the progress or failure of an educational organization is inseparable from the name of the leader, with the development of technology it is hoped that leaders also have good abilities to take advantage of these developments in order to achieve goals. Leadership is part of management, namely planning, organizing, and implementing the evaluation stage. This explains importance of a leader having good competence so that the organization he leads runs in a better direction, one of which is the ability of digital leadership (Rhinesmith et al., 2022).

In the current era of globalization, digital capabilities are the main prerequisite in every activity. Likewise, in the world of education, digital capabilities are the main support in the midst of a pandemic that is full of uncertainty. The leader or leader of an educational institution is a person who usually decides what is right or most appropriate in certain situations, especially in the education policy itself (Andriani et al., 2022). More than just digital capabilities, the world of education also demands more in terms of digital leadership capabilities or what is commonly called Digital Leadership. Technology-based organizations can improve quality and global competitiveness and competitive advantage (Pratiwi et al., 2022). The process of improving Digital Leadership skills in education is not easy. The ideal principal leadership in the digital era is leadership that follows the flow of technological developments where the principal must play a role to influence, move and guide his subordinates to implement educational programs in accordance with technological developments in the era of globalization.

The challenge of leaders in the digital era is that they are required to be able to generate creative and innovative ideas in order to be able to turn problems into solutions and opportunities in carrying out their duties and functions in advancing the world of education in the digital era (Capogna et al., 2018). Leadership in the digital era drives a lot of issues, especially regarding the readiness of leaders and their members in exploring all possibilities in the use of digital technology to maximize their efforts (Erhan et al., 2022). There are many leadership styles, each of which has its advantages and disadvantages, but what must be considered is that the leader's leadership style must be adjusted to the circumstances that



occur in educational institutions today (Rüth & Netzer, 2020). Every leader is expected to have an ideal leadership style tailored to the conditions and demands of the times. The problem is that not all leaders have the ability to adapt to the demands of change, coupled with the lack of knowledge of school principals on the transformation of principal leadership in the digital era. Digital era leadership has an impact on the digital transformation of an organization as well (Sow & Aborbie, 2018; Sunu, 2022). Digital leadership is characterized by technological developments in leadership in educational institutions. Several studies conducted show that digital leadership positively impacts the quality of a leader's performance (Sunu, 2022).

Leadership is the process of influencing individual or group activities to achieve certain goals in certain situations (Visintini, 2022). One of the leadership styles that are in accordance with the conditions of technological development and the digital era at this time is the digital leadership model. The digital leadership style is an appropriate method for determining the level of readiness of followers in information technology, starting from the introduction and operation of software (software, applications, operating systems) and hardware (cell phones, modems, computers, touch screens), work ethic, to legality issues in information technology (Jisr, 2021). Identifying followers' readiness for digital information-based businesses can be done by adjusting the indicators of digital information readiness and skills with the level of readiness of followers in the leadership process. A leader must have an attitude of responsibility and be ready to face every challenge that exists including in the digital era without setting aside his role as a leader (Kahanna, 2021).

## Methods

The method used in this research is Systematic Literature Review (SLR). This research method is carried out by identifying, reviewing, evaluating, and interpreting all available research. This method reviews and identifies journals systematically in each process following the following steps (1) Research Question, made based on the topic chosen by the researcher. (2) Search Process, used to obtain answers to research questions in the previous step obtained from relevant sources. The search process can use the google chrome search engine with the site <http://garuda.ristekdikti.go.id> for primary data and <http://google.com> for secondary data. (3) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria, at this stage a decision is made on whether or not the data used in SLR research is feasible. (4) Quality Assessment, at this stage the data that has been found will be evaluated based on the criteria questions in the predetermined quality assessment. (5) Data Collecting, is the stage where existing research data is collected. And (6) Data Analysis, at this stage the data that has been collected will be analyzed to show the results of the research questions that have been made previously and conclusions are drawn.

This research collects journal articles on the Crossref database with the help of the Publish or Perish application, the keyword is digital leadership. The articles collected are only articles published in the last 5 years, from 2018 to 2022, due to the massive implementation of technology in the world of education due to technological developments and covid-19. The protocol the author uses is the PRISMA Protocol (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyzes). The primary study selection process is carried out through four stages that refer to PRISMA, namely; identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion (Dadang Juandi & Tamur, 2020). From the articles collected, we selected 64 articles that were closely related to the keywords used. In the next step, researchers grouped articles

related to the topic to be discussed into 30 articles, then this article will be reviewed and studied by researchers comprehensively.

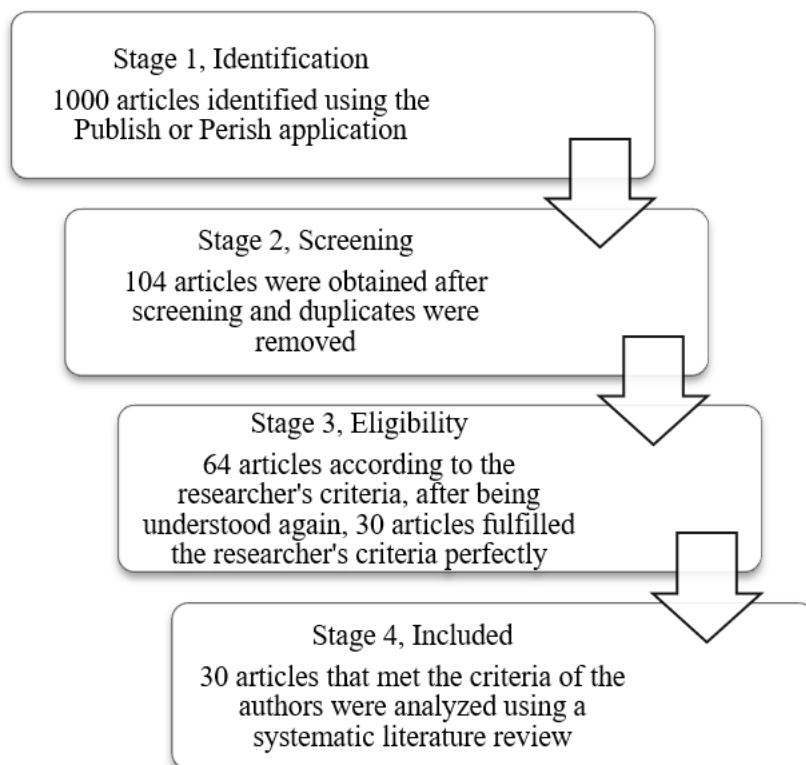


Figure 1: Digital Leadership Prism Diagrams

**Results and Discussion**

The results of the research data included in this literature review are an analysis and summary of documented research related to digital leadership. In this study, researchers categorized based on five moderating variables, namely research year, education level, sample size, research type, and country. The results of the analysis can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Analysis Results

Criteria		Number of Articles
Research Year	2018	2
	2019	4
	2020	6
	2021	7
	2022	11
Education Level	elementary school	1
	Junior high school	2
	Senior High School	6
	College/University	21
Sample Size	< 30	8
	>= 30	22

Type of Research	Qualitative	19
	Quantitative	9
	Mix Method	2
Research Location	Indonesia	13
	India	1
	Amerika	4
	Thailand	1
	Italy	1
	Vietnam	1
	Germany	3
	Turkey	1
	China	1
	Inggris	1
	Lebanon	1
	Russia	1
	Romania	1
	Netherlands	1

In today's dynamic digital transformation and modern era, conventional leadership and separate management theories are increasingly disappearing and outdated because the organizational culture and work environment are not effective with the times (Verma et al., 2022). Digital leadership is a disposition for leaders and aspiring leaders to be able to direct the organizations they lead toward digital transformation. It directs, facilitates, and coordinates digital work and knowledge processes within organizations. Digital leadership requires not only an appreciation of the potential of information and communication technologies to assist leadership, but also a recognition of the limitations of these technologies and how they can be used. Digital leadership based on several studies has a positive impact on organizational performance (Theng et al., 2021). There are several criteria that a leader must have in developing digital leadership itself including transformative vision, foresight, technological literacy, adaptability managerial, collaborative, democratic, participatory, and good networking (Thohri, 2022).

Digital leadership competencies researched by Prawiro Theng et al. (Theng et al., 2021) explain that the presence of a leader's digital capabilities will have a positive impact and influence on improving organizational performance. According to research conducted by Michael Jacoby et al. defining the digital revolution and the era of globalization are about optimization and automation supported by networks, machines, and processes that are more effective (Jacoby & Usländer, 2020). Based on research conducted by several researchers in the article, Katie Storm explains that the utilization of existing technological media also has a significant impact and is of interest to several universities in various countries (Strom & Porfilio, 2019). However, as more and more organizations are in the process of digital transformation, this makes it a challenge for a leader who only concerns top management, but all layers of management must be able to utilize and manage this digital technology-driven transformation.

The digital age we are experiencing is changing people's perception of life and work at an impressive pace comparable to the impact of the industrial revolution. The new phase of the digitization process, sometimes called the social stage, is characterized by connections never seen before, both personally and professionally (Mihai & Crețu, 2019). The digital age is

moving so fast that it is changing the way organizations operate, be it private or public institutions, and requires them to be able to adapt to the demands of the times. Therefore, globalization has a profound effect on the human resource function in organizations (Iskamto, 2020; Kuznetsova, 2021). One of the increases in digital leadership competencies will improve employee performance and be able to do work in accordance with the system provided by the company so that the company's vision and mission can be fulfilled properly (Iskamto, 2020).

Empowering leaders means empowering the organization as well as understanding their contribution to managing an organization. Due to the covid 19 pandemic, private and public sectors are severely affected worldwide. This causes all sectors to accept change and undergo digital transformation well. For example, the world of education, which utilizes Zoom or other digital media in the teaching and learning process and banking, has switched to digital activities rather than conventional (Verma et al., 2022). To accept this kind of digital change, leaders need to have various leadership skills in the digital era. These skills are as follows: personal communication, always being ready to accept change, providing free hands to commit errors, responsibility to encourage digital literacy, and leaders should always be innovative (Henderikx & Stoffers, 2022).

By applying the inclusion criteria for relevant studies, articles were further categorized based on their study characteristics or moderator variables, namely year of publication, education level, sample size, research type, and research location. The articles were then described individually based on the predetermined criteria.

#### A. Research Year

The studies used as data by researchers in this systematic review study are research articles published from 2018 to 2022. Details of the distribution of primary studies from 2018 to 2022 are presented in Figure 2:

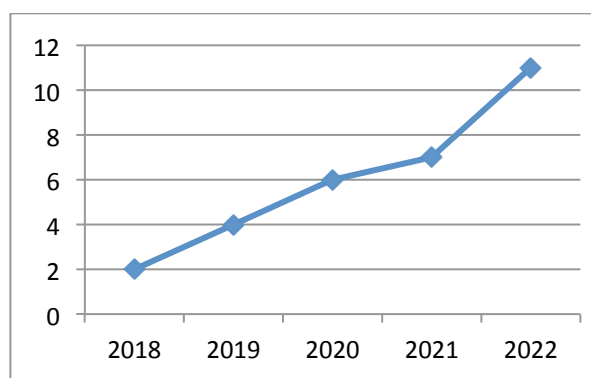


Figure 2: Research data by year

Based on the results of the analysis of several research journals in the last five years, namely from 2018 to 2022, the data obtained can be seen in Figure 2. Based on Figure 2, it can be concluded that research related to digital leadership has increased significantly from year to year. The lowest research on digital leadership was conducted in 2018 with 2 articles, while the highest occurred in 2022 with 11 articles. Therefore, it can be concluded that the urgency and influence of digital leadership increasingly need to be discussed and improved. In accordance with the findings of Mouhamadou Sow's research which shows that the digital leadership style is very impactful in organizational transformation and employee engagement in carrying out their duties to achieve organizational goals (Sow & Aborbie, 2018). In

addition, research conducted by Rajanikant Verma explains that this digital era requires several opportunities that must be owned by every leader including upgraded data collection, knowing customer insights through social media platforms, and companies are witnessing higher profits in the digital transformation (Verma et al., 2022).

### B. Education Level

Grouping by education level is divided into 4 categories, namely elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university. The number of studies based on education level is presented in the following graphical data Figure 2:

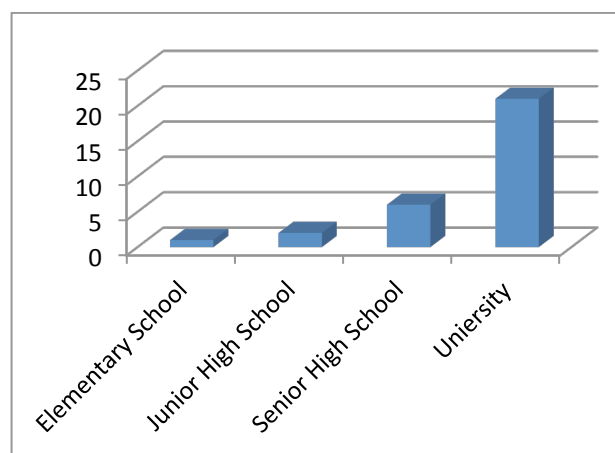


Figure 3: Research data by level

From Figure 3, it can be interpreted that digital leadership is more researched and studied at the university level with a total of 21 articles, while in elementary schools there are still few studies related to digital leadership conducted and published. Therefore, this must be a concern because digital leadership is a competency that is very important to be developed and possessed by every leader regardless of the level of education he leads. This is in accordance with research by Hamzah (Hamzah et al., 2021), which says that school leaders today must strive to fill any gaps in their technical knowledge and skills in order to provide direction and guidance to lead digital development in their school and spread this practice to the school learning environment. Furthermore, research conducted by Rajanikan Verma et al explains that in this modern era, there have been drastic changes in the field of leadership in both the industrial and service worlds, where conventional leadership concepts are increasingly outdated due to changes and developments in science and technology that are increasingly modern and demands to meet organizational needs (Verma et al., 2022). From the research of Galina V. Kuznetsova, several organizations explained that organizations that successfully carry out digital transformation with a clear vision and mission will have a high chance of survival and development (Kuznetsova, 2021).

### C. Sample Size

Research related to the size of the research sample is categorized by researchers into 2 categories, namely research with a sample size of  $< 30$  and research with a sample size of  $\geq 30$ :

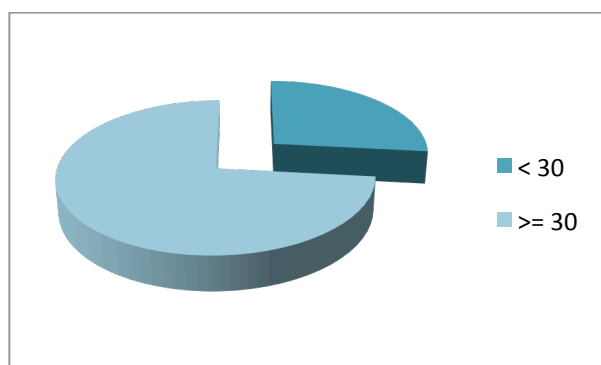


Figure 4: Research Data Based on Sample Size

Based on graph 4. it can be understood that research on digital leadership is dominated by samples with an amount of approximately or equal to 30. The sample is a snippet or part of the population to be studied or it can also be said that the population is in miniature (miniature population). One of the conditions that must be met by the sample is that the sample must be representative of the population (Danuri et al., 2019).

#### D. Type of Research

Grouping based on the type of research is divided into 3 categories, namely qualitative, quantitative, and mix- method research. In qualitative research, researchers categorize it into descriptive qualitative research, case studies, and phenomenology. While quantitative research is divided into descriptive, experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational quantitative research, more details can be seen in Figure 5. below:

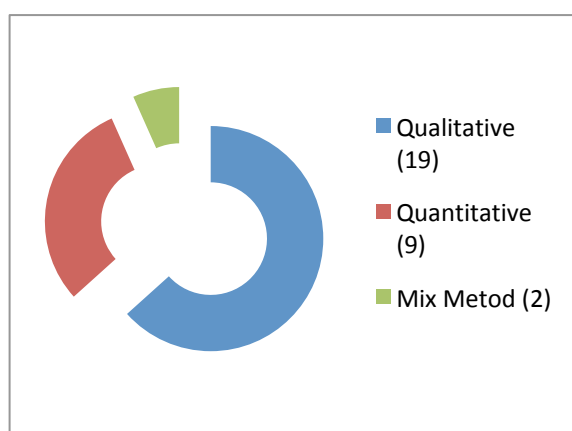


Figure 5: Research data based on research type

Based on Figure 5, it can be concluded that research on digital leadership itself uses the most qualitative research methods compared to quantitative methods and mixed methods. This explains that qualitative research is preferred by researchers and the results of the research are more detailed and in-depth considering that qualitative research itself focuses on quality, the data collection process is flexible and interaction is carried out with the language used in the data collection process. In accordance with research conducted by René R uth and Torsten Netzer who conducted qualitative research on the use of digital media in the world of organizations or the world of education, it has a good impact on improving quality, the technology used, for example, the concept of cultural intelligence and artificial intelligence which provides tools for managing diverse resources from various cultures, backgrounds in one organizational framework (R uth & Netzer, 2020).

### E. Research Location

Details of the distribution of studies based on demographics related to digital leadership are categorized by researchers based on the country where the research was conducted. This is presented in Figure 6 below:

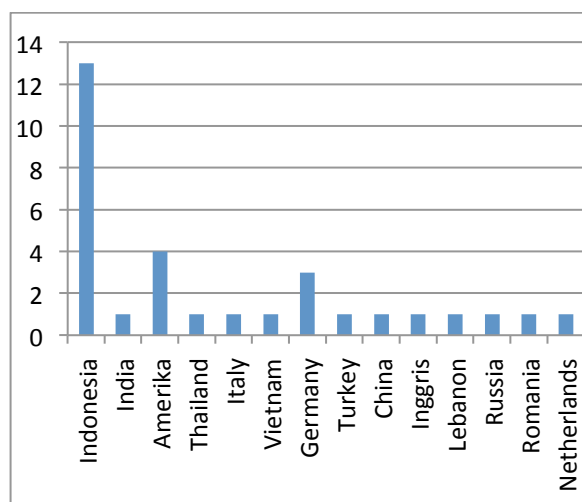


Figure 6: Research Data Based on Research Location

Figure 6 explains that research on digital leadership has been widely researched in several countries in the world. Meanwhile, the most research conducted on digital leadership itself that was obtained by researchers was in Indonesia. This explains that digital leadership is a competency that must be possessed by leaders in the current era of the development of science and technology. This is in line with research conducted by Stefania Capogna et.t who conducted research on the impact of digital society challenges focused on education and digital leadership which explained that in dealing with technological developments we need highly technical and methodological skills to move digitally and require social-social skills. strong emotions to maintain cognitive, emotional, and relational loads in both real and virtual environments (Capogna et al., 2018). Gloria Visintini also conducted research on the academic leadership approach to the implementation of digital education in higher education which explained that technology and human resources are key in implementing education in the digital era (Visintini, 2022).

### Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion described above, research on digital leadership has received good attention, especially in the last few years, especially in 2018 to 2022 with qualitative methods as the method most widely used by researchers. The majority of research was conducted at the college or university level with a majority sample size of more than or equal to 30. Research on digital leadership has also been widely researched in various countries and from the results of this research digital leadership has had a positive impact. Suggestions for future researchers are to be able to do in-depth research not only at the university level but also at other levels of education.

## **Acknowledgment**

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## ***Teaching Students to Draw Quickly: A Strategy to Encourage Traditional Drawing Skills***

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### **Abstract**

With the introduction of better design and drawing software in the previous decade, Architecture and Interior Design students are relying more and more on the computer to produce visual representations of their ideas. Students entering the College of Architecture, Art and Design at the American University of Sharjah (AUS) are becoming less motivated to build their observational freehand drawing skills knowing that when they enter the second year of their major they will transition to producing most of their work on the computer. The challenge is to get students to understand that learning freehand observational drawing is more than being able to replicate things they see in front of them. Observational drawing is also the act of visual analysis that transcends superficial observation. Being able to quickly understand and draw what is in front of them will also lead to being able to quickly draw and understand what they envision in their minds. In order to get students to embrace traditional drawing, they must understand the benefits of what drawing can do that is hard to replicate on the computer. Speed is key. Students are more apt to use and develop their drawing skills if it allows them to work more efficiently. This paper will explore the process involved to learn how to analyze form and space and quickly produce a drawing that privileges formal and spatial content over superficial detail. It will also examine how both drawing and computer visualization can work in tandem to enhance design process.

Keywords: Drawing, Design, Studio Teaching, Visualization

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## **Introduction: Getting Started**

Free-hand drawing is just one aspect of the larger issue of representation. The representation of objects, form and space can be accomplished in many different ways. Various forms of representation require differing skills and sensibilities to be able to communicate effectively to a given audience. Free-hand drawing is probably the most immediate skill because we start drawing as children and use the tools (pencil, paper, pens) throughout our elementary and secondary education. Students entering university tend to come in with some degree of drawing skills even if they haven't drawn since they were children. The intention of teaching drawing skills to first year design students is to foster their abilities to represent and communicate complicated ideas visually and to be able to do so quickly and efficiently. Skills in other forms of representation, including computer drawing or modeling, build on these primary free-hand drawing skills.

Drawing is not just about developing a technical skill. Drawing is a means evaluate and analyze objects, form and space through your point of view or perception. It is a method of active engagement to analyze and understand the components, characteristics and organization of a complex form or space. Prolonged looking and documentation through free-hand drawing often reveals characteristics that are not noticed or seen by just a passive glance. This type of seeing and understanding opens up a realm of knowledge and understanding that goes unnoticed by much of the world. It is important for students to understand these broader objectives in order for them to accept the importance of free-hand drawing.

Before you represent the ideas in your head, you need to be able to represent those things that are in front of you. When the lesson is about developing an understanding of form and space through drawing, there is a big difference between the representation of a two dimensional image from a magazine or the internet and the representation of an actual three dimensional object or space in front of you. For design students, copying two dimensional images through drawing is pointless. The translation of an actual three dimensional object or space to a free-hand, two dimensional drawing is key to developing both representation skills and understanding. Francis Ching describes drawing as “not only as artistic expression but also as a practical tool for formulating and working through design problems.”<sup>1</sup> It is these types of exercises that help students learn how to see and think visually.

## **Traditional Still-Life Drawing**

Traditional art and design foundations drawing courses tends to examine very complex still-life's with various types of objects, cloth with folds and patterns, and dramatic lighting. These drawings tend to be developed over a period of a few to many weeks often totaling 40 to 50 hours to complete a single drawing. They emphasize a high level of realism. Unless you are going into fine arts or illustration, most students will never draw like that again in their careers. For design students, this type of still-life drawing is irrelevant to how they will eventually use drawing as a means of thinking and experimentation. Not to say that there aren't benefits to looking and drawing a still-life over a long period of time. There is a discipline and an eye for detail that is developed by having to draw a single still-life over a multi-week period. But there is also a discipline that develops when you have to draw the same thing over and over again in a much shorter period of time until you get the proportions and relative relationships correct. It is a type of exercise that relies on active drawing without

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<sup>1</sup> Ching, p.18

erasing. Design drawing allows the students to move away from realism and to be comfortable with a certain level of abstraction.

### **Design Still-life Drawing**

Design drawing is quick but accurate. It is not the same as sketching. Sketching implies a quick, rough approximation of what you are observing but design drawing tries to be more precise although usually more abstract. Design drawing encourages an editing process where some details are ignored and others exaggerated. Iteration is key so students learning how to draw the same thing from many different angles. They draw the same object over and over again at different speeds. Some drawings are very quick taking just 5 minutes. More complex spatial drawings might take up to two hours but usually that is the maximum time for most free-hand design drawings.

### **The Process of Design Drawing and Building Speed**

Students starting out at university learning to draw come with a wide variation of drawing skills. Some have taken drawing in high school while others haven't drawn since they were 8 years old. To level the playing field a little bit we introduce drawing exercises that most students are not very facile with. It is important to get students to slow down and just start making a series of marks on the paper so they don't worry so much about the outcome. The first exercise is a series of line drawings that begin to develop muscle control, speed control and hand-eye coordination. These drawings require students to fill up A5 and A4 sheets of paper with horizontal, vertical, diagonal and random lines spaced as evenly as possible but allowed to vary from 2 mm to 5 mm apart. Students first define an area or border with light regulating lines on their paper so that each line has a particular start and finish point. This means that students must be able to start and stop in a consistent way and control their speed. If students get in a hurry or lose their concentration after fifty to one hundred lines, the inconsistencies are easily identified. Erasers are not allowed and are contrary to the point of the exercise anyway. After doing this for a number of hours every day for a week, students are eager to move on to the next exercise.

The first exercise where students get to draw an object in front of them entails a series of blind contour drawings. This exercise is important because it begins the process where students are forced to really look at the object they are drawing and think about the continuity of the line. The exercise is really about a process and not a product but the outcomes are usually psychologically troubling for the student who has been conditioned to produce drawings that must maintain a level of realism and accuracy. Blind contours are typically quick, one to two-minute drawings that are repeated over and over again. Using blind contours helps the drawing student to loosen up and relax and not worry so much about the outcome of each drawing. It is also an important exercise to make students less reliant on their erasers and thinking that every drawing must be perfect. Blind contour exercises are great because it allows the students to just prioritize the act of looking (seeing) and develop confident consistent lines.

From the blind contour, students are given the opportunity to look every 5 to 10 seconds to orient themselves a little better on the paper. These semi-blind contours help students to begin to translate what they see in front of them to the paper by finding formal relationships between the various parts of the still-life. These drawings tend to take a little longer but are still in the 2 to 4 minute range. It is not uncommon for students to fill up their entire pad of

paper in less than a week with these drawings. Blind and semi-blind contours are mostly executed in pen so the temptation to erase is eliminated.

After a couple of weeks of blind and semi-blind drawings, students transition to more traditional drawing techniques where they are allowed to pick up their pen or pencil and begin the process of representing proportions, formal relationships and positive and negative space much more accurately. These quick still-life drawings are also very repetitive and are loosely time to occur in 5, 10, 15, 30 and 45 min. drawings. It is important to constantly reinforce the notion that students should be spending much more time looking at the still-life and much less time looking at their paper. After each drawing, students will evaluate the accuracy of their work and determine areas for improvement before drawing the same view again. While a lot of students have difficulty finding their mistakes, the role of the drawing instructor is to point these out but only after the drawing has been completed. These still life drawings focus primarily on the overall form and less of the qualities or details of the surface. The drawings are broken down into relationships of lines and points, looking at the shape of both positive and negative space. Students are also encouraged to use light regulating lines or construction lines to help plan out their drawings.

The next step of adding shade, shadow and gradation to help integrate surface with line and form introduces a variety of techniques. Graphite, hatching and cross hatching, charcoal and stippling are all explored as a means to move from a more two-dimensional line drawing to a more three-dimensional drawing where light becomes an important element in the visual representation of form. While these drawings incorporate a much more complex set of issues to address, each drawing is still kept to 45 minutes to one hour. When students practice in the studio after hours, they might take a little longer. This is the first set of drawings where the eraser becomes more of a tool as students add and subtract graphite or charcoal to get the gradation and tone variation correct.

The final set of exercises removes the still-life as the focus of the drawing and places the student in various interior and exterior spaces to draw. Perspective is introduced as a basic structure to help students understand how lines and surfaces relate but observation is maintained as the primary method of analysis and representation. Because these spaces are extremely detailed and cluttered with information, students are made to edit what they see to depict only those things that help them define the space. There is a necessity towards abstraction that allow for the essential information to be represented and other things to be simplified or eliminated altogether. Students begin to understand that drawing is about interpretation of what they see and that it is ok to use their own judgement in how the space or form can be represented. These series of final drawings are the longest drawings they might make but still only amount to about two hours per drawing.

The intention to the entire semester is to encourage students to use drawing as a means to explore possibilities and analyze and document what they see. Beyond the technical skills they develop over a period of a few short months, the ability to represent form that is in front of them will hopefully translate to an ability to represent form that they conjure in their mind. With the introduction of other means to represent space and form, namely the computer, it is hoped that these traditional drawing skills are quicker, more flexible, and more easily utilized at the initial stages of the design process.

As the computer is introduced to produce measured orthographic drawings and 3d modeling, students are encouraged to use free-hand drawing to diagram architectural ideas, and their



initial representation of form and space. Using free-hand drawing as an initial exploration incorporating multiple versions and many ideas allows a certain amount of flexibility before investing in the time and energy to produce the computer drawings that requires precision, certainty and clarity. Charcoal and graphite drawing can also introduce an atmospheric quality that is hard to replicate very easily on the computer, especially at the early stages of the design process.

## **Conclusion**

Freehand drawing allows flexibility in one's visual thinking. Ching states, "In fostering a heightened and critical awareness of the visual environment, drawing also nurtures understanding and improves our visual memory."<sup>2</sup> Though it produces imprecise and vague notions of form and space, it allows the designer to move through many ideas quickly and efficiently until they commit to a particular direction. At a point of some degree of certainty and direction, the designer will move primarily to the computer to produce a three dimensional model and a series of two dimensional drawings. Even at this point, there are times where a computer drawing will be printed out and a freehand drawing will be traced on top of the computer drawing to investigate alternative elevational ideas or plan organizations. Designers that are nimble with both computer and freehand drawing skills often use them in tandem to work more efficiently which in turn produces better results.

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<sup>2</sup> Ching, p. 22

## **Reference**

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***Re-investigation of Cinematic Narrator: An Analysis of Japanese Film Narratage***

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**Abstract**

This research re-questions the concept of cinematic narrator, to evaluate the understanding towards narrative cinema and its operations. Through a case study on the feature film *Narratage* (2017), this research attempts to problematize how film arranges the logic of its storytelling through narrative structure and narration, as well as how the elements of film style contribute to the narrativity of the cinema. To answer these questions, a narrative analysis based on plot segmentation and close textual reading is used to read *Narratage*. Based on the result of the analysis, it could be argued that the cinematic narrator does not only refer to the “figure of the storyteller,” but instead relates more widely with how the audiovisual enunciation is utilized to form the narrative itself.

Keywords: Narrative, Narration, Cinematic Narrator

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## Introduction

It is undeniable that narrative has become the dominant form of cinema recognized today. From a simplified perspective on film history, it can also be acknowledged that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a paradigm shift of cinema as a medium of attraction—which was later labelled by film theorists as “cinema of attraction”—to the direction of what we now know as narrative cinema. Students of cinema have also accepted this shift, by arguing that Hollywood, as the dominant force, has also participated in the establishment of the hegemony of narrative cinema in the world.

Having said that, is narrative cinema a natural progression of the development of film as a medium? Or, in other words, is it true that cinema is essentially narrative? Such essentialist questions cannot be answered simply. However, the development of the science of narrative—narratology—which took place throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be able to provide several perspectives to re-examine how cinema also transforms itself into a medium of storytelling. Referring to introductory literature on narratology, the narrative tends to be defined as a “semiotic representation of a series of meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way” (Onega & Landa, 2014, p. 3). Temporal relations and causality are the keywords here because without these two things (and also without the spatial context), it is said that “narrative” cannot be formed.

Film as a moving-image medium has the advantage that with the principles of mimesis and motion, the representation of an event becomes perceptible based on temporal development, and also with a spatial depiction that appears real. As André Bazin points out, cinema, in addition to capturing the essence of reality through photographic mechanism, also captures “the image of their duration, change mummified as it were” (Bazin, 2004, p. 15). In simpler terms, it can be argued that cinema should have narrativity precisely because it already has a kind of built-in temporality. However, is narrativity—the quality or condition of presenting a narrative—universal? Or on the contrary, is narrativity medium-specific, which consequently means that cinema’s narrativity has its particular characteristics?

In an attempt to answer these questions, this research intends to re-investigate the concept of the cinematic narrator as a key figure in the transformation of cinema into a narrative form. The word “cinematic” raises the suspicion that there is something specific about cinema’s narrative operation, especially when compared to other storytelling mediums. To re-examine the concept of the cinematic narrator, we propose a case study of a narrative film text that has several characteristics suitable for discussion in the context of narratological scholarship. The film is a Japanese feature film titled *Narratage* (2017). *Narratage* is a film adaptation of a novel of the same name, which tells the story of a young woman named Izumi Kudo who recalls her complex past with a teacher she knew in high school named Takashi Hayama. Most of the film is a series of memories belonging to Izumi, which are accidentally triggered one day after a conversation with a co-worker. The film presents these memories in a series of non-linear flashbacks that mix Izumi’s point of view with the events happening to other characters around her.

To explain the narrative mechanism of *Narratage*, we will work through two research questions: (1) How does *Narratage* position the narrator in its narration?; (2) How is the narration in *Narratage* enunciated through stylistic elements in the film?

## Methodology

This research is a qualitative study, which is a narrative-based textual analysis of a film text. The primary data source used is a narrative fiction feature film titled *Narratage* (2017), by director Isao Yukisada. This film was chosen because of its characteristics of having a character who narrates the story, but in the presentation of the film, a certain level of ambiguity sometimes arises that raises questions such as, “Who is telling the story?”, because the main character’s point of view clashes with the presence of other characters in the story. Its characteristic of playing with temporality, namely with non-linear storytelling techniques, is also an element that is considered to contribute to the discussion about narrativity. The film text will be examined using plot segmentation and close reading method. The results of the data description will then be compared with several related concepts obtained from literature studies on narrative and narratology, as well as the concept of the cinematic narrator itself.

## Debates on Cinematic Narrator

Many opinions have been expressed about the figure of the cinematic narrator. André Gaudreault distinguishes between what he calls the underlying narrator and the delegated narrator. According to Gaudreault, the underlying narrator is the primary narrator, who works implicitly as an omnipresent agent outside the narrative that controls what happens in it; whereas, the delegated narrator is the secondary narrator, personified in the narrative (in other words, also known as the character-narrator) (2009, p. 120). Gaudreault argues that the cinematic narrator can be explained through the relationship between these two levels of narrators—one is hidden, while the other is personified. However, not all films have a personified narrator. This fact seems to encourage the idea that the position of the underlying narrator may be more important in explaining the status of the cinematic narrator. However, what or who exactly is this underlying narrator? Can the filmmaker be positioned as a cinematic narrator? Or is there a more precise explanation of the term? To further explore the concept, here is a review of literature relevant to the concept of cinematic narrator.

In an article titled “Silly Questions and Arguments for the Implicit Cinematic Narrator,” Angela Curran (2019) attempts to clarify the terminology related to narration in film, especially fiction films. A fictional film conveys a story, which is a plot, a sequence of events underlying a story, and of course, a narration, so that the story can be conveyed to the audience. Thus, generally speaking, a narrator is a character who tells a story (pp. 98-99). In the article, Curran questions the narrator in a film by comparing it to the narrator in literature. If there is an implicit narrator in literature, a character who narrates events for the reader, is there also an implicit narrator in a film? Curran establishes that even in a fictional film, there should be an implicit narrator, which functions in conveying the overall story to the audience (p. 100). In films, this narrator takes the form of a character, whether human or otherwise. Thus, the implicit narrator mediates the audience’s access to the story by using characters that are explicitly presented in the film. In addition to the implicit narrator, there is also an all-knowing narrator in the film. In this case, the narrator reports events as if they happened, but is not involved in any of them (p. 100). This statement about the implicit narrator can be said to intersect with Gaudreault’s concept of the underlying narrator.

The subject of “hidden narrator” has also been discussed by Sarah Kozloff (1988) in her book *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film*. In the book, Kozloff introduces voice-over narrator, which can be divided into several types, namely first-person narrator, embedded narrator, and frame narrator. The first-person narrator is usually a key

element in a narrative adaptation from novel to film. The first-person narrator serves a variety of functions, including recreating or referencing the narrative voice in the literary text, conveying expositional information, aiding the presentation of a complex chronology of events, influencing the audience by naturalizing the source of the narrative, and increasing identification with the characters (p. 42). Meanwhile, an embedded narrator (or, micro-narrator) has narrow access to the events in the film—for Kozloff, relatively for only about twenty-five per cent of the entire text (p. 50); whereas the frame narrator narrates from multiple points in the time and space outside the boundaries of the story (p. 51). From the frame narrator, the audience usually gets very little information about the events being narrated. Similar to Curran, Kozloff also questions whether narrative in literature can be equated with narrative in film. Here, Kozloff departs from structuralist literary theorist Gerard Genette, by taking the concept of focalization. There are two types of focalizations, namely from *within* (coming from inside the character, revealing the character's thoughts and feelings) and from *without* (looking from the outside of the character) (p. 48).

Finally, in an article entitled “Literary Origins of Cinematic Narrators”, Katherine Thomson-Jones (2007) tries to answer why there should be a narrator in film narratives, like in literature. According to Thomson-Jones, although the theoretical connections between film and literature are important, it is not correct to say that films should be like novels that always have narrators (p. 76). A narrator is a fictional agent who tells or shows a story, be it a film, novel, or drama from within the story. Thus, the narrator's job is to report and present the event to the audience. Thomson-Jones divides several types of narrators: cinematic narrators, visual narrators, and verbal narrators. Verbal narrators are voice-over narrators who introduce and explain past events in the fictional world of the film as shown on screen (p. 79). Characters who are verbal narrators are usually easier to identify. In addition, the verbal narrator can also control the sequence of images so that the audience sees what they see. The visual narrator, on the other hand, is usually involved in the performance, but not in narrating the events of the story. The visual narrator, therefore, has a smaller portion in narrating the events in the film. This could be considered the equivalent of the embedded narrator in Kozloff's terms. Furthermore, the cinematic narrator is an implicit visual narrator from within the story or from a fictional point of view. There are two conceptions of the cinematic narrator: first, as a witness to the events depicted through the camera's point of view; and second, as an agent responsible for showing the audience about the characters and events (p. 81).

### ***Narratage* (2017): A Case Study on Cinematic Narration**

*Narratage* is a film adaptation of the novel of the same name written by Rio Shimamoto. The film was released in 2017, directed by Isao Yukisada. The word “*narratage*” itself is associated with a technique used in film or television where a narrator's voice supplements the ongoing story and even gives the illusion that the story is an expansion of the narrator's words. In this particular film, the narrator is the main character, Izumi Kudo (Kasumi Arimura), a young woman who always looks melancholic every time it rains. When a work colleague guesses that she is thinking of a past love, Izumi recalls her experience of falling in love with her high school teacher Takashi Hayama (Jun Matsumoto). The film's story revolves around how Izumi has been holding feelings for Hayama (and is quite open about it)—something that she maintained even until college when she was reunited with Hayama who invited her to help with the school's drama club that is lacking members. Despite knowing Izumi's feelings, Hayama never gave Izumi a clear answer, probably because he

was entangled in his problem of being haunted by the memory of his ex-wife whom he was forced to separate from due to her suffering from a mental disorder.

Based on the narrative structure presented in the film, it can be inferred that the film uses a temporal sequence that Genette would call an analepsis containing an ellipsis, which shows the narrative movement from the present and then brings together several incidents to paradigmatically connect the past (Turim 8-9). *Narratage* opens with a present-day scene, where the main character Izumi is sitting in her office late at night. The scene depicts Izumi talking on the phone with her friend, then continues with Izumi looking at an old pocket watch and the rainy scenery outside the window. When her co-worker suddenly walks in and calls out to her, the dialogue exchange about the memory behind the watch triggers Izumi to remember her past, and that is where the series of flashbacks begin.

Through this opening scene, especially with the presence of voice-over narration that can be identified as coming from Izumi, the audience gets the impression that Izumi is the narrator of this story. According to Kozloff's classification, Izumi can be categorized as a *first-person narrator*, as the series of flashbacks that occur throughout the film are consistently produced by Izumi's voice-over. This suggests that everything shown in the film comes from Izumi's perspective as the protagonist. In other words, the audience is encouraged to identify with Izumi's character.

The conversation about "identification" here needs to be straightened out first, because in the discourse of film studies, "identification" can mean many things. In the context of narrative and narration, identification with a character is a question of how the character and the audience are positioned in the hierarchy of knowledge. By focusing the storytelling through Izumi's point of view, the assumption is that the audience is placed at the same level of knowledge as Izumi. However, since *Narratage* tells a non-linear story and a large part of the narrative is a narrative of past memories, the validity of whether the audience is placed in the same position as Izumi is highly debatable.

The term "point of view" also runs the risk of being ambiguous, especially in narrative discussions. In this regard, the question of identification is better discussed as the discussion of "focalization" (Branigan, 1992). The concept of focalization talks about how characters can be the source of narrative action, or in other words, narrative action is filtered (or focused) through characters' awareness and experience of that action. These experiences include not only objective experiences, but also subjective experiences, such as memories, dreams, or fantasies.

Looking at how the film *Narratage* structures its narrative, with an opening scene in the present time that triggers Izumi to remember her past, followed by a series of flashbacks to those memories, it can be concluded that the film is primarily focalized through Izumi. If *Narratage* is viewed as a whole, almost every scene that appears always involves Izumi. Exceptions occur only in two specific scenes, namely when Hayama discovered that his wife had burned down their house, and when Hayama met up with his father-in-law. In both scenes, Izumi is not present, but when the two scenes are linked back to their causal relationship with the events that preceded them, they are manifestations of how Izumi receives information about the two events from Hayama's focalization. In other words, in the frame of the story presented by this film, both scenes are still filtered through Izumi.

Izumi's focalization also becomes very clear when the final scene of the film is taken into consideration. The final scene of the film *Narratage* begins with an extreme close-up shot of Izumi's sleeping face slowly opening her eyes—tears can be seen falling on her cheek. The next shot is a medium close-up, which reveals that this is Izumi in the present time, still in her office shown in the opening scene. While wiping away the tears, an off-screen diegetic voice suddenly appeared saying, “Did you just dream something sad?” The question turned out to come from Izumi's co-worker who also appeared in the opening scene and asked about Izumi's old watch. Hearing that, Izumi replied, “I was reminded of the person who gave me this watch.” That line sort of confirms that what the audience has just witnessed—a series of non-linear flashbacks to Izumi's high school and college days, as well as her problems with Hayama—is a dream that comes from her memories of the past.

The first and last scenes, set in the present, are important markers of Izumi's position as the focalizer and the narrator of the story. Izumi's existence is a narrative tool in carrying out the narrative. If examined more deeply, it can also be concluded that *Narratage* as a film tends to take the form of restricted narration. How the storytelling is carried out through Izumi's focalization limits the audience's knowledge of what they are witnessing. The audience is given a fragmented amount of narrative information, as it is filtered through Izumi's memories and dreams. Therefore, the audience is encouraged to put together the pieces of the puzzle of how exactly the sequence of events led Izumi to where she is in the present on their own.

However, on the other hand, although seemingly limited because it is filtered through only one character, the narration of *Narratage* also gives more access to the character's vision or mind—a concept that can be called internal focalization. The series of flashbacks that the audience witnesses—which turn out to be Izumi's dreams—are manifestations of Izumi's internal subjectivity. As such, what the audience perceives is what Izumi personally processes. The audience has access to more of this information than any other characters who interact with Izumi. Moreover, the characters depicted in the flashbacks scenes are merely projections of Izumi's memory, so the only other character Izumi interacts with more objectively is her co-worker who asks about her old watch. If we compare the level of knowledge between these characters and the audience, the audience definitely knows more about what Izumi is going through.

Based on the explanation thus far, it can be concluded that Izumi occupies the position of character-narrator. Not only does she focalize the entire narrative, but the presence of her voice-over throughout the film also gives the audience access to her internal state in every event depicted on screen. Does this mean that Izumi is the cinematic narrator of the film? Of course, the answer is not that simple. As Gaudreault has pointed out, however, the character-narrator is only a personified secondary narrator in the film. Although the entire film is focalized from a character's point of view, there is still an underlying narrator implicitly at work in the storytelling. Thus, how does the underlying narrator actually work?

André Gaudreault argues that cinema has been equipped with antennae since its birth (1990, p. 71). However, there is debate on this point. The film history perspective, for example, suggests that narrativity does not exist in cinema naturally, as the essentialist argument says that the essence of cinema is motion and immediate presence, thus not bound to the dimension of time. According to Sean Cubitt, the concept of temporality in film only gained direction when the concept of the “cinematic cut” was invented (2014, p. 49). With the connection between shots, the audience is made to “question” more about what they see and



not just perceive the attraction. In other words, narrativity is a product of the possibility of film editing. On the other hand, according to Gaudreault, early forms of cinema are also narrative, though they may be called “micro-narrative.” He also divides narrativity into two levels, namely: *first-level narrativity*—something he calls “monstration,” or the act of showing; and, *second-level narrativity*—which emerges through editing, or in other words, the narrative is determined by the transition from one shot to the next.

Through this debate, the concept of the underlying narrator, or the hidden narrator outside the narrative, can be juxtaposed with questioning the function of the elements of film styles concerning narrative. Whatever the argument is, both tendencies emphasize that the narrativity of cinema is determined by how a cinematic technique is utilized for storytelling purposes. If we return to the discussion about the film *Narratage*, it is necessary to ask, at what point does the film signal that it is indeed a narrative film? To answer this question, the discussion must go back to the film's opening scene.

The first shot of the film begins by showing a film poster on the wall. Shortly after, there can be heard the sound of a telephone ringing. The same shot then continues with a pan-to-left camera movement, as a female voice—Izumi's voice—picks up the phone and a conversation begins between Izumi and her friend. The camera movement reveals information about where the scene takes place: an office workspace, dimly lit. The panning camera movement then starts to turn into a tracking shot when the camera's point of view has found the source of the voice—Izumi sitting behind a desk, covered by the items on the desk. The shot size is still fairly wide, and Izumi's face is not yet clearly visible. The camera then slowly approaches Izumi, as the phone conversation continues. When the sound of a baby crying is heard through the phone, the shot switches to a medium close-up and this is the point where Izumi's face is clearly seen for the first time.

Through the description above, it can be seen that the first shot connection that occurs in the film only occurs after approximately one minute of the film has passed. That duration seems short, but when perceived as a shot with slow camera movements, the audience will perceive a relatively slow tempo. The film seems to want to give information to its audience rather slowly and carefully. Does this mean that *Narratage* only becomes a narrative film when it switches from a full shot of the office space to a medium close-up of Izumi?

Referring to Sean Cubitt, who argues that the narrativity of cinema lies in its cinematic cut, the simple answer is that it is when there is a shot connection that the film transforms into a narrative. However, this consideration seems inadequate and ignores the fact that there is a specific technical choice in making the first shot of the film, namely the camera movement. The camera movement shown in the shot seems to be designed with a detailed calculation of how to reveal some initial information about what the film is actually going to tell.

There are two particular things to note about the construction of the opening shot of *Narratage*. Firstly, the shot begins with a film poster on the wall. This is certainly not an accident, but rather a choice that is based on characterization. The existence of the poster marks the importance of the subject of film in the story because Izumi (and Hayama) is going to be depicted as being fond of films—this becomes one of the motifs that will be repeated in the subsequent narrative. Thus, the placement of the film poster in the *mise-en-scène* and the fact that the camera shoots for the first time at the object, apart from providing context to the space of the scene (that the setting being shown is the office of a film company), provides a

kind of subtle planting of information to the audience about the things that the character that they will soon get to know likes.

Secondly, the panning and tracking camera movements that occur in the shot can be questioned as to their motivation. Who is the focalizer of the shot? Referring to Branigan's theory of types of focalizations, the shot can be categorized into *Objective Shots*, which are shots that are not focused on the consciousness of any character in the film's narrative. The shot has not been filtered through Izumi, because the audience does not know who Izumi is at that moment. Instead, the shot functions to introduce the audience to Izumi gradually, by combining camera movement with diegetic sound that transitions from off-screen to on-screen. However, even though the shot is unfocused on the character's consciousness, it does not mean it has no focalizer. In this case, it can be argued that the focalizer of the shot is outside of the narrative, or in other words, the filmmaker makes the creative choice to execute the technique of camera movement in that particular shot. This demonstrates Gaudreault's concept of the underlying narrator, who is outside of the narrative, but still serves as a narrative agent that determines how narrative information is conveyed to the audience.

In addition to the two considerations above, it can also be argued that the initial shot of the film is what Gaudreault referred to as first-level narrativity. The shot consists of the act of showing the space of the event, then slowly trying to reveal the character, which can be read as a monstration or the act of showing something. The term "monstration" is understood more in the context of early cinema, where film was still in its very simple form of only "showing" an event, which may not be directly equated with the shot found in *Narratage*. However, in this case, Gaudreault's opinion can be enriched by considering another element of film style, namely sound.

The first shot of *Narratage*, if perceived only in its visual capacity, i.e., focusing only on the camera movement, does seem like it is only an act of showing something. However, the shot is also accompanied by sound elements, namely the sound effect of the telephone ringing, as well as Izumi's voice transitioning from off-screen to on-screen position. There is also dialogue that has relevance in explaining Izumi's characterization, even though the audience is not yet familiar with her.

The combination of the visual form of the shot and the aural elements that are also contained in it triggers curiosity in the minds of the audience about who is talking, what is happening, and how the story will continue. In other words, the narrativity of cinema, apart from being determined by the presence of narrators—both hidden and personified—is also determined by the interaction between the narrative agent and the audience. Warren Buckland, in his discussion of film narrative, emphasizes that the key to a film's narration is how the spectator is placed in relation to the action and the narrative agent (2020, p. 62).

Through the examples found in the film, it can be seen how cinematic narration is not only dependent on the concept of the narrator as a storyteller, but is also very much related to the reading of the technical choices of film style. This corresponds with Katherine Thomson-Jones' two conceptions of the cinematic narrator: as a witness to events through the camera's point of view, and as an image-maker. Narration occurs through the combination of camera shots and how they are syntagmatically combined in the logic of editing, and is complemented by elements of film sound, such as speech, music, and sound effects.

## Conclusion

Through the analysis and discussion of the narration and the operation of stylistic elements in the film *Narratage*, the theoretical conversation regarding the concept of the cinematic narrator has been reopened. In the previous sections, the researcher quoted Angela Curran as saying that the narrator is not a real person, so the narrator cannot be implied as a filmmaker. After considering this issue by examining the film, the researcher felt the need to criticize Curran's statement.

Cinematic narration is essentially about selecting and reorganizing narrative actions and placing them in the context of time and space. This does not only mean that narration is there to organize the narrative, but also that narration has the function of revealing or concealing information from the audience. With a character acting within a narrative, and having the capacity to limit the narrative, as can be seen in the case of Izumi in *Narratage*, it seems that the concept of the narrator will always refer to the character's position. No matter how objective a film's narrative is, the presence of a character will determine focalization.

However, cinema is not the same as any other storytelling medium, especially with written literature. Cinema has its own set of technical elements, which enunciate in specific ways, resulting in specific expressions. As the film *Narratage* has shown, decisions related to the stylistic elements of the film—camera placement and movement, *mise-en-scène*, the joining of the shots, as well as the sound elements—produce marks of the act of storytelling that contribute to how the film's narration is constructed. Perhaps this is what Gaudreault means by the term “underlying narrator,” that the logic of a film's audiovisual language can ultimately design a specific process of manipulating narrative information that orientates the story to the audience.

If we agree with Curran that the cinematic narrator is not a human being, then the argument stops there. However, what or who can make choices about a film's technical and aesthetic elements, if not the filmmaker themselves? Admittedly, the term “filmmaker” may not refer to a human figure, but rather an abstract figure that represents creativity, but reducing the cinematic narrator to a non-human figure seems unproductive in trying to re-evaluate the narrative capabilities of cinema.

Through the case study of the film *Narratage*, the researcher would like to suggest that the concept of a cinematic narrator actually refers to the entire interaction in the cinematic process itself, including the figure who makes creative decisions, the possibility of a narrator at the textual level who is personified in the form of a character, and the creative choices in telling stories through audiovisual elements. If we dare to extend this argument, we can also consider Peter Verstraten's suggestion that narrative input can also come from the audience, as long as they interpret it as such (2009, p. 14). In other words, perhaps the sentiment of Seymour Chatman and André Gaudreault is true, that cinema is indeed meant to tell stories.

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***Self-Concept and Perceived Social Support as Predictors of Self-Esteem Among Students in a Malaysian University***

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**Abstract**

Recent findings have shown that the differences between self-concept and self-esteem are becoming more apparent. Self-concept serves as a cognitive domain of the self, while self-esteem involves emotional and affective stances. Historically, self-concept and self-esteem were used interchangeably. As studies have found, self-concept is not the sole factor that influences self-esteem but social relationships and/or perceived social support have also predicted one's level of self-esteem. It is unclear why previous studies have produced inconsistent results about the correlations between self-concept, social relationships and self-esteem. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine the association of self-concept, and perceived social support, on self-esteem and gender difference in self-esteem among students in a private university in Malaysia. The objectives of this study are (1) To identify the relationship between self-concept and self-esteem (2) To determine the relationship between perceived social support and self-esteem, and (3) To measure the differences in self-esteem between male and female students. The study utilized quantitative methods. A total of 197 students participated in the study. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between self-concept and self-esteem, but there was a significant relationship between perceived social support and self-esteem. Additionally, there was a significant mean difference in the levels of self-esteem between the male and female students, where male students had higher self-esteem compared to female students. The study suggests that educational institutions should serve as a strong social support platform for its students, to enrich their well-being as well as to promote self-esteem.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Perceived Social Support, Self-Esteem

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## Introduction

Well-being is a crucial factor in a student's quality of life. Self-esteem is one of the important aspects in determining the student's psychological well-being, (Dogan et al., 2013; Singhal & Prakash, 2021), as positive self-esteem is not only seen as a basic feature of mental health but also protects one from negative experiences (Michal et al., 2004). The belief and perceptions students have of themselves may greatly impact how well they can perform in their studies (American Psychological Association, 2020). A study by Blegur et al. (2021) showed that self-esteem has a significant role in students' personal development due to its association with group learning commitments and responsibilities. Self-esteem tends to fluctuate depending on the student's environment, for example, an experimental study done by Shimizu et al. (2022) showed that students who had low self-esteem, had lower self-evaluation in comparison with those who have improved self-esteem.

The term self-concept and self-esteem are often used interchangeably according to King (1997). Redefining the term, self-concept is more of a general set of beliefs one has about oneself, whereas self-esteem is the affective aspect that measures self-concept (Huitt, 2009). In recent findings, the differences between self-concept and self-esteem are becoming more apparent, where self-concept serves as a cognitive domain of self while self-esteem involves emotional and affective stances but both have similar relationships in determining the well-being of a person. (Pilarska & Suchańska, 2015; Jhangiani & Tarry, 2016; Bhatt & Bahadur, 2018). Research suggests that one's self-concept may identify the level of self-esteem. (Lachowicz-Tabaczek & Śniecińska, 2011). When exposed to a new distinct environment where social comparisons are apparent, self-concept would likely go through changes (Gore & Cross, 2014). Another connotation towards self-esteem is that it is also often known as global self-worth, as seen by King et al. (1993) and Erdvik et al. (2020). One question to ponder upon, does the state of one's self-concept necessarily reflect their self-esteem? There are unclear repercussions as to why previous studies produced inconsistent results on the relationship between self-concept, social relationship and self-esteem. Therefore, to provide a better understanding of this relationship, research has been carried out on students in a private university in Malaysia.

Moreover, recent studies showed that women's self-esteem was profoundly lower compared to men in Western countries. In Asian countries the gap in gender differences is smaller (American Psychological Association, 2016; Biolcati, 2019). It is suggested that cultural aspects have some influence on self-esteem development in men and women. This grounded basis that indicates male to have better level of self-esteem compared to female could be induced from male's self-reporting style which maybe better patterned i.e., higher value threshold (Compas, 2013 as cited in Moksnes & Reidunsdatter, 2019). Although, it is suggested that gender does not have a strong influence on the developmental trajectory of self-esteem despite the differences (Moksnes & Reidunsdatter, 2019). Asian countries like Malaysia are said to have a relatively lower gap of gender difference in self-esteem (Bleidorn, 2016). But in higher learning institutions, female students were found to have higher self-esteem than male students due to it being a female-dominant industry (Fakaruddin & Tharbe, 2018; Hirschmann, 2022).

## **Methodology**

### **Study Design**

This study utilised quantitative methodology to find out about the relationship between self-concept, perceived social support and self-esteem amongst students in a private university in Malaysia, with the help of three instruments- Personal Self-Concept Questionnaire (PSQ), Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Demographic questions were incorporated in the research instruments as well. Correlational research design was employed in this study for examining the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable that are both continuous and categorical. The data was collected using Google Form using convenience sampling and questionnaires were distributed to the participants through online and physical means. The data was analysed using Statistical Pack for Social Sciences (SPSS) by using Pearson correlation for the first and second research objectives, and independent samples t-test for the third research objectives.

### **Questionnaire Design**

The first instrument was the Personal Self-Concept Questionnaire (PSQ) developed by Goñi, Madariaga, Axpe & Goñi (2011) in which the statements were related to the dimensions of self-concept (i.e honesty, autonomy, self-fulfilment, emotional self-concept). This questionnaire consisted of 18-items that are rated using a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = Totally Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Totally Agree). Its aim was to measure the personal domain of self-concept through 4 subscales; self-fulfilment, honesty, autonomy, and emotional self-concept. Higher score indicated higher sense of self-concept.

The second instrument was the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) designed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet & Farley (1988). This questionnaire is a 12-items self-report questionnaire that measures subjective assessment from three sources of social support, which is family, friends and significant others. Items are rated using a 7-point Likert Scale (1 = Very Strongly Disagree; 2 = Strongly Disagree; 3 = Mildly Disagree; 4 = Neutral; 5 = Mildly Agree; 6 = Strongly Agree; 7 = Very Strongly Agree). The score range between 12-35 indicates low perceived support, between 36-60 indicate medium perceived support while scores between 61-84 indicate high perceived support.

The third instrument was Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg, M. (1965) that measures both positive and negative aspects about the self. This questionnaire consists of 10-items rated using 4-point Likert Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree). Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. The scores interpretation is considered as high when the scores between are 35 to 40, medium when scores are between 25-35, and low when the scores are below 25.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collection was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in order to determine the correlation between self-concept and perceived social support as predictors of self-esteem amongst students in a private university in Malaysia. The data also consisted of descriptive analysis. The data analysis refers to the 3 main objectives of this study; (1) to identify the relationship between self-concept and self-esteem among students in a

private university in Malaysia (2) To determine the relationship between social support and self-esteem among students in a private university in Malaysia, and (3) to measure the difference in self-esteem between male and female students in a private university in Malaysia.

## Result

The results of demographic data showed 197 respondents who agreed to participate in the online survey. The percentage of female respondents was higher than the male respondents with a percentage of 68.5%, in comparison to 31.5% male respondents. The level of education of the respondents was mostly undergraduate with a largest percentage of 95.9%, while the remaining being diploma and foundation students. As for the courses, majority of the respondents were Bachelor in Education (TESL) students with a percentage of 41.1%, followed by Bachelor in Public Relations Management with 14.2%. In contrast, respondents from the program, Bachelor in Education (Visual Arts) have the lowest percentage (1%). 58.9% of the respondents were in their third year of their study, followed by first year students at 22.3%, then second year students at 16.2% and the least being fourth year students at 2.5%.

**Table 1.** *Item-Total Percentage of Self-Concept*

No. Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. I am satisfied with what I am achieving in my life.	2.5%	12.7%	26.9%	37.6%	20.3%	3.60
2. If I'm feeling down, I find it hard to snap out of it.	1.5%	22.8%	14.7%	45.2%	15.7%	3.51
3. So far, I have achieved every important goal I have set myself.	5.1%	27.9%	21.8%	29.9%	15.2%	3.22
4. I am a trustworthy person.	1.5%	0.5%	17.8%	56.9%	23.4%	4.00
5. In order to do anything, I first need other people's approval.	6.6%	17.3%	28.4%	32.5%	15.2%	3.32
6. I consider myself to be a very upright and highly strung person.	5.1%	18.8%	25.9%	40.1%	10.2%	3.31
7. I have yet to achieve anything I consider to be important in my life.	7.1%	9.6%	19.3%	48.2%	15.7%	3.56
8. I am a man/woman of my word.	1.0%	2.5%	18.8%	42.1%	35.5%	4.09
9. I find it hard to embark on anything without other people's support.	2.0%	19.3%	26.4%	38.1%	14.2%	3.43
10. I find it hard to embark on anything without other people's support.	3.6%	19.3%	21.3%	39.1%	16.8%	3.46
11. I have always overcome any difficulties I have encountered in my life.	0.5%	7.1%	22.3%	55.3%	14.7%	3.77
12. When taking a decision, I depend too much on other people's opinions.	6.1%	22.8%	22.3%	36.0%	12.7%	3.26



13. If I could start my life over again, I would not change very much.	12.7%	30.5%	14.2%	27.9%	14.7%	3.02
14. If I could start my life over again, I would not change very much.	5.6%	13.2%	26.9%	39.1%	15.2%	3.45
15. If I could start my life over again, I would not change very much.	3.0%	15.2%	25.9%	39.1%	16.8%	3.51
16. I feel proud of how I am managing my life.	2.5%	20.8%	26.4%	39.1%	11.2%	3.36
17. I suffer too much when something goes wrong.	7.1%	28.4%	26.9%	27.9%	9.6%	3.05
18. My promises are sacred.	1.5%	5.1%	27.9%	44.7%	20.8%	3.78

Referring to the Table 1 above, it shows the percentage of responses for the items in the Personal Self-Concept questionnaire (PSQ). As shown, the fourth and eighth items have the highest percentage of responses with most participants agreeing to these items- “I am a trustworthy person” and “I am a man/woman of my word.” On the other hand, the statements “if I could start my life over again, I would not change very much” and “I suffer too much when something goes wrong” have shown a neutral response from most respondents.

**Table 2. Item-Total Percentage of Perceived Social Support**

No.Items	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree	Mean
1. There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	4.6%	7.6%	9.1%	10.2%	13.2%	28.9%	26.4%	5.12
2. There is a special person with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	2.0%	10.2%	5.6%	9.6%	19.3%	28.4%	24.9%	5.19
3. My family really tries to help me.	2.5%	1.5%	8.1%	17.8%	15.7%	23.4%	31.0%	5.37
4. I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.	3.0%	5.6%	12.7%	13.7%	17.8%	21.3%	25.9%	5.05
5. I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	6.1%	6.6%	8.1%	12.2%	14.7%	25.4%	26.9%	5.07
6. My friends really try to help me.	1.0%	1.5%	7.6%	11.7%	23.4%	35.0%	19.8%	5.39
7. I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	0.5%	1.0%	7.6%	19.8%	19.3%	25.9%	25.9%	5.38
8. I can talk about my problems with my family.	10.2%	11.2%	13.2%	18.3%	12.7%	13.7%	20.8%	4.37
9. I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	2.0%	3.6%	6.6%	12.7%	18.8%	33.0%	23.4%	5.35
10. There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	6.6%	6.1%	8.1%	11.7%	15.2%	26.9%	25.4%	5.05
11. My family is willing to help me make decisions.	2.0%	5.1%	8.1%	17.8%	17.3%	24.4%	25.4%	5.18
12. I can talk about my problems with my friends.	3.0%	6.1%	6.6%	12.7%	20.3%	30.5%	20.8%	5.16

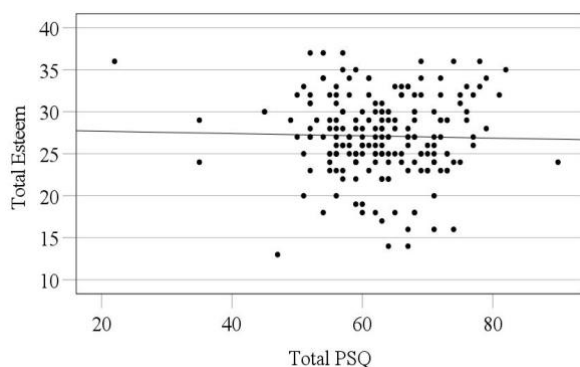
Table 2 shows the responses for the items in the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support scale (MSPSS). The highest number of responses have been found to be for item-“I

have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows,” with a majority of the respondents answering “Strongly Agree” to the statement. However, respondents surprisingly showed that they were neutral to the statement “I can talk about my problems with my family.” This showed that the respondents tend to be close to friends in comparison to their family.

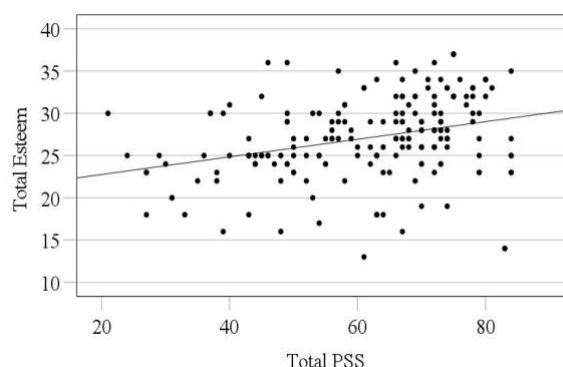
**Table 3. Item-Total Percentage of Self-Esteem**

No.Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	2.0%	16.8%	47.7%	33.5%	3.13
2. At times I think I am no good at all.	9.6%	30.5%	44.2%	15.7%	2.66
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1.0%	15.2%	61.9%	21.8%	3.05
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	3.0%	12.7%	60.4%	23.9%	3.05
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	12.7%	37.6%	36.0%	13.7%	2.51
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	9.6%	19.8%	49.7%	20.8%	2.82
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	2.5%	12.2%	62.4%	22.8%	3.06
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	2.0%	8.1%	56.3%	33.5%	3.21
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	27.9%	34.5%	30.5%	7.1%	2.17
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1.5%	12.2%	52.3%	34.0%	3.19

Finally, Table 3 shows percentage of responses for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). As shown above, most respondents have indicated agreement to positive items like 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 10. While for the negative items such as 2, 5, 6 and 9 they have disagreed. This shows an aligned results of self-esteem among the university students. The results show that there are more than 80% of the respondents who tend to agree with the all the positive items which are statements reflecting satisfaction, quality, ability, self-worth, respect and positive attitude.



**Figure 1. Total PSQ(Personal self concept)**



**Figure 2. Total PSS (Perceived social support)**

**Table 4.** *The correlation table between Self-Concept, Perceived Social Support, to Self-Esteem*

	Self - Esteem	
	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
Self - Concept	0.004	0.957
Perceived Social Support - PSS	0.290**	0.001

Significant level at  $p=0.05$

Based on Table 4., Pearson correlation analysis showed that there was no significant relationship between self-concept and self-esteem among the respondents ( $r=0.004$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). However, the finding also showed that there was a significant positive relationship between perceived social support and self-esteem among the respondents ( $r = 0.290$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The relationship is mild which means an increase in perceived social support would result in an increase in the self-esteem.

**Table 5.** *Gender difference in Self-Esteem*

Variable	Mean		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mal e	Female		
Esteem	28.73	26.36	3.8 1	.00 1

The last objective was to measure the difference in self-esteem between male ( $M = 28.73$ ,  $SD = 4.22$ ) and female ( $M = 26.36$ ,  $SD = 4.86$ ) students, in which this study found that there was a significant mean difference between male and female students ( $t=3.81$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

## Discussion

In this study, it was hypothesised that there is a significant relationship between self-concept and self-esteem. However, the finding did not find as such ( $r = .004$ ,  $p = .96$ ). Despite the fact that there was no significant relationship between self-concept and self-esteem, yet both are similarly constructed in ways that both have their own roles in cognitive and affective domains, where self-esteem could be seen as a belief of one's worth and self-concept is considered as how one would heed the importance of their personal attributes.

As Swann Jr et al. (2007) said, "There is little basis for dismissing self-concepts as merely cognitive or for focusing on the predictive capacity of self-esteem at the expense of self-concepts." Perhaps what this study found was more aligned to the thoughts that self-concepts are merely the extent of "how I see myself" versus self-esteem, is prone to be viewed as "how I feel about how I see myself" (Marcic & Grum, 2011). This might suggest the way students describe their personal attributes which do not correlate to their evaluation of one's selves, separating the two self-entities. The results of self-esteem depend on one's perception on their standard of excellence or living up to interpersonal expectations and values whereas self-concept is a structure of characteristics, beliefs, personal attributes, morality, etc. Du, King and Chi (2017) stated that subjective well-being is one of the most important outcomes associated with self-esteem and Xu, Li and Yang (2019) suggested that positive self-concept could uplift

a crucial part of well-being, particularly self-esteem. One way or another there could be an indirect correlation between self-concept and self-esteem.

Onto the next finding, the study found a positive correlation between perceived social support and self-esteem amongst the respondents ( $r = .29, p < .001$ ) which coincides with previous findings about the relationship between the variables (Budd et al., 2009; Tam et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be said that when perceived social support of students increases, their self-esteem levels increase accordingly.

Ioannou et al. (2019) found that low level of perceived social support led to high level of perceived stress among young adults. Social support roles have a huge impact in determining one's self-esteem as it is considered as a protective factor against mental health issues (i.e., loneliness) (Ren & Ji, 2019; Liu et al., 2021). The findings suggest that the perception towards the availability of the students' social support could be the source to their self-esteem. It is evident that the accessibility of their social support could mediate the way they evaluate themselves. Seemingly, life is demanding in nature, having a strong bond and supportive interpersonal relationship would fortify our mental aptitude and makes life more meaningful.

As for the last finding, there was a significant mean difference between male and female students ( $t = 3.31, p = .001$ ). Male students showed higher self-esteem than female students. As opposed to some of the established self-esteem studies done in Asian country, higher gaps of gender difference in self-esteem were only found in Western countries, driven with the influences of individualistic-centric culture (Bleidorn et al., 2016). Meanwhile, Malaysia is known to be collectivist in its societal culture (Ahmad et al., 2018; Sumari et al., 2020). The findings of this study implied that the selected population sample may have been involved in individualistic sociocultural settings. Rather, it is an established concern that many of the gender studies on self-esteem found males to have higher self-esteem (Schwalbe & Staples, 1991; Bleidorn et al., 2016; Li et al., 2022). Contrastingly, Tafarodi, Lang, and Smith (1999) found there was no significant mean difference in self-esteem between the cultural trade-off. The relevance on culture-specific influences were thought to be the determinants in the gaps of self-esteem between males and females due to the involvement of gender roles in sociocultural settings where males were given advantages in the autonomy of choices and decision making. Regardless, the rate of response would void this study to reach to such conclusions. The respondents who participated were disproportionate between male and female students, where the majority of the respondents were females, with 68.53% (135), while males were of the remaining 31.47% (62). Perhaps if the gender of the respondents were to be equalised, there could be less of a difference in self-esteem between male and female students.

## Conclusion

The conundrum of the self-topic is still being discovered in the field of personality and social psychology. Some define self-esteem as how one feels others value them considering self-esteem to be socially susceptible, while another perspective emphasized that it is the evaluation of one's feelings in relation to oneself. Perhaps lexical intervention may be needed to verify the distinction between the terms within the self-concept components. Moreover, as humans are inherently social, there is not a moment where people do not require interaction. Our identity is constantly alternating between different social landscapes to fit in a society, hence the wavering stance of self-esteem. Generally, the self-esteem one has with their circle of friends, could never equate with the self-esteem one has while being with their supervisor or people with higher status. Gender difference in self-esteem amongst students may signify

various constituent influences on evaluation of self, which can be further studied by future researchers. To summarize, the study contends that educational institutions should provide a robust social support platform for their students in order to improve their well-being and boost self-esteem.

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## *A Reading Program for College Students*

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to develop a reading comprehension program on the reading competencies and comprehension level of college students. A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to gather insights from students on their reading habits and challenges, which served as the basis for the development of the reading program. The program focused on teaching specific reading strategies, building vocabulary, analyzing texts, and reading critically, evidence that a structured reading comprehension program can be effective in improving college students' reading competencies and comprehension level. The insights gathered from the FGD, reading inventory, cloze tests, Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment were crucial in developing the program that addressed the specific needs and challenges of the students. These findings have important implications for college educators and administrators, highlighting the need for targeted and well-designed reading programs to support students' academic success.

Keywords: Reading Program, Competencies, Assessment

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Reading is a fundamental skill that is essential for academic success. College students are expected to read large amounts of material across a variety of subjects, and the ability to comprehend and analyze these texts is critical for achieving academic excellence. However, Lu's (2023) paper reveals that many college students struggle with reading, either because of poor reading skills or because they find reading tedious and uninteresting.

To address this issue, many colleges and universities have developed reading programs that aim to improve students' reading skills and increase their engagement with reading. These programs typically involve a range of strategies and activities, such as guided reading, active reading techniques, and opportunities for discussion and reflection (Moore, 2022).

The purpose of this research was to assess the reading comprehension level of the College respondents and consequently develop a reading program. Specifically, the researchers examined whether the program improved students' reading skills and increased their motivation and engagement with reading. The factors that contributed to the program's success or failure was likewise explored, such as the design of the program, the qualifications and training of the instructors, and the level of support provided among the respondents of the study.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Research Design and Instruments**

This qualitative paper utilized the research and develop (R&D) design. The design process involved a systematic approach from needs analysis to the validation of the developed reading comprehension program.

### **2.2 The Instruments**

The modified focus group discussion prompts of Zurong (2021) was employed for the analysis phase of this study. Moreover, the researchers identified the reading comprehension level of the respondents with the aid of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test and the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) assessment. Data were likewise gathered from the instructors as the results of the reading comprehension levels were based from cloze tests and informal reading inventories.

### **2.3 The Respondents**

The respondents of this study were the one hundred twenty-five college students from both private and state university. Fifteen college instructors participated in the focus group discussion sessions. Due to the peak of the pandemic, these respondents were contacted via google meet, text message, cellular phone calls and electronic mails.

### **2.4 Data Gathering Procedure**

Letters addressed to the Presidents of the two universities were sent in an email. This requested permission from the English Department heads for the conduct of the study. The researchers then gathered data from the teacher-respondents by means of focus group discussion with teaching reading strategies and assessment practices as core topics. The proponents similarly requested for copies of the results of the Informal Reading Inventories and Cloze tests. These results served as foundation for the researchers to design the reading comprehension program, thus addressing the needs of the respondents of the study.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Reading Competencies of College Students**

Categories of Reading Competencies	Reading Competencies		Frequency	Percentage
	Private HEI	SUC		
<b>TEXT PROCESSING</b>				
Emergent Literacy	50	75	125	1
Reading Fluency	30	54	84	10
Vocabulary Learning	30	59	89	8
<b>Locating information</b>				
Accessing and retrieving information	20	60	80	11
Searching for and selecting relevant text	15	58	73	12
<b>Understanding</b>				
Acquiring a representation of the literal meaning of a text	45	70	115	4
Constructing an integrated text representation	40	45	85	9
<b>Evaluating and Reflecting</b>				
Assessing quality and credibility	50	74	124	2
Reflecting on content and form	35	70	105	7
Detecting and handling conflict	55	59	114	5
<b>TASK MANAGEMENT</b>				
Setting up goals and plans	43	69	112	6
Monitoring progress and self-regulating goals and strategies throughout the activity	50	72	122	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>1228</b>	

Table 1 shows the reading competencies of the respondents according to the twelve categories. *Emergent literacy* has the highest frequency. This competency is an essential precursor to reading comprehension. It is important for educators to provide young learners with opportunities to develop these foundational skills and knowledge in order to support their future success as readers.

*Assessing quality and credibility* follows as the second in rank among the categories of reading competencies. According to Baumann (2020), assessing the quality and credibility of reading comprehension materials is an important skill for readers to develop, as it enables them to make informed decisions and draw accurate conclusions based on their understanding of the text, as cited by Toquero (2020), and Henessy (2021). To earn this skill, a range of collocated skills are required as cited by Solari et al. (2021). These researchers noted authorship, publication source, evidence, objectivity, clarity and coherence.

Furthermore, table 1 displays that *searching for and selecting relevant texts* which is under *locating information*, is one of the least emphasized reading competencies among college students. It is important to give students the opportunity to search for and select relevant texts in reading comprehension to help them develop critical thinking skills, exposure to different types of texts, motivation to read, and a sense of autonomy in their learning. Hence, the research results imply that there is limited reading instruction which focuses on developing the learners' abilities to establish predictable routines to encourage learners to anticipate reading events.

**Table 2. Reading Comprehension Levels of the College Respondents in Region X**

College Students First Year Level	Independent		Instructional		Frustration		Non-Reader		Total Population
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
	33028	26422.4	39062	31249.6	36515	29212	5	4	125

This data in table 2 reveals that there are more instructional readers than independent readers among first year college students. The gap is not that high but implies that more is to be done in the reading instructions. This further served as foundational data for the reading training plan designed by the researchers.

Additionally, five research respondents were found to be non-readers. They are those who are unable to recognize and sound out letter sound connections for single consonant, consonant blend and others. This implicates that an extensive reading program must be developed to address this alarming concern.

**Table 3. A Training Design Matrix for Reading Comprehension Enhancement**

Training Objective	Instructional Method	Assessment
Identify main ideas and supporting details	Reading and note-taking strategies	Quiz on main ideas and supporting details
Determine author's purpose and tone	Analysis of language and style	Written analysis of author's purpose and tone
Understand text structure and organization	Graphic organizers and outlining	Outline of text structure
Analyze text for bias and perspective	Critical reading and reflection	Written analysis of bias and perspective
Build vocabulary and language skills	Vocabulary exercises and context clues	Vocabulary quiz and writing exercise
Apply reading strategies to different types of texts	Text analysis and comparison	Written analysis of two different texts

Using the needs assessment results as baseline data, the researchers designed a training matrix to enhance the reading comprehension level of college students. Table 3 depicts the training objective, instructional method and assessment. By focusing on specific skills such as identifying main ideas, understanding text structure, and analyzing for bias and perspective, students can build a strong foundation for reading comprehension. Instructional methods such as reading and note-taking strategies, analysis of language and style, and graphic organizers can provide students with tools and techniques to approach different types of texts. According to Lu (2023), assessment tools such as quizzes, written analyses, and vocabulary exercises can help students track their progress and identify areas for improvement.

Employing the training design, the researcher developed a reading comprehension program, to address the comprehension difficulties of the respondents. The subsequent table illustrates the significance of the learners as the core in the teaching learning repertoire.

Week	Reading Strategy	Vocabulary Building	Text Analysis	Critical Reading	Practice and Feedback
1	Predicting	Word roots and affixes	Identifying main ideas and supporting details	Evaluating sources for credibility	Multiple-choice questions
2	Summarizing	Context clues	Analyzing text structure	Identifying bias and point of view	Written responses
3	Questioning	Academic vocabulary	Interpreting figurative language	Recognizing logical fallacies	Group discussions
4	Note-taking	Idioms and phrases	Analyzing author's purpose and tone	Identifying propaganda techniques	Timed readings
5	Highlighting and underlining	Synonyms and antonyms	Comparing and contrasting texts	Examining cultural assumptions	Peer feedback

This tabular reading comprehension program provides students with a weekly schedule that focuses on different strategies and skills. Each week, students work on a specific reading strategy, build their vocabulary, analyze different types of texts, read critically, and receive practice and feedback. The program includes a variety of assessment tools, such as multiple-choice questions, written responses, group discussions, timed readings, and peer feedback. By focusing on different skills each week, students can possibly develop a comprehensive set of reading comprehension skills over the course of the program.

This program underwent three assessment phases. Pre-assessment was done in the conception of the training design. Three language experts with specialization on reading were invited to assess the conceived reading program and post assessment was conducted when the program was pilot tested among the select respondents. Peer feedback was added for week five as suggested by the experts.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this research suggest that a structured reading comprehension program can significantly improve the reading skills of college students. The program, which focused on teaching specific reading strategies, building vocabulary, analyzing texts, and reading critically, was found to be effective in improving students' performance on reading comprehension assessments. The program also helped students to set specific goals, monitor their progress, and receive feedback and support from instructors.

The results of this research have important implications for college educators and administrators. By implementing a structured reading comprehension program, colleges can support students in developing essential reading skills that are crucial for success in academic and professional settings. Additionally, this research highlights the importance of ongoing assessment and feedback, as well as individualized goal setting, in supporting students' growth and development.

Overall, this research provides evidence that a targeted and well-designed reading comprehension program can have a positive impact on college students' reading abilities and academic success.

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***Subaltern Bugis Women in Short Story “Ketika Saatnya”:  
Spivakian Postcolonial Studies***

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**Abstract**

This study aims to reveal the phenomenon of social-cultural facts of Bugis women as subalterns in the short story “Ketika Saatnya,” written by Darmawati Majid. The problem in this research is the narration of the third-world women in Darmawati’s *Ketika Saatnya*. This study uses the subaltern theory by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. The term subaltern refers to a social, political, and geographical population subdued by a group that controls them. A subaltern is a group whose voice is always represented and becomes a tool of a hegemonic practice that symbolizes political, military, social, and even cultural domination by one group over another. The study reveals that the position of women as subalterns are narrated as a subaltern group trying to convey their voice to be heard even though they occupy a position as “third-world women” who are trapped between tradition and modernization.

Keywords: Subaltern, Bugis Women, Spivakian, Third-World Women, Postcolonial Studies

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## Introduction

Since immemorial, women have been objects and positioned as women from the Third World in literary works and subaltern groups. Terminologically, the term subaltern refers to junior officers in the British military context, meaning subordinates. The word is often used to describe officers who are low-ranking or below the rank of captain. In the study of critical theory and postcolonialism, the term subaltern refers to a population that is socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure of the colonial nation. Antonio Gramsci first introduced the term subaltern through his work on cultural hegemony, categorizing excluded and ostracized groups in the social order (Morton, 2008).

Spivak developed from these negative connotations that subaltern is not just a classy word indicated for the oppressed class or the "Other" group. For Spivak, in postcolonial terms, the subaltern is not only about categorization as the oppressed or the oppressed working class but also about anyone whose voice is limited by the access that represents them. The term subaltern was originally—by Spivak—used to identify widows (in the Sati incident) who were oppressed by the dominating solid power relations in Indian society. Widowing is a subject among other subjects. It is stated in the essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* For example, subaltern material from Mahasweta Devi Stanayadini's story is used in "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern (1988)" to examine various "elite" Western theoretical discourses to reveal their limitations and absence (the West). Spivak concentrates on minor characters, subplots, or motifs that seem marginal to reveal the unconscious racial nature of the conceptual framework operating in various nineteenth-century female canonical texts. A common characteristic is the "re-constellation" or "catachresis" technique (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Catachresis is a more localized tactical maneuver that involves removing specific images, ideas, or rhetorical strategies from their place in particular narratives and using them to open up new areas of meaning (often in direct opposition to conventionally conceived meanings and functions). It redefined Gramsci's concept of the "subaltern" reasonably radically. While in "Can the Subaltern Speak?," he takes a precise definition of "Otherness" in Derrida's writings, describes it in the context of the eschatological sense of "Other," and reconceptualizes it to criticize other (post) colonial notions of metropolitan. (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Third-world women as subaltern subjects presented in fiction, especially literary works, display massive socio-cultural conditions related to gender and discourse in today's era. The issue of third-world women displayed by the author in a literary work aims to convey a message about socio-cultural conditions to be understood by the reader as a phenomenon of ongoing socio-cultural construction. From these descriptions, the researcher traces the track record of third-world women narrated in an anthology of short stories, "Ketika Saatnya," written by Darmawati Majid. In this anthology of short stories, the author presents women's defeat in expressing their voices, either because they are silenced by tradition or modernization. Thus, the researcher formulates the problem of this research into the question, "How are third-world women narrated in the short story *Ketika Saatnya?*"

The significance of the problem is expected to be a forum for educating the millennial generation about the use of regional literature as a form of diverse identity to build the culture of the Indonesian nation. Through the short story "Ketika Saatnya," students are expected to

be able to see the phenomenon of socio-cultural facts in terms of balancing the position between women and men to achieve gender equality in the social order.

Many researchers have researched the study of women in the third world. One of them is Asep Deni Saputra. In 2011, the alumnus of the Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Jakarta, wrote a scientific journal entitled "Subaltern Women in Poskolonial Indonesian Literature." He concludes that the position of women Nyai Ontosoroh, Surati, Prinses van Kasiruta, Pulette (Buru Tetralogy), Nyai Dasima (Njai Dasima), and Srintil (Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk) have been marginalized, or rather become subaltern groups, to occupy the lowest space. Women are not able to get up and show their existence. Even the women did not dare to appear to put up a fight even though they knew they would find defeat. In this case, Spivak's statement has been justified and is considered a problem that does not require resolution because Spivak's statement regarding doubts about subaltern groups has found the answer. Subaltern groups will not be able to speak and determine their life choices. They will remain silenced forever. It has been narrated by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, G. Francis, and Ahmad Tohari as authors who subject women in their novels.

A decade later, in 2021, M. Hafidzullah S.M. et al., a postgraduate literature student at the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Gadjah Mada University, wrote about "Representation of Third World Women as Postcolonial Constructions in Chris Cleave's Little Bee Novel." This research implies that it paradoxically finds two opposing poles when the author represents women who are considered to be from two different worlds. West is considered to have a unique character, and East could be better. The construction of women presented in the material object is a return to the image of Eastern women. The image of the results from the author's subjectivity as a narrator gives rise to a view of constructing and representing women. In the novel, the depiction and presence of Little Bee and his refugee friends, as well as Sarah's character, implies an opposing dimension between race, ethnicity, and collective memory.

### **The Subaltern Concept**

Consistently, Spivak pays attention to the practice and politics of pedagogy, an area that should be discussed more in detail in Said and Bhabha. In particular, Spivak sought new ways to incorporate non-Western cultural productions into Western academies without setting aside his challenges to the metropolitan canon and modes of study and consequently perpetuating the "subalternation" of the so-called "third world" literature. Spivak outlines several ways what he calls "transnational cultural studies" can be facilitated, particularly at the graduate level, suggesting steps as diverse as discontinuing single-author studies, expanding the range of language requirements to include non-Western languages, and more significant concerns. Nonliterary media and forms of popular culture integrate critical theory more effectively into postcolonial studies. Spivak rejects the idea that there is uncontaminated space outside modes and objects of analysis and that postcolonial criticism has access based on "life experience" or cultural origin (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

There are three criticisms of Spivak. First, Spivak asserts that Deleuze's reference to the "labor struggle" as an organizing principle in his political theory and practice is flawed by unfounded Eurocentrism so that Deleuze "ignores the international division of labor, a gesture that often characterizes poststructuralist political theory." Second, Spivak argues that Foucault and Deleuze typically favor micro-resistance structures defined by local conflict and operating through voluntary association at the expense of macro logical and "objective"

determinations such as class interests, global capitalism, and nation-state alliances. However, he should have paid more attention to the effectiveness of the micrologic resistance pattern. Spivak argues that they should not be allowed to remove larger power configurations and other potential sites and resistance modes. Third, Spivak reintroduced the concept of ideology to challenge Foucault and Deleuze's construction of the subject according to what he saw as the simple economy of "want" (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

In this view, making subjectivity, agency, and identity coherent and legible in a way that, ironically, is comparable to what liberal humanism proposes: "In the name of will, they reintroduce undivided subjects into discourses of power." In contrast, Spivak's theory of the subject draws equally on the classical Marxist model of the "split and dislocated subject" at the level of individual and class identity and on Althusser (subjects that are worthy of being held together only, and given the illusion of free subjectivity by ideological interpellation). Spivak states it is better to leave the subaltern as an inaccessible subject of emptiness. It reveals the horizons and boundaries of Western knowledge (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Spivak sees deconstruction as having a more direct "affirmative" mode. Spivak considers deconstruction to produce a greater awareness of excluded or marginalized social constituencies. There is a parallel between what is suppressed or ignored to enable a particular theory or text to function as a coherent or authoritative narrative and how the dominant social faction operates in a hegemonic manner. Spivak also uses deconstruction to subvert the binary system, which is the dominant discourse's basis for legitimizing their (Western) power. For Spivak—like Derrida—direct counter-hegemonic discourses are more likely to be canceled or even appropriated by the dominant than the "tangential" or "wild" guerrilla engagement modes, so Spivak advocates "negotiation" and "criticism" modes that unsettle the dominant party (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

For Spivak, two specific areas of reinterpretation of the dominant ideology occur in counter-hegemonic discourse; the definition of the identity and the role of the subject's investigation. For Spivak, Derrida's conception of the worthy subject is instrumental in preventing the postcolonial struggle from falling into fundamentalist politics through his critique of traditional ways of understanding "identity, belonging, and origin." In Spivak's view, the self or subject must be understood not as innate or given but as discursively formed and, therefore, as inevitable "worthy." The effects of the subject can be briefly plotted as follows: what appears to operate as a subject may be part of an extensive discontinuous network (text in the general sense) of strands that may be called politics, ideology, economics, history, sexuality, and language. The different knots and configurations of the strands are determined by heterogeneous determinations, which depend on various circumstances producing the effect of the subject of operation (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Spivak also refers to Lacanian theory to describe the feasibility of the subject as a consequence of its emergence through the symbolic order written in the language. Spivak also cites Foucault to point out the many inevitable subject positions, with which he carves out the textuality of both writers and readers and, by extension, the subject in general. Textuality is where the self loses its boundaries and traces of the other, preventing identity and consciousness from being fully present. Spivak rejects all definitions of identity in the essentialist conception of origin or possession. A necessary consequence of Spivak's theory of identity according to the "spread" and "textual" model is that he rejects the argument that only postcolonial subjects can deal with the subject of postcoloniality – a perspective which

he considers "nativism" or "reverse ethnocentrism." Meanwhile, Spivak accepts that, too often, postcolonial subjects remain broadly discussed by metropolis (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

As noted, affirmative deconstruction also manifests in Spivak's attention to the role and politics of the "subject of investigation." In *Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography*, Spivak argues that the group mistakenly assumes they can override the implications of creating a space where the oppressed can speak—in this regard, repeating the problem identified by "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" essay (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

Spivak makes this point by juxtaposing the work of Foucault and Deleuze with an explanation of how the British assumed the prerogative to speak on behalf of oppressed indigenous women in the discourse surrounding the prohibition of Sati in early nineteenth-century India. An essential maneuver, as in the case of Rani of Sirmur, was to build an image of Indian women who "justified" the adoption of the empire's "modernizing, liberating and progressive" regime, a process that also consolidated the British imperial self-image as superior to civilization as compared to indigenous women who degraded and their local oppressors. As Spivak points out in the essay "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," St John Rivers missionary at *Jane Eyre* justifies her missionary project as one that involves improving her race and the "liberation" of India. Such attitudes have continued into this century, even among opponents of colonial rule (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

At the heart of the appropriation process in the discourse around Sati is the notion of "voice"—denoting the will and free agency—to subaltern women. In the case of Britain, the voice is said to be calling the imperialists for liberation; according to the native male, the voice agrees with his practice. No version—according to "Can the Subaltern Speak?" which may reliably represent the "real" voice of the female subaltern. On the one hand, Spivak points out that the British cannot even spell the names of the people they have "saved" and often translate the proper names into common nouns. On the other hand, Spivak notes that the violence Sati inflicts on Indian society is directly proportional to the amount of property the widow owns—and thus, poor women are often spared the trials of their wealthier sisters. In both discourses of sati, the subaltern voice uses ventriloquism, "spoken" as it is. Spivak suggests that one "never finds a female voice-conscious testimony." So, between colonialism and indigenous patriarchy, "the figure of women disappears, not into pure nothingness but into alternating violence which is a displaced figure from third world women trapped between tradition and modernization" (Moore-Gilbert, 1997).

The method used in this analysis is a qualitative research method. This study tries to describe the data with words or sentences distinguished according to certain elements and parts related to the research objectives and to obtain research results. The data source used in this research is the short story "Ketika Saatnya" by Darmawati Majid. The research data consisted of primary data and secondary data. The primary data are the texts in the short story anthology "Ketika Saatnya" relevant to the research analysis. Meanwhile, secondary data are in the form of books, journals, written works, and articles, which sharpen the analysis of third-world women, Bugis women.

The technique of data collection is the method of listening. The listening method is used in language research by listening to the use of language in the object under study (Sudaryanto, 1988). Adapting to the material object that the author will analyze in the form of text, the understanding of the listening method will be equated with repeated reading. The steps taken

in collecting data for this research include 1) reading the text of the short story anthology "Ketika Saatnya" intensively and repeatedly; 2) performing data selection in the form of language identification (literary text); 3) recording data that is considered relevant to the research analysis; 4) performing data analysis according to the theory/paradigm of the Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak subaltern; 5) compiling research reports. In the data analysis stage, the method used is descriptive and explanatory, namely by describing and explaining the position of third-world women narrated in the short story "Ketika Saatnya."

### **The Bugis Women as Subaltern**

The definition of third-world women or Eastern women shows a form of colonization that is discoursed through socio-cultural, economic-political, and others (Mohanty et al., 1991). In a book entitled "Belenggu Pascakolonial: Hegemoni dan Resistance Dalam Sastra Indonesia," Faruk (2007) asserts that postcolonial theories focused on the implications and impacts of the remnants of colonialism on colonized nations and countries continuously and transformed into a form of neocolonialism.

The existence of third-world women—(Mohanty, 2007)— is considered too excessive in terms of domestic issues. Hence, the image of third-world women becomes a homogenization agenda for first-world women (Western women) to create an ideal image for female subjects. Homogenization is an act of hegemony that forms a particular identity created on the collective memory of Eastern subjects (the colonized people). The form of homogenization of women can be found in the short story anthology "Ketika Saatnya" by Darmawati Majid. The short story anthology "Ketika Saatnya" is a collection of short stories about the image of third-world women in various districts and cities in South Sulawesi. The problems presented by the author in the short story anthology are said to be various, ranging from women who are cheated on by their husbands and the position of women in marriage to women who are locked in their mate. The third-world female figures revealed in this study are Alaida, Ammak, and Indah. By following the short story "Ketika Saatnya" shows the dialogue between Alaida and Ammak.

Kenapa perempuan disamakan dengan tempat bertelur, Ammak? Alaida gusar. Sebegitu rendahnya posisi perempuan di dalam adatnya? (Majid, 2019)

Why are women likened to laying eggs, Ammak? Alaida was furious. How low is the position of women in their customs? (Majid, 2019)

The quote above illustrates a female character—Alaida, who confirms the position of women to the Ammak—her mother, in a patriarchal Bugis-Bone society. The author shows that women in the customs of the Bugis-Bone tribe are represented as "ampoti." Ampoti, in the Bugis-Bone tribe, is known as chicken cages. She is positioned as a place to save money, manage family finances, and accompany her husband. This representation—by Ammak figures, is considered a unique position held by Bugis-Bone women. Women being represented as the frontier of such allegorical substitution is a reminder to us academic feminists (both Third World and First World feminists) that despite careful research into the term "woman," one thing that has not been studied as academic feminists is to "stop feeling special as a woman." Spivak demands that we stop using culturalism as a way out of ethnocentrism and trace the regulatory psychobiographies that shape the effects of female subjects differently (Ray, 2009).

Regulatory psychobiography is a narrative model that gives meaning to readings about self and others. One cannot abolish the so-called uterine social organization because it is the suppression of ideological material from the clitoris as a marker of gendered subjects who exercise particular oppression against women, as the lowest level of "chicken cage" used by the Bugis-Bone community with solid control, in the extraction of surplus value in the Bugis-Bone cultural order (Ray, 2009).

The use of the chicken cage symbol is the author's affirmation of the representation of the identity of Bugis-Bone women in South Sulawesi. Symbols or signs presented as characteristics of the subject's identity can also be found in various literary works, from regional and Indonesian literature to English/American literature. An example can be found in the parody "Gone with the Wind" novel entitled "The Wind Do Not Go"—from now on abbreviated as TWDG, the author displays the symbols of cinnamon (cinnamon) and coffee to portray the physical attributes of black people who are dense and black; Chocolate. Cinnamon is one type of spice that has not only a dense texture but also a pungent taste. It is the same as the symbol for bitter coffee, but it gives an intense sensation to the person who consumes it. Such presuppositions are interpreted as a physical representation of black people; although black is not visually beautiful but has high vitality. Vitality refers to strength and health, which is essential to have in the human body.

From the European perspective in early modern times, spices (spices) were costly goods and symbolized the prestige of someone who owned them. Europeans were willing to expedite to the Eastern hemisphere to have spices, such as Maluku. In the fifth century AD, documents on spices were found for various medical purposes. For example, black pepper (black pepper) is prescribed various kinds of serious diseases, namely paralysis, sewerage, inflammation of the mouth and throat, and bubonic plague (Andaya, 2015).

The use of spices is also found in religious rituals—especially in Ancient Greece- the process of preserving corpses in polytheistic worship and ritual offerings of gods (Turner, 2011). Thus, spices, as a representation of black people's identity, mark the values given by black people in America. These values not only complement the composition of the population but also contribute to the cultural variety that adds to the diversity and strength of the American nation. This diversity makes America more unique and stands out from the rest.

Sudah jadi takdir seorang istri untuk menghormati suami, Nak. Suami bekerja keras memenuhi tanggung jawab, mencukupkan kebutuhan anak istrinya. Karena itu, saat kau menikah nanti, titah suamimu yang seharusnya kau utamakan, kau laksanakan sepenuh hati, tak setengah-setengah. Dengan cara itu, kita, perempuan, memperoleh berkah Tuhan. (Majid, 2019)

A wife's destiny is to respect her husband, a girl. The husband works hard to fulfill his responsibilities to provide for the needs of his wife's children. Therefore, when you get married later, your husband's orders that you should prioritize you carry out wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly. In that way, women get God's blessing. (Majid, 2019)

The quote above affirms the patriarchal discourse that remains strong in the Bugis-Bone community in South Sulawesi. Implicitly, the patriarchal tradition has silenced Alaida's character. He was forced to accept it because the subject who practiced the discourse was his biological mother. He saw and proved for himself that his mother is a historical subject who

still preserves the foundation of patriarchy through loyalty to her husband (Alaida's father). From here, the author shows the subject of women's misogyny against other women.

As an object of history, oppression (misogyny) against women is carried out by men and other women, which cannot be resisted. Women are victims, and God ordained them to be the object of male domination. Therefore, the inner voice of a suffering woman will never be heard, even by her fellow women.

The silencing of Alaida's character by Ammak is a form of subaltern constructed by the culture of indigenous peoples placing women as "back friends" of men whose lives only revolve around problems; wells, mattresses, and kitchens (Gandhi, 2006). It means that the placement of women is considered low in family life. Women in a patriarchal society no longer have a role in interacting in the public sphere. The position of women is only a complement, and their activities or relations with men are only used to the extent that they support men's activities and projects. Women will be valuable if they themselves have value and benefit men's lives. Thus, the position of women becomes marginal.

An example of the story of marginalized women is also found in the novel *Tjerita Nyai Dasima* (1896) by G. Francis—a European author. The story of Nyai Dasima narrates a Javanese woman named Nyai Dasima who becomes the nyai of a British man named Tuan W. Nyai Dasima is portrayed as a beautiful and kind woman. The image made Mr. W fall in love. As a nyai, Nyai Dasima can have happiness and luxury. However, all of that was ruined by a native man named Samioen. Samioen had instigated Nyai Dasima that the position of the nyai had an unfavorable view and that Tuan W, as a colonial, could only seize the wealth of the natives. Samioen, with all his strategies, has tricked Nyai Dasima into leaving Mr. W and marrying him.

The position of women as objects is stereotyped as weak and powerless. Women can be treated as complements and have no room to defend, fight, or even choose their way of life. G. Francis described the figure of a nyai who could not keep up with colonial power as described by Pramoedya Ananta Toer with his character Nyai Ontosoroh. Nyai Dasima is too soft and weak as a woman to be quickly marginalized by patriarchal power.

Pramoedya narrates Nyai Ontosoroh as a continuation of Nyai Dasima to defend her rights as a woman and elevate the dignity of women as nyai. Nyai Dasima, narrated by G. Francis, has gone through a critical period to maintain her dignity as a nyai. She came out of the colonial territory to clear her good name as the mistress of a colonial man even though she was treated like a wife who lived a luxurious life in a palace. Nyai Dasima has been instigated by discussions that her position as a nyai is viewed negatively and will hurt her future because Tuan W, a colonial man, will return to his country and leave Nyai Dasima. That made Nyai Dasima able to articulate her voice, leaving Mr. W, and she married Samioen even though she had to become his second wife. Nyai Dasima's resistance was limited to a cultural conflict between the colonial and the natives. He chose to marry Samioen because he considered his marriage legal and acceptable to society. While he was the Nyai Tuan W, there was no clarity, and it was considered illegal under Islamic law or the norms of indigenous peoples.

From the story, the conclusion is that the position of women as subordinate and second class can be justified. The women's voices had been silenced before they spoke and thought. The patriarchal system has received legal space from society to build a discourse of men as rulers



and women under it. Spivak's statement regarding the subaltern group that they cannot speak has been seen in reality in every event raised by women in literary works.

Spivak stated that literary works could be a milestone in observing postcolonial society and matters related to colonialism, including the struggles of subaltern groups. During the colonial period, many events left history to be used as objects and showed things considered representations of colonialism's ugliness. As a subaltern group, women were emancipated to escape the colonial or even the patriarchal system, which became the colonial strategy of putting women second. Women were discriminated against during and after the colonial period as a form of unity from the patriarchal culture that continued to establish its power. Women's emancipation never developed because the patriarchal or colonial system tried to silence it and did not provide opportunities or space for women. The existence of women is still considered low and passive, so men use patriarchal and colonial power to oppress them.

Kau tahu, kan, kalau kita beli teh botol, penjualnya selalu minta botolnya kembali. Laki-laki juga begitu. Biar saja isinya berceceran di mana-mana, yang penting botolnya pulang. Tidak apa-apa suami selingkuh, yang penting mereka tetap kembali kerumah, menjalankan kewajibannya, menafkahi kita lahir dan batin. Bu Rania gamblang menerangkan. (Majid, 2019)

The seller always asks for the bottle back when we buy bottled tea. So do men. Let the contents splattered everywhere; the important thing is that the bottle goes home. It is okay for husbands to cheat; the important thing is that they stay home, carry out their obligations, and provide for us physically and mentally. Mrs. Rania clearly explained. (Majid, 2019)

In contrast to the character Alaida—a third-world woman from the Bugis-Bone tribe, the author presents the character of Indah as the subject of an educated urban woman. However, the image of Indah's character presented—by the author—as a subaltern woman who cannot voice her feelings against the patriarchal discourse perpetuated by her neighbors—is also a female subject. The discourse that men cheat is natural as long as the man can meet all kinds of needs of his wife and children, both internally and externally. This discourse is called—by Spivak—essentialism. Spivak sees that essentialism has an inherent perceptual danger to the subaltern. Essentialism functions to revive (revival) subaltern voices by offering heterogeneity and creating a stereotyped representation of the various identities of people who make up certain social groups. Essentialism can be seen as a subaltern's dream and hope. Essentialism is a manipulation that a representative group of subalterns will exploit.

Essentialism refers to group identity in inter-community discourse that facilitates subaltern communication to be noticed, heard and understood. Essentialism offers the importance of difference (subaltern, not as "the Other") in social groups. However, in its practical function, strategic essentialism is politically just a tool that uses subalterns. Women are always the only objects that can be exploited socially or sexually. Women are the concrete other. In this case, the idea of the concrete other can be interpreted as accepting the 'other' as an individual with a concrete history, identity, and effective emotional constitution. Women not only have the right to express opinions but also to think. In women's minds, a symbol of kindness has been engraved throughout centuries (Supelli, 2006).

Spivak (Ray, 2009) argues that transactional reading sees the collective as a strategic way of following the essentialist notion of consciousness to write subalterns as historical subjects.

The essentialist idea is the second main problem after the subaltern as a basic hegemonic form. Strategic essentialism becomes a mode of delivery, a buzz phrase that indicates one's subject position to engage in feminism that rejects essentialism. Women's individualism is often achieved at the expense of "other women" (the other). Strategic essentialism (after reduction) involves a philosophical acceptance of the anti-essentialist argument that, in principle, there is no essential identity. Strategic essentialism acts "as if" identity is stable for specific political reasons. For example, one might temporarily accept the category of "women" as a stable entity to mobilize women for political action (Barker, 2004).

They add that strategic essentialism is tied not only to the historical narrative that is produced but also produced when articulating one's subject position. In the previous short story excerpt, men are portrayed as driving the economy's engine, ignoring women's struggles, discrediting women, and being equal to parents and children. Women are just tools for the continuity of life, objects that reproduce and regenerate. The main characters in the struggle are the men.

Kau memutuskan menanti dengan sabar botolmu pulang. Ini belum oerkara hidup-mati. Orang berpendidikan mana pun juga tahu, yang bersemangat pasti sedang sehat (Majid, 2019).

You decide to wait patiently for your bottle to come home. It is not a life-and-death affair yet. Any educated person knows that the spirit must be healthy. (Majid, 2019)

The author presents Indah—an educated urban woman, as the subject of subaltern women whose voices are alienated. Subaltern is not just a classy word indicated for the oppressed class or the Other group. In postcolonial terms, the term refers to everything related to access restrictions. It becomes a kind of space of distinction. For example, during a demonstration, a demonstrator leader took action to voice labor rights against the ratification of the Job Creation Act. When workers' voices are always represented and do not have freedom of speech, they are subalterns. From this, Spivak emphasizes the significance of an effort to see the unconscious hegemonic mechanism regarding the use of subaltern word attributes. They (workers) are in a hegemonic discourse, meaning there is a kind of unconscious manipulation of what they are doing (Morton, 2008).

Implicitly, Spivak questioned the involvement of academics with Liyan. For Spivak to prove an authentic engagement with the subaltern, academics should remove themselves as experts amid the binary social relations between Us and Them, Center and Periphery, and other binary oppositions. Academics—especially Western academics—have a great curiosity about the subaltern experience of colonialism. However, they did not want to position themselves in the middle of the colonial domination experience. That is, there is a gulf between academia and subaltern. It exposes the subaltern truth, which is the truth that comes from experts or academics. Subaltern subjects only submit knowledge about colonialism to be used by academics, especially Western academics.

Hooks (1990) said, "... I do not need to hear your voice. It is better to talk about yourself than you can speak about yourself. I do not need to hear your voice. I need your pain. I need your story to tell it back to you in a new way. I tell it back to you so that it has become my own. Re-writing you, I write myself anew. I am still the author and authority. I am still the colonizer who is the subject. You are the object at the center of my talk." It is an application of Foucauldian epistemic violence that describes the destruction of the perspective of non-

Western societies in viewing the world. The subaltern is oppressed and manipulated to have a perspective like the Western nation in viewing the world. If the whole society has only one point of view, the Western point of view, then that is where we need to be made aware of colonialism in its most discursive form.

For Spivak, that epistemic violence relates specifically to Third World women who are never really allowed to express themselves. They are only used as a trigger for sympathy to function as a comparison with the essential women, such as Western women who are elegant, free, independent, and so on. That is how the colonial powers hegemony non-Western cultures simultaneously to see the world as Western society understands and knows the world (Sharp, 2008).

Furthermore, Spivak insists on not seeing subaltern people as cultural Others. He believes that the Western world can progress and develop rapidly through self-criticism and introspection of fundamental ideas and methods of investigation (reasoning), which leads them to study the culture of inferior non-Western people. That is, Western nations become culturally superior because they set cultural standards.

Subaltern women in French feminist theory (especially in the case of Kristeva) become a single storehouse in their differences. Therefore, for French feminists, they are added as a temporary depiction of absolute value always on the other side. For Spivak, the reconfiguration of the subaltern woman as another temporal bracket in the "micrology of political economy" reduces the subaltern woman to a mirror that only reflects the views directed at her. French feminism is concerned with establishing a discourse about women that confuses the relationship between women's meanings for women. In other words, what concerns French feminism is the relationship between the feminine and women in discourse, literature, and philosophy with women themselves.

Subaltern women lie between the gaps of globality and development on the one hand and immigration and multiculturalism on the other. The subject of gender globalization generates gender alliances. It legitimizes its ethical agenda in the name of an all-too-easy global justice that fails to address capital/cultural aporia on the other side of the capital. By understanding the circulation of women in colonial discourse and the repetition of indifference in decolonization, one can open the gaps between the two discourses that women pervade. When that gap opens, one will discover that woman has multiple meanings in different locations: one side being in the streets of the capital and the other being in a country house where she might return. One cannot involve one without involving the "Other." One cannot hold on to a single issue of feminism because gender becomes a meeting point for discourse, not only about development but also about the war in the name of women's equality in another world."

## **Conclusion**

This research leads to two mutually sustainable conclusions. First, third world women narrated by the author in the short story anthology "Ketika Saatnya" describes the construction of "third world women" as subjects who are homogeneously powerless and 'powerless' and occupy the position of victims of the discourse of social, cultural, and economic systems, patriarchal discourse. Discourses that are always confirmed by the Colonized subject. Second, the colonialization steps taken by the author is the representation

of third-world women as subaltern subjects. Finally, third-world women will always be positioned as objects for the author.

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***An Empirical Investigation on Perception of Organizational Politics, Job Stress & Job Satisfaction Among Academicians in Pakistan Using Second-Order Construct***

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**Abstract**

Level of job satisfactions among academicians has remained enriched area of research for the academic's institutions. Therefore, the rationale behind conducting research was to investigate the influence of Perception of Organizational Politics (POP) and Job Stress (JSt) on Job satisfaction (JS) academicians. Research framework has been formed based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) to create logical relationships among variable which explained that employees behave accordingly as per response they received from management's behavior. For the execution of analysis data was collected from 300 teachers of public sector universities of Punjab, Pakistan through psychometric defined instruments. Software SmartPLS was used for assessment of measurement and structural model. Results from the analysis demonstrates that POP has significant and negative effect on JS and significant positive effect on JSt while significant negative effect was observed between JSt and JS. The results revealed useful information for the stakeholders and policy makers to focus and develop and organizational structure to eliminate the influence of POP in academic institutions.

Keywords: Perception of Organizational Politics, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction

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## Introduction

A country's socio-economic system is shaped largely by the capacity of its higher education system whereas colleges and universities are strategic assets. The purpose of these organizations is to provide a country with updated technology and skilled personnel for the continuous improvements towards human resources and socio-economics capabilities. Pakistan's federal and provincial governments share responsibility for higher education (Norric, 2006). The higher education system in Pakistan is regulated by the “Ministry of Education” “Higher Education Commission,” which include universities, colleges, and degree awarding institutions (WorldBank, 2007). To avail higher education at country’s level, as per documentation of NEP (2017) there were 99 public sector universities which are going to become 195 by the year 2025 to meet the higher education needs of country. Additionally, the Pakistan’s Government has proposed various projects to improve the technical needs and develop new industrial linkages for the country’s economic stability. Through this entire process, university academic staff members and other university staff members come into contact with certain unwanted factors developing either from the institution's internal environment or from the external environment (Khan, Yusoffb, & Azam, 2018). Researchers agree that these factors negatively impact the mental and physical health of academic staff. Consequently, academic staff members' productivity and work performance suffer.

According to Global competitive Index Report 2019 Singapore as at top position followed by U.S, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Switzerland and Japan (Schwab, 2019). However, the situation in Pakistan is quite worse in the scenario by its position on 110<sup>th</sup> followed by Ghana, Senegal, and Uganda. Additionally other native countries in the same region are at much better position i.e., India at 68<sup>th</sup>, Sri Lanka 84<sup>th</sup> and Iran at 99<sup>th</sup> position. To meet the global challenges the main disparities in achieving educational targets, National Education Policy of Pakistan highlighted those underperformed teachers are biggest hurdle in the same context. According to Zhou & George (2001) only unproductivity can be achieved from dissatisfied employees rather that value for the betterment of organizations. That is why the educational scholars are more anxious to learn about the distinguished human abilities (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010), still there is scarce literature have paved the attention of researchers to know about the phenomenon and effect of environmental factors on the creativity of faculty (Amabile et al., 2005). Therefore, educational institutions, specifically colleges and universities must be aware about those factors which can enable faculty members to be creative, thrivers and achievers for the sake of development of institutions (Cambell & O’ Meara, 2014), because the success of every institution depends upon this (Frohman, 1997). According to Mgaiwa, (2021) there is bulk of research between POP and JS in the literature, but a very little attention is paid on academic institutions. However, among the most research there are not any research that has used these variables as higher order construct as per author’s knowledge. Hence, it was necessary to cover this literature and methodical gap using same phenomena. Although there has been substantial research on the relationship between perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction, most of it has been conducted in fields other than higher education (Mgaiwa, 2021). Therefore, research was needed to gauge the level of job satisfaction of academicians to fill this gap.



## **Development of Research Model**

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Genuinely, Social Exchange Theory (SET) developed for the objectives of human behaviour analysis (Homans, 1958). But later on, it began to apply to test the organizational behaviour (Emerson, 1962; Blau 1964). After few years, Emerson (1976) believed that SET has the proposition that there are specific customs that directly impact attitudes and behaviours and these norms navigates the exchange procedure (Cropanzano and Mitchel, 2005). If the reciprocate exchanges are positive the result be positive as well developing a mutual trust (Lee et al., 2014) which provoke the long-lasting tenure of quality exchange relationship (Cropanzo and Rupp, 2008). Since most of the literature explains that POP is negative perception which leads to destructive job outcomes including turnover intention and other consequences (Ferris et al., 1989). Hence it can be concluded that when they are less satisfied at workplace and tend to show low commitment this may be the result negative emotional, psychological and financial exchange relationship with top management which steers them to perform in the same reciprocal way.

### **Job Satisfaction**

JS is considered the vital element of organizational and human behaviour that may increase the performance of employees potentially by impacting motivation level and organizational behavior of employees (Chun, Choi, & Song, 2019). Job satisfaction “refers to how content an individual is with his or her job, whether or not they like the job or individual aspects or facets of jobs, such as nature of work or supervision. The degree to which the achievement of a set of work-related goals or needs was associated with a positive state of mind” (Hirschfeld, 2000; Spector, 1997). The construct of JS is mainly divided in to facets i) “intrinsic job satisfaction ii) extrinsic job satisfaction”. Intrinsic job satisfaction relates to work itself or job content and include willingness to have achievement, utilization, advancement, compensation, creativity, activity, social status, moral value, working conditions and social service (Weiss et al., 1967). In simple words it reflects the nature of task and feeling to perform the task at workplace (Spector, 1997). Whereas extrinsic factors include work environment and job context such as policies and procedures of organization, job security, recognition, interpersonal relations, salaries and relationship with colleagues (Spector, 1997).

Factors instigating job performance of employees particularly in the education context has received remarkable attention in last decade across the globe (Danish et al., 2019; Garcia-Carmona, Marin, & Aguayo, 2019; Ali, 2019; Aziz & Qureshi, 2017; Tehseen & Ul Hadi, 2015). Most specifically few researchers have invested the level of JS among university staff (Noordin and Jusoff, 2009). These authors have discovered that age, status, salary are factors that contribute to JS of employees in Malaysian universities. Additionally positive and significant relationship was explored between pay, compensation and job satisfaction (Adeel et al., 2011). However, further consequences of lower JS tend to increase the absenteeism (Talat et al., 2012). It has been reported by Ghaffar et al. (2013) that 60 academics (Lecturers, Asst Professors, Assoc Professors) are not satisfied with their job duties because of a lack of security, promotion, and colleagues. Therefore, job satisfaction was operationalized into two different measurements, intrinsic and extrinsic. As per nature of intrinsic JS factors, employees do satisfy with the nature of job, on the other hand extrinsic includes the work employees do at job, job tasks which are directly related to their job.

## Job Stress

The essence of job stress theory explains that expectations and role generations are transmitted by various organizations factors which are later indulged to pressure and stress among employees. The stress of experiencing a prolonged and increasingly demanding work environment contributes to this ill health (Kahn, 1964). There are four types of job stressors: work overload, ambiguity within the role social support and physical environment (Peiro et al., 2001). “Reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure (i.e. no effort is enough) accompanied by the general physiological, psychological, and behavioral stress symptoms” (Division of Human Resource, 2000). “Role related are concerned with how individuals perceive the expectations other have of them and includes role ambiguity and role conflict” (Alexandros-Stamatios et. al., 2003). “Role stress means anything about an organizational role that produces adverse” consequences for the individual. “Pressure of workforce to perform maximum output and enhance competitiveness (Kahn and Quinn, 1970). Indeed, to perform better to their job, there is a requirement for workers to perform multiple tasks in the workplace to keep abreast of changing technologies” (Cascio, 1995; Quick, 1997).

According to Anwar, Rosman, & Kamran, (2014) the most prominent factors of academic staff in universities include 1) social status of academicians 2) work overload 3) insecurity of job 4) political interference are some of the potential factors. Additionally Khan et al., (2018) also pointed out above factors including absence of training and demanding role of students and parents, limited resources and change in educational policies.

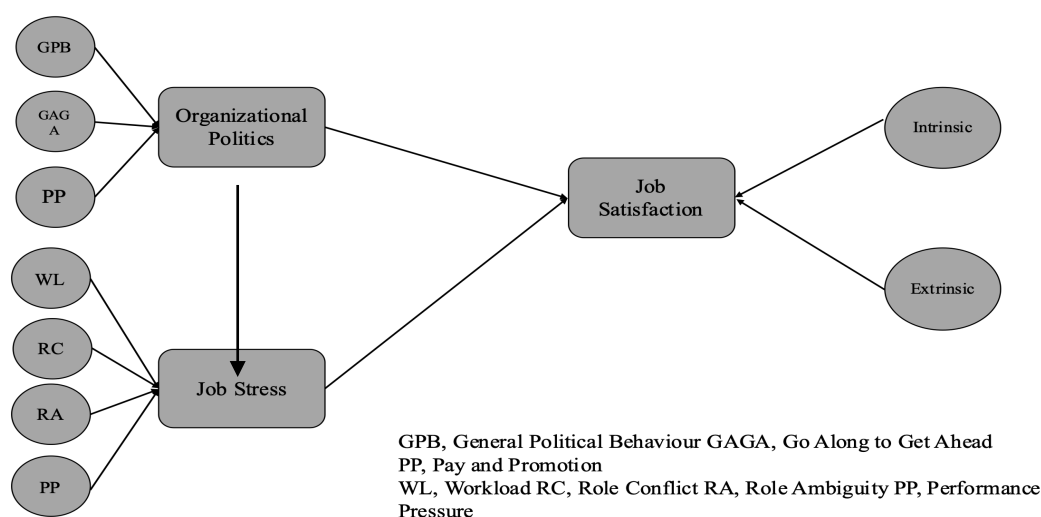
## Perception of Organizational Politics

Organizational politics was studied as objective measure which were unverifiable inherently. This study focuses organizational politics (OP) as perceived organizational politics (POP) which is subjective evaluation about the degree of environment at the workplace which is characterized by supervisors and coworkers who explains self-serving behaviour (Ferris, Harrell-Cook, & Dulebohn, 2000). Ferris et al, (1989) proposed a research framework for the subjective evaluation of OP as antecedents and consequence of OP. Before the previous proposed framework OP was treated as objective phenomena but later on Ferris et al., 1989 proved it as subjective evaluation and divided the OP into three dimensions “i) General Political Behaviour (GPB) ii) Go Along to Get Ahead (GAGA) iii) Pay and Promotion (PP).” GPB defines by Kacmar and Carlson, 1997 as cited in Haq, (2011) “In some cases, a scarce resource, such as the organization’s tickets to a sporting event, may only be valued by a few individuals, and hence, the actions engaged in to secure this resource may not be as competitive as those used to secure a scarce resource valued by all, such as a raise or a promotion”( Kacmar & Carlson, 1997 p.630) and GAGA, “can be a logical and lucrative approach to take in order to precede one's own self-interests when working in a political surrounding” (Kacmar & Carlson, 1997) while PP policies “influenced by political behavior also affect the individuals who do not act politically in organizations and consequently, people who are perceived inequity regarding rewards may become more involved in political activities in future” (Kacmar, & Ferris, 1993; Kacmar & Carlson, 1993). Moreover, certain grants and research projects in the field of OP has been approved and prosecuted through Ferris POP Model (1989) (Ferris et al., 2019).

No public organization is free from politics. The decisions about employees working in higher education institutions are affected by external politics influence. The top elected

leaders play significant role in transfers, postings and promotion of employees due to corrupt political system of Pakistan as highlighted in National Education Policy, 2018. This political interference creates a sense of dissatisfaction (Khan et al., 2018). Moreover, the power of workload which is distributed among staff who are not the player of political activities creates depression and anxiety among employees. Burnout results in stress which is primarily causes by POP (Maslach et al., 2001). It causes role and job conflict, responsibility pressure and stress quality concern (Goodman, Evan and Carson, 2011). Most specifically Makhdoom et al., (2015) found the biggest source of job burnout among teachers is the organizational politics. Hence based on above explanations our proposed research hypotheses are as follows:

- H1: JSt and JS are significantly negatively related.  
 H2: POP and JS are significantly negatively related.  
 H3: JSt and POP are significantly and positively related.  
 H4: POP and JS relationship mediated by JSt.



### Objectives of the study

1. To examine the relationship between JSt and JS.
2. To examine the relationship between POP and JS.
3. To examine the relationship between JSt and POP.
4. To examine the mediating effect of JSt between POP and JS.

### Questions of the Study

1. Is there any significant relationship between JSt and JS.
2. Is there any significant relationship between POP and JS.
3. Is there any significant relationship between POP and JSt.
4. Does JSt mediates the relationship between JSt and JS.

## Methodology

This research was carried out in the public sector universities of province of Punjab. Specifically, data was obtained from all cadres of teachers including” lecturers, assistant professors, associated professor and professors. 500 questionnaires were distributed out of which 260 questionnaires were selected for analysis with properly filled and returned completely. Simple random sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaires among faculty members of universities. 9 public sector universities of Punjab were chosen systematically. As per recommendations given by Krejci and Morgan (1970) needed number of sample size was 250.

## Measurement Design

Fundamentally three constructs are measured using higher orders adapted from previous studies. The instruments were further validated from educational experts for face and content validity. A pilot study was conducted to check whether the instrument truly measure the construct and easily understandable by the respondents. A questionnaire comprising all demographic information about respondent along with questions asked against each variable dimension was distributed in various public sector universities of Punjab on using 5-point Likert Scale against each item ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree. Table 1 below demonstrates the dimension alongwith its definition total number of items of construct and sources of adapting scale is explained below.

Table 1: Details of Instruments as per dimension

Construct	Operational Definition	Total Items	Source
Perception of Organizational Politics	“General Political Behaviour”	15	(Kacmar & Carlson, 1997; Rosen et al., 2009)
	“Go Along to Get Ahead”		(Kacmar & Ferris, 1991).
	“Pay & Promotion”		(Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Rosen, 2006)

Job Stress	Workload	“Reluctance to come to work and a feeling of constant pressure (i.e. no effort is enough) accompanied by the general physiological, psychological, and behavioral stress symptoms”		(Division of Human Resource, 2000)
	Role Ambiguity	“Role related are concerned with how individuals perceive the expectations other have of them and includes role ambiguity and role conflict”	13	(Alexandros-Stamatios et. al., 2003)
	Role Conflict	“Role stress means anything about an organizational role that produces adverse”		(Kahn and Quinn, 1970)
	Performance Pressure	“Pressure of workforce to perform maximum output and enhance competitiveness. Indeed, to perform better to their job, there is a requirement for workers to perform multiple tasks in the workplace to keep abreast of changing technologies”		(Cascio, 1995; Quick, 1997).
Job Satisfaction	Intrinsic Satisfaction	“Intrinsic job satisfaction facets pertain to job content or the work itself and involve ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, social service, social status, and working conditions”		(Weiss et al., 1967)
	Extrinsic Satisfaction	“Relate to job context or the work environment and involve authority, company policies and practices, recognition, responsibility, security, and variety”	20	“(Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967)”
	General Job Satisfaction	“employees’ orientation of emotions toward their workplace roles”		Vroom (1964)

### Method of Data Analysis

Data input and data cleaning were made using SPSS Version 26.0 software. Prior to the analysis, preliminary analysis was performed to check the normality of data along with CMV

issue. The results from the preliminary analysis showed that this dataset qualified to be analyzed using SmartPLS with bootstrapping procedure.

## Data Analysis

### Pilot Testing

Since the adapted instruments are used in this study. Therefore, pilot test was performed to analyze the reliability and validity of the instruments. In pursuance of these 30 questionnaires were given to the academicians in various universities to test further validation of the instrument. Which confirm the possible accepted of Cronbach alpha i.e.,  $>0.70$  as recommended by Nunnally (1978). Table 2 represents the Composite Reliability value to confirm the reliability of variables.

Table 2: Cronbach Alpha of Variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>
Perception of Organizational Politics	.95
Job Stress	.94
Job Satisfaction	.93

### Profiles of the respondents

Table 3 represents the profiles of the respondents. Demographic factors had been collected, namely “gender, age, marital status, level of education, and mode of appointment.” Most of the respondents were female (n=173, percentage= 66.5) male (n=87, percentage = 33.5). 51 respondents comprise 19.6% of total while 192 respondents 41.9 % of the respondents were between 30-39 years of age. In the same time 38.1% of respondents were 92 with the age class boundaries of 40-49 years, and above 50 were 31 (3.1%). In terms of education level, most of the respondents were employed as regular employees 173 (66.5%). 83% respondents were married and 16.9% were unmarried. 56.5% respondents were qualified MS/MPhil degree while 66.5% were appointed on regular basis.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	87	33.5
	Female	173	66.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Age</b>	20-29 years	51	19.6
	20.39 years	109	41.9
	40-49 years	92	35.4
	Above 50 years	8	3.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mode of Appointment</b>	Regular	173	66.5
	Tenure Track	16	6.2
	Contract	62	23.8
	Visiting	6	2.3
	Daily Wages	3	1.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<b>Level of Education</b>	BS	12	4.6
	Masters	20	7.7
	MS/M Phil	147	56.5
	Ph. D	81	31.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	44	16.9
	Married	216	83.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Preliminary Analysis

Firstly, we have utilized partial least squares (PLS) path modeling using SmartPLS software (Ringle et al., 2015) for the assessment of measurement and structural model. According to Chin et al. (2003) there was no requirement of normality assumptions as the survey method is normally and not normally distributed.

It has been observed in most of social science research the issue of CMB. Common Method Bias issue occurred when data is obtained from single source. To check this we have conducted a full collinearity test as per cut off values recommended by Kock and Lin (2012) and Kock (2015)  $VIF < 5$  and  $VIF < 3$  consecutive. The result in the following table demonstrates that the value of VIF ( $VIF < 3.3$ ) threshold value in accordance with the data. Hence it can be concluded that data is free from common method bias issue. From the normality and common method bias issue it can be concluded that data may be further proceeded for analysis using SmartPLS. Table 4 demonstrates the full collinearity estimates for the proposed variables.

Table 4: Full Collinearity estimates

	<b>POP</b>	<b>JSt</b>	<b>JS</b>
<b>VIF</b>	2.278	1.331	1.935

Note: POP, perception of organizational politics, JSt, Job Stress, JS, Job Satisfaction

Table 4 shows that VIF value for all dimensions is below 3.0, the paths are statistically significant and weight indicators are between -1 and +1. These conditions confirm that the formative model achieves its convergence validity, thus valid for further analysis in table below.

### Assessment of Measurement Model

The components of the convergent validity for the second-order formative constructs reflected by the indicator of collinearity (VIF), statistical significance, and the weights of the dimensions (Hair et al., 2019; Xu, Peng, & Prybutok, 2019). For this study, three constructs namely POP, JSt and JS were formed by three dimensions for each construct. POP consists of “General Political Behaviour (GPB), GAGA (Go Along to Get Ahead) and PP (Pay and Promotion).” Whereas, JSt consist of “Workload (WL), Role Conflict (RC), Role Ambiguity (RA) and PP (Performance Pressure)” and JS consists of “Intrinsic and Extrinsic Job Satisfaction dimensions.”

Table 5: Assessment results of the measurement model (second-order construct - formative)

Construct	Dimensions	Beta	t-value	VIF
POP	“General Political Behaviour”	0.395	18.301***	2.607
	“Going Along to Get Ahead”	0.215	24.932***	3.742
	“Pay and Promotion”	0.509	27.918***	2.250
Job Stress	Workload	0.350	16.721***	2.504
	Role Conflict	0.651	24.070***	2.966
	Role Ambiguity	-	09.276***	2.810
Job Satisfaction	Performance Pressure	0.110	06.021***	1.958
	Intrinsic Satisfaction	0.659	33.802***	2.218
	Extrinsic Satisfaction	0.408	23.478***	2.218

The discriminant validity for this model was measured using “heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio,” and the cut off indicator value is 0.85 for constructs that conceptually are distinct the indicator 0.90 is applied to the similar concepts of constructs (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014). In Table 5, HTMT indicator between the rest of the indicators for both groups are below 0.85. Thus, the HTMT indicators achieve its discriminant validity and valid for further analysis in Table 6.

Table 6: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Constructs	1	2	3
<b>1. Job Satisfaction</b>			
<b>2. Job Stress</b>	0.343		
<b>3. POP</b>	0.727	0.514	

Figure 1 shows the measurement model using stage two disjoint two-stage approach for the research framework. POP, JSt and JS consist of dimensions for each construct. All dimensions have been saved as a score to represent the construct. POP represents GPB, GAGA and PP and JSt represents by WL, RC, RA, PP and JS includes intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. This figure also presents the R<sup>2</sup> value represents by the value inside the circles (constructs). By using this disjoint two-stage approach, the model has achieved its parsimony without losing the rigorousness of the information.



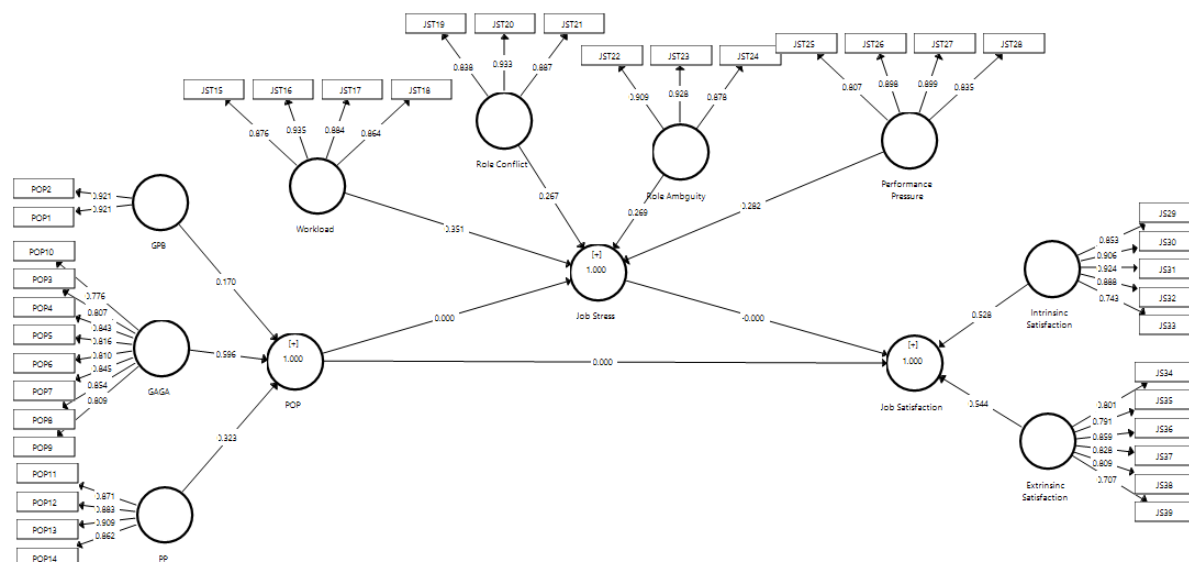


Figure 1: Measurement Model Assessment

### Assessment of Structural Model

To test the hypothesis the data was proceeded through assessment of structural model in SmartPLS software. There were four (4) hypotheses tested in this study. The result in the given below table demonstrates that POP positively and significantly related to JSt ( $\beta=0.523$ ,  $t\text{-value}=10.77$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) likewise, POP and JS are significantly and negatively related ( $\beta=-0.703$ ,  $t\text{-value}=10.66$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) on the other side JSt and JS are related but their association is insignificant ( $\beta=0.009$ ,  $t\text{-value}= 0.108$ ,  $p=0.457$ ) which explains that study fails to provide evidence for the 3<sup>rd</sup> hypotheses. The included variables which were tested in this study explained 48.4% variance in the ( $R^2 =48.4$ ) while  $Q^2$  value is greater than zero for the latent variable which demonstrates that suggested model can also predict endogenous construct. Table 7 demonstrates the path modeling to test the hypothesis while figure explained the assessment of structural model using SmartPLS.

Table 7: Testing of Hypothesis (Direct Effect)

Hypo	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	BC LL 5.00%	BC UL 95.00%	R <sup>2</sup> /Q <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>
								48.4	
H1	JSt -> JS	0.009	0.081	0.108	0.457	-0.116	0.150		0.000
H2	POP -> JS	-0.703	0.066	10.666	p<0.01	-0.795	-0.572		0.703
H3	POP -> JSt	0.523	0.049	10.777	p<0.01	0.427	0.590		0.376

Note: We used 95% CI with a bootstrapping 5,000.

Note: JSt represent Job Stress, JS represents Job Satisfaction and POP represents Perception of Organizational Politics

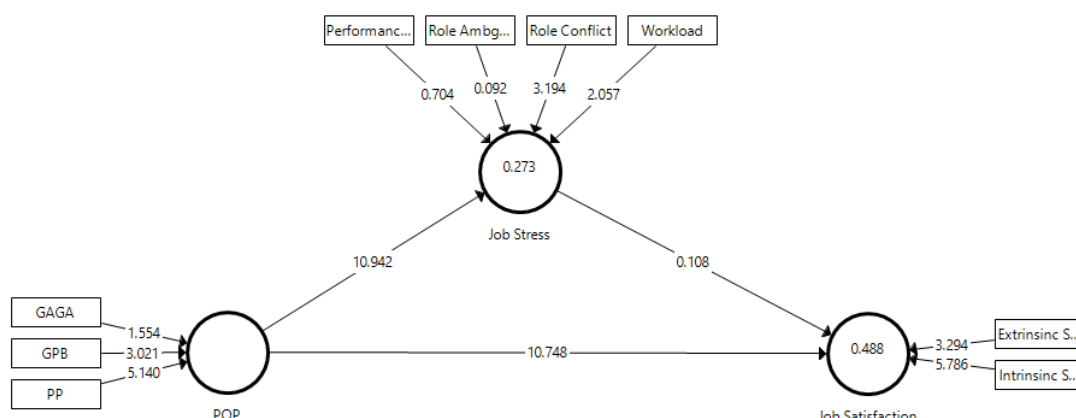


Figure 2: Assessment of Structural Model

Table 8: Testing of Hypothesis (Indirect Effect)

Hypo	Relationship	Std Beta	Std Error	t-value	p-value	BC LL 5.00%	BC UL 95.00%
H4	POP-> JSt -> JS	0.005	0.044	0.104	0.459	-0.06	0.084

Note: We use 95% confidence interval with a bootstrapping of 5,000

According to Preacher and Hayes (2004; 2008) median hypothesis can be tested by bootstrapping the indirect effect. These conditions applied when confidence interval does not straddle a 0 demonstrates the significant mediation. As mentioned in Table 8, POP à JSt à JS ( $\beta = 0.005$ ,  $p=0.459$ ), was insignificant. The confidence intervals bias corrected 95% also showed intervals straddling a 0 thus confirming our findings there is no mediation. Thus, H4 is not supported.

Table 9: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Description	Results
H1	“There is positive and significant relationship between job stress and job satisfaction”	Not Supported
H2	“There is negative significant relationship between Perception of Organizational Politics and Job Satisfaction”	Supported
H3	“There is positive significant relationship between Perception of organizational politics and job stress”	Supported
H4	“Job stress mediates the relationship between perception of organizational politics and job satisfaction”	Not supported

### Discussion

In this study, we have explored the factors that directly or indirectly influence job satisfaction of academicians in higher education institutes at Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. The job satisfaction of teachers is correlated with the academic performance of the student which is vital to achieve the educational targets set of Government of Pakistan. Social exchange theory was used as underpinned theory to form the research framework. Findings of the research demonstrates that organizational politics is negative emotions which directly influence job

satisfaction of employees about which they reciprocate the negative emotions in performance of their duties efficiently.

Research found the significant negative correlations between JSt and JS. This study is aligned with the previous research conducted by Asrar et al., (2019) POP is source of stress and job satisfaction. This would happen because the pressure and political activities played from the top management to the people who are not part of the game feel dissatisfied and stress at workplace in terms of deliberately assigning extra workload of class and undue pressure of providing extraordinary result and engaging academic staff in other administrative duties. Likewise previous studies have found the undue interference from the political leaders who play significant and dominant active role in promotions and transfers of academic staff creates imbalance in performance of duties (Khan et al., 2018). Moreover, Bilal and Khan (2012) found the politicization and corruption are demoralizing academic staff of university. The administrative authorities of universities control over institutional decisions which creates a sense of stress from authorities if the decisions are biased and unfavorable is considered to be the vital factor that influence dissatisfaction of academicians in universities (Basak, & Govender, 2015).

This study found weak (insignificant) relationship between JSt and JS of academicians which is aligned with the previous research in the same findings (Essiam et al., 2015; Ahsen et al., 2009; Howe et al., 2000). However, the finding is contradicted with the previous findings in which the positive relationship between JSt and JS was observed (Rehman et al., 2012). This may happen because of stress to perform more efficiently encourage to increase the level of satisfaction in terms of economic conditions of the country. The study also aligned with the findings of Bhatti et al., (2011), which demonstrates the significant negative relationship between JSt and JS. Though our hypothesis is insignificant but negative relationship was observed in the similar findings. Our research is also associated with the previous findings of NECŞOI, (2011) in which she explained the negative association between JSt and JS of academic faculty of university. However, females represent high level of depression and anxiety and low level of job satisfaction as compared to males and the employees on tenure track have greater job satisfaction. This outcome also parallel to previous findings (Blix et al., 1994; Dua et al., 1994; Cotton et al., 2002). Finally our study has significant but negative relationship between POP and JS which is also consists with the findings of (Akanbi, & Ofoegbu, 2013). This is due to the fact the university teachers should endeavor to understand the reality of organizational politics which hampers their level of satisfaction.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The study has contributed in the previous literature to explore in depth more about the causes of JS of academicians of teachers working in Higher Education Institutions of Pakistan. This study has used social exchange theory as underpinned theory which demonstrates that employees reciprocate the behaviours and intentions which they observe and feel at workplace. Therefore, POP and job stress are used as antecedents that influence and deteriorate the level of JS academicians. However, the negative relationship between JSt and JS was insignificant. But POP and JSt proved to be negatively and significantly correlated. Also, POP significantly negatively affect JS of university teachers. There was no evidence found as the mediation role of JSt between POP and JS. This may happen because job stress is its self a psychological state and sometime treated as objective measure while perception of politics is subjective measure. Moreover, all the teachers understands that teaching is stressful profession and heavy workload and pressure from authorities is part of their job.

The research provides a brief and specific understanding that how POP and JSt affect the JS of teachers. However, the study cannot be generalized in the entire country due to massive number of private higher education institutions. Future research must in cooperate other factors that may contribute to decrease the JS of academicians. Also, for the generalizability of the study for private higher education institutions must be included in the sample for further studies.

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## *Family Support on Self-Compassion Development: A Case Study of Thai Lesbians*

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### **Abstract**

The family has played a crucial role in psychological development, especially for Asians. This qualitative study aims to explore the ways in which family support could assist Thai lesbians to develop self-compassion. This study employed purposive sampling to examine how 6 participants perceived what and how their family could foster their self-compassion. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using content analysis. The emerging themes included: 1) self-compassion and self-acceptance of being lesbian, 2) a supportive family, which consisted of 2.1) respect and freedom, 2.2) warmth, 2.3) open mind for their child being lesbian, and 3) a family model of being compassion, which consisted of 3.1) a model of forgiveness, 3.2) a model of being mindful, and 3.3) a model of a decent living and insight. Findings highlight that family supports and family members who could be models for mindfulness and compassion are helpful to participants' self-compassion development and mental health.

Keywords: Self-Compassion, Family, Lesbian, Mental Health

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## Introduction

Lesbian refers to a woman who is primarily or exclusively attracted to other women, both emotionally and sexually. Research has shown that the lesbian and LGBT population faces more diverse mental health issues which relate to lower self-acceptance (Camp et al., 2020). In order to promote their mental health, academics emphasize factors such as a greater understanding of their nature (Rees et al., 2021), self-acceptance (Zimlich, 2019), and family support (Roberts & Christens, 2021). Together with self-compassion, a psychological construct and meta-analysis study has suggested its significant association with mental health. Carvalho and Guiomar (2022) suggest that affirmative mental health care may benefit from promoting self-compassion.

Self-compassion (Neff, 2023) has been found to be a critical factor in promoting mental health and well-being. It involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding and acceptance in times of difficulty, rather than self-criticism and judgment. Self-compassion is comprised of self-kindness, common humanity and mindfulness, which also share some similarities with self-awareness and self-acceptance. Today research has shown that self-compassion and family support have a positive effect on LGBT mental health. However, little is known about how family support can promote self-compassion that improves mental health for lesbians.

Family support is related to mental health and well-being (Schnettler et al., 2015). Sui and Phillips (2002) mentioned that family quality could predict both positive and negative affect on older women in Hong Kong. Additionally, findings from Camp and Rimes (2020) mentioned that a lack of acceptance from one's family is a stressor for the LGBT population. These findings suggest that family support may play a critical role in promoting mental health among Asian and LGBT individuals. More research is needed to better understand the mechanisms through which family support can promote mental health among Asian populations, especially regarding self-compassion.

In conclusion, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the role of family support in promoting self-compassion among LGBT individuals, particularly within a Thai lesbian context. By examining their experience of what and how their family could foster their self-compassion, the findings could lead to more understanding of their nature, and factors that could help promote their mental health.

## Self-Compassion

Neff (2023) mentioned that self-compassion is a construct that was originally based on the Buddhist perspective of compassion. To understand self-compassion, an understanding of compassionate experience is required. Compassion is an intention and action to relieve suffering (Payutto, 2008). This also includes oneself. Neff added that in order to do so, one needs to turn toward suffering, and indeed it also requires mindfulness towards awareness, instead of avoiding or rejecting it.

Self-compassion is comprised of 3 elements. As Neff (2023) explained, 1) self-kindness vs. self-judgment; self-kindness is to be kind and supportive toward ourselves, to take a benevolent and supportive attitude toward ourselves instead of condemning ourselves, and to acknowledge our shortcomings and care for ourselves regardless. This self-acceptance decreases the sense of unworthiness. 2) Common humanity vs. isolation; this is a capacity

and understanding that life's challenges are part of being human and an experience we all share, instead of irrationally feeling like everyone else is just fine and we are the only ones who are in difficulty. This helps one to feel connected instead of isolated. 3) Mindfulness vs. overidentification; we need to be able to turn our awareness toward our own pain, instead of avoiding or exaggerating the discomfort of our present-moment experience, in order to be compassionate to ourselves.

Germer (2009) explained that self-compassion is a form of acceptance. Self-compassion is accepting ourselves while we're in pain, which includes giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others. Germer also portrayed stages of acceptance as: 1) aversion, which is resistance, avoidance and rumination to our suffering; 2) curiosity, which is turning toward discomfort with interest; 3) tolerance, which is safely enduring suffering; 4) allowing, which is letting feeling come and go; and 5) friendship, which is embracing suffering and seeing a hidden value beneath it.

Elements of self-compassion and stages of acceptance within a framework of self-compassion could give us a general understanding of self-compassion and possible processes toward self-compassion from an inner perspective. While there is little knowledge on how other factors could foster self-compassion, this study aims to explore how family support could help promote self-compassion, especially in cases where the literature has suggested promoting self-compassion, such as in the LGBT population.

## Method

This study took a qualitative approach. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using content analysis. Data triangulation methods were utilized to ensure trustworthiness in this study. The data collection process began after ethics clearance by the Chiang Mai University research ethics committee (COA No. 039/62).

## Participants

Key informants were 6 Thai lesbians that could accept their gender identity. The key informants were selected through purposive sampling for in-depth interviews via gatekeepers. The inclusion criteria were as follows: 1) Thai women who identify themselves as lesbians, 2) aged over 18 years old, 3) rated themselves as having medium or high self-compassion on the self-compassion scale in the Thai version by Boonsrangsom (2013), 4) can communicate their in-depth experiences, and 5) are willing to participate the study. Exclusion criteria included anyone reporting themselves with having psychiatric symptoms or were currently in psychiatric treatment.

Table 1: Demographic data of key informants.

Alias	Age at interview	Occupation	Period of gender identity acceptance	SCS score
ID1	29	Pharmacist	High school	21.9
ID2	24	Architecture	Late elementary school	22.05
ID3	26	Psychologist	Undergraduate	23.33
ID4	28	Psychologist	Junior high school	21.4
ID5	30	Researcher	Junior high school	22.15
ID6	25	Personal business	Elementary school	21.85

## **Instrument**

The self-compassion scale (SCS) is a 26-item scale, responses were measured on a 5 points Likert scale, and topics consisted of six factors: self-kindness, common humanity, mindfulness, self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification. The SCS reflected self-compassion by using a cumulative average score of all 6 factors (score range was from 6-30). SCS defines a score as: 6.00-14.00 is low self-compassion; 14.01-22.00 is medium self-compassion; 22.01-30.00 is high self-compassion. The Thai version of the SCS scale was developed by Boonsrangsom (2013), which had a Cronbach's reliability coefficient of .836. SCS was used as an instrument for inclusion criteria in which respondents rated themselves as having medium or high self-compassion at a score of 14.01 or above.

## **Procedure**

Content analysis was used to analyze the data. Firstly, the first researcher transcribed the voice recordings verbatim, together with an observation note on how key informants reacted and expressed themselves. Then, the researcher read the transcripts to understand the participants' experiences and identify the primary common and emerging themes. The researcher finally coded and categorized them into themes and subthemes.

## **Results**

The emerging themes included: 1) self-compassion and self-acceptance of being lesbian, 2) a supportive family, which consisted of 2.1) respect and freedom, 2.2) warmth, 2.3) open mind for their child being lesbian, and 3) a family model of being compassion, which consisted of 3.1) a model of forgiveness, 3.2) a model of being mindful, and 3.3) a model of a decent living and insight.

### **Theme 1: Self-Compassion and Self-Acceptance of Being Lesbian**

Key informants mentioned their self-compassion and self-acceptance of being lesbian as they could accept who they were and what their gender preferences and identity were. They felt at ease with what they were and what they chose to be. As ID2 shared:

I didn't hate or feel bad about myself. Just felt like Yeah! That's work. When I dated a woman, I felt that it was "myself". I didn't feel any struggle. Honestly, I felt good. I didn't have to conceal myself, just be frank that I like a woman. And that made me feel chill. I wasn't like at a stage that I feared or had to conceal. Just felt fine. (ID2, 341-345)

On the same pages, ID3 assured her feeling as:

I knew that loving a woman wasn't a bad thing. It just has its own way. The longer I was in a relationship with my girlfriend, I realized that this is me. Even her feeling that she could accept this relationship told me that I had gained more than I had lost. There was a time when I feared how others would look at me which made me not accept that I loved her. But I realized that it was just a feeling. So, I accept it! (ID3, 233-239)



## **Theme 2: A Supportive Family**

A supportive family was a comparable factor that key informants mention in their experience of self-compassion. As it helped support key informants to grow in the emotional aspect with a safe space that is as fundamental as their family. A supportive family showed a respectful and accepting attitude toward their process of coming out as lesbian, together, with love and a warm atmosphere throughout their growing-up process. A supportive family consists of 3 aspects: 1) respect and freedom, 2) warmth, and 3) open mind for their child being lesbian.

### **Theme 2.1: Respect and Freedom**

Key informants mentioned how they perceived that their family was supporting of them with respect and freedom in whatever choices they made in their life, especially the choice of becoming lesbian. This quality has shown that it helped them to have the courage to choose their life and become more independent. And it also helped them in the process of self-compassion. As ID1 stated:

My family gave me the freedom to be anything. Yes. They gave me the courage to be whatever I chose to be. I knew that I was different but they were ok. They were fine. They hadn't judged me or anything. That's how my family helped. (ID1, 820-822)

ID5 mentioned how she perceived respect and freedom from her dad and how it helped her grow:

About how to think or how they taught me how to live, they weren't bad; their attitude was open. But, if it came to preference, taste, or my liking, Dad would just be like... He was the type that was open to whatever his daughter liked. He's fine. Just so that his daughter was a good person, and wasn't harmful to anybody. And let me be independent of myself. (ID5, 171-174)

### **Theme 2.2: Warmth**

The common atmosphere of the family that key informants shared was warmth. A warm relationship based on love was the relationship that was their emotional support and a resource for their further experience. As ID4 shared how she was loved and supported by her family:

When I was a kid, my parents raised me in such a loving way. I could really feel their love. Dad was a funny person, really funny. He was also like an artist. He had his art of living and his aesthetic way of his life. Mom was a social worker. She raised me in a very psychological way. It was warmth; a warm way. I could feel it a lot when I was young. And they really supported me emotionally, during my childhood. (ID4, 57-62)

ID6 shared how she perceived her mom's love through her action:

Mom would go with me everywhere, even to school events that other parents didn't go to. Sometimes I thought "Why did she have to come?" As a teenager, by that time, I wanted to spend time with friends and be cool. But Mom cared, so she came along. When I grew up, I understood that I was lucky that my mom could manage to go everywhere with me while others might never have had this chance. (ID6, 104-108)

### **Theme 2.3: Open Mind for Their Child Being Lesbian**

Key informants reported an open attitude of their family about their being lesbian. This open attitude had become one of their family supports. As ID6 mentioned how her dad expressed that he could accept her choice on her coming out:

My dad told me that it was totally fine. We even have sperm bank today. I was like shoot! I cried so hard. I'd never thought that Dad would... He could understand this modern world so well. I was so grateful. I was like a moment of coming out. (ID6, 315-318)

It was not just a direct parent that mattered, ID5 also shared how her aunt showed her supportive attitude toward being lesbian:

My aunt said that it was nothing about being lesbian. There were many people that date a girl and it was fine. Nothing bad about it. Their daughter wasn't a bad person. She still studied hard. And everything is still the same. That was just it. (ID5, 189-191)

### **Theme 3: A Family Model of Being Compassion**

A family model of being compassionate had installed a feeling of self-compassion. Key informants learned to forgive, to be mindful, and the way to live their life from their family, which was a resource for their self-compassion development. A family model of being compassion consists of: 1) a model of forgiveness, 2) a model of being mindful, and 3) a model of a decent living and insight.

#### **Theme 3.1: A Model of Forgiveness**

Key informants mentioned how they learned to forgive and to be compassionate from their parents. Their parents were living models of forgiveness and compassion. They showed how to forgive the key informants in their process of learning, making mistakes, and growing up. And, they also showed how they could be compassionate toward others. As ID3 mentioned:

I'd never been scolded. Well, since I was a child, I wasn't a bad one. But, in case I failed an exam or I could not achieve something, I still had never been scolded. My parents had never blamed me, scolded me, or been harsh with me, or even on themselves. Or, when I was younger, and I did something wrong, they would teach me reasonably, such as I wasn't supposed to do that. It was how they taught. They had never made me feel like what I did was bad or unacceptable. They would just forgive. I failed an exam. OK, give it another try next time. There were always words like 'never mind', 'let's try again next time', 'it's ok, next time', or 'after this, you could do that'. I always got chances from my family. They had never blamed, judged, or thought of me as a bad person. If there was something wrong, it was still wrong, then made up. (ID3, 1172-1179)

ID4 also learned how forgiveness and compassion could be performed by her mom:

I would have seen it from my mom. Mom was a soft-hearted person. She is the type of, no matter how much she hated someone, eventually she would be kind to them. This was her compassion toward others. No matter how much someone had been bad to us, eventually at some point, we would feel that that person was so pitiful. We

should... like...we should forgive them. Or forgive anyone that had been bad to us. (ID4, 974-978)

### **Theme 3.2: A Model of Being Mindful**

When a family member(s) was the one who could be a model of being mindful, key informants mentioned that they learned to be mindful from their family. And mindfulness became a resource for their self-acceptance, compassion and mental health. As ID3 shared:

Dad was the one who taught me. He was more on suggesting and guiding our way of life. When I was a kid, he taught me meditation, yoga, and (Buddhist) Dhamma. Since he lived his life according to Dhamma, so he taught me since I was young. He taught me to do things slowly, just like practicing mindfulness. And he also taught us to see what was right or wrong. He was a guide in my life. So that the mindset had imprinted into me. For example, when I was moody, I knew that I was not supposed to accuse others. Or, when I was dissatisfied, I didn't have to hurt others. So, there were things that I knew since I was a kid that I should or should not do. Since he taught me to be slow, mindful, and do yoga, it helped me to aware and to pause myself at the time when I got emotionally overwhelmed with either stress, anger, or irritation. So that I could deal with myself. Or, at least, I knew what I should not do, so I didn't do it since the beginning. What my dad taught me, helped me to be more logical, and workable, and also help me to accept myself. (ID3, 1150-1161)

Being mindful also included an ability to be aware of their feelings. As ID4 mentioned that she learned this from her parents:

Dad and Mom were the types that can talk about their feelings. For example, Mom would say that she felt sorry, and Dad was sorry. There was so much feeling. So, there was nothing left unfinished. My family, we were not a logic type, we were more the emotional type. (ID4, 440-443)

### **Theme 3.3: A Model of a Decent Living and Insight**

The family wasn't just a model for forgiveness and mindfulness. The key informants mentioned that they were also a model of how to live a decent life and also insight as a resource for their psychological development. A decent life has encouraged them to live a graceful life. Insight, or understanding of life, has brought them through their suffering. As ID1 mentioned regarding her model of decent living:

I grew up in a good environment. Even though I wasn't really close with my mom, dad, or brother, for me they were good people from a social standard. They didn't drink, smoke, nor do any violence. They provided love and warm feeling for me. Even my friends were good people. They had human-hood. They weren't a virtue, but they didn't do anything bad that I could not endure. These environments shaped my mindset. They faced huge problems, but they weren't pessimists, they were resilient. That made me see beauty in humanity. (ID1, 787-795)

ID6 also mentioned how she had obtained her insight and understanding of life, that nothing can be held as 'ours', from her father at a time that she was heartbroken:

There was a time that my dad told me that he had to die too. He wasn't mine and wasn't his. Shoot! My heart was broken that day. And that made me realize that that

person who broke my heart wasn't mine either. The thing that made me approach her, and the thing that made me suffer, was because I thought that she was mine. (ID6, 329-331)

## Discussion

The family is a crucial factor in a person's mental health. The findings also reflect a contradiction to what Camp and Rimes (2020) mentioned, that a lack of acceptance from the family is a stressor for the LGBT, since the key informants mentioned their self-acceptance and well-being alongside their supportive family which genuinely accepted them. Furthermore, the family that supports their child emotionally together with warmth, respect and acceptance is congruent with Rogers (1961), who mentioned the factors that therapists could use to help their client grow psychologically, which included 1) being genuine and congruent in their relationship, 2) a warm, positive and accepting attitude toward the client, and 3) empathetic understanding. As the key informants mentioned how their families genuinely accepted them on the gender preference that they made, and forgave them for whatever mistakes they made in the process of growing up, along with positive communication to help them learn how to live, this reflects how their families had been genuine in their relationship and provided them with a warm, positive and accepting atmosphere in their relationship. The key informants also reported how they had been treated with empathetic understanding, as they felt that their families had supported them emotionally, with an understanding of their feelings. Academics and researchers agree that these psychological qualities of the parent provide a great support for their child's mental health (English, 2013; Farrant et al., 2012; Korelitz, Garber, 2016; Psychogiou et al., 2008; Roth et al., 2016). This family vibe has become the resource on how the key informants had grown their self-awareness and self-acceptance, which is at the root of mental health and healthy self-compassion.

Learning from a model is a powerful way for a child to learn behavior (Bandura, 1965). Accordingly, the findings showed that key informants reported that their parent was a model of their self-compassion development, especially in two main aspects of self-compassion (Neff, 2023), self-kindness and mindfulness. Forgiveness is compassion (Boonyarit, 2012), and compassion is kindness. The key informants learned directly from their experience on how they had been forgiven by their parents, and they observed how their parents forgave others. Their parents' compassionate attitude and behavior had been imprinted on their learning, together with their direct experience, and were at the root of their self-compassion, while learning to be mindful of the model of their parent also enhanced their basic sense of self-compassion. As the key informants mentioned, they learned to be mindful of their feeling and their life from their parents. This finding is congruent with Han et al. (2021), who mentioned that mindful parents could be related to a child's behavior.

The difference is that the key informants did not mention the model of common humanity. To look more deeply into the common humanity, common humanity is an understanding that helps people feel connected in times of difficulty. It is an understanding or insight that has deepened its root in Thai culture from Theravada Buddhism (Tuicomepee, 2012). An insight of a decent living and how things cannot stay the same also led key informants to a feeling of connectedness. As ID6 mentioned, her realization was that everybody is facing the same phenomenon and that no one belongs to anyone else. Or ID1, who could see beauty in humanity because of a decent living model from her family and the people surrounding her. As Neff (2023) mentioned, the self-compassion construct was originally based on the

Buddhist perspective, this phenomenon could also extend the perspective on how different understandings could foster a sense of connectedness, which is the root of common humanity.

The findings also extend a perspective to the mental health professional, on how to help people cultivate self-compassion. This could imply that promoting compassion and self-compassion to parents could also be helpful to their child's self-compassion, which is congruent with a holistic perspective (McKee, 1988) that people could grow their well-being together as a system. When one learns to have self-compassion and have better mental health, they could be a factor that helps the people surrounding them to also grow better mental health and self-compassion.

## **Conclusion**

The emerging themes of this study are: 1) self-compassion and self-acceptance of being lesbian, 2) a supportive family, which consists of 2.1) respect and freedom, 2.2) warmth, 2.3) open mind for their child being lesbian, and 3) a family model of being compassion, which consists of 3.1) a model of forgiveness, 3.2) a model of being mindful, and 3.3) a model of a decent living and insight. The findings have shown that a supportive family and a family model of compassion could help assist Thai lesbians in cultivating their self-compassion. The findings could lead to an implication of self-compassion parenting, which could help families holistically grow in their mental health. This study has the limitation of a restricted number of participants, as the nature of a qualitative study, please apply the findings to your setting with care.

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## ***Study on Architectural Remains of Tuman: A Forgotten Capital of the Kalachuris***

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### **Abstract**

Tuman is a small village located at 10 km away from Katghora in the Korba District of present day Chhattisgarh, India. This place is considered to be the first capital of the Haihaya or Kalachuri Royal Dynasty of South Kosala. According to its political, social, religio-cultural importance this place gained attention of the researchers. This historic region of Chhattisgarh also gained archaeological importance by owning the 15 ruins of intricately sculptured stones principally of ancient temples. This locality is one of the protected areas in Chhattisgarh declared by the Archaeological Survey of India. The architectural wonders of Tuman not just only attract tourists, but also raise so many vital queries among Historians including Archaeologists and young research scholars as well. Like – when did this small settlement become the centre of the authority of the Kalachuri Dynasty? Are these monuments carrying out one single style of temple architecture or are they showcasing the composite structural pattern? Based on religious perspective, this place can portray a successful picture of communal compatibility as well. This paper intends to focus on how Tuman transformed into the capital of the Kalachuri Dynasty from an elementary stage of a Janapada. This paper would discuss the detailed architectural features of the temples and other monumental remains of that place based on a thorough field study. Lastly, I would also like to highlight how political anxiety and religious harmony went hand in hand to make Tuman a unique ancient archaeological site in India.

Keywords: Kalachuri Dynasty, Haihayavanshi, South Kosala, Archaeological Survey of India, Janapadas

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## Introduction

The 'Ancient Dakshin Kosala' region comes under the geographical zone of the newly created Chhattisgarh state at present. Apart from the northern and central part of Chhattisgarh, this particular place is also covering the western part of the Odisha state as well. According to the major Puranas, this particular place is mentioned with Tripuri, Kalinga and Mekala. If we considered one of the major epics of India 'Ramayan' as our primary literary source, we came to know that in 'Uttara-kanda Parva', Rama divided Kosala into two regions – Uttar Kosala was given to Lav and Kosala went to his another son Kush. It is very strange that particular term 'Dakshin Kosla' was not mentioned in any specific texts or inscriptions. This debate is still very popular among researchers though. According to Donald M Stadtner, the present classification of 'Dakshin Kosala' used by historians is just to differentiate it from the region of 'Kosala' in northern India. The art tradition particularly the architectural formation of this region is very rich and unique. The references we are getting from 'Manasara'<sup>1</sup> based on that we can say that the architectural structure of South Kosala is portraying a blended form of Northern Indian monumental style with local genres. Tuman or Tummana (Geo-coordinates Lat. 22° 34' N and 82° 45'E) is a historical place. This settlement situated 10 km away from Katghora, which is 30 km away from district headquarter in the north-west direction. This site is archaeologically very active and from the Ratanpur inscription of Jajjaladeva I of Kalachuri (1114CE), we get to know that this place became the very first capital of the Kalachuris of Dakshin Kosala branch. In Tuman, one can find more than 15 monumental remains and several sculptures of Brahmanical deities. Even Buddhist architectural remains are also there. Among them, one Saiva Temple is very popular and considered to be the only protected historical site by the archaeological survey of India. This paper is an attempt to look into the detailed architectural features of those monuments especially to study that particular Siva Temple which is still maintaining its lost glory. This paper not only focuses the architectural part but also intends to focus on the sculptural development of ancient and early medieval Tuman as well. But before we get into the structural study, we will briefly discuss on the historical identity of South kosala especially Tuman and how the political scenario changed gradually and this janapda became the first mighty capital of the Kalachuris of the South Kosala Branch. Apart from that I would like to discuss the religious perspective behind the making of those outstanding monuments in Tuman.

## Reviewing the Previous Works and Methodology I Have Used

To study this particular theme, I went through various first-hand and second-hand sources. Among first-hand sources, I considered examining different inscriptions of the Kalachuri Dynasty and primary literary sources. Apart from these first-hand materials, there are plenty of second-hand literary sources like Books and journals which help us to understand the changing socio, cultural, political scenario of ancient and early medieval Dakshin Kosala especially Tuman. Various works like 'Maha Kosala in Ancient Literature' by K.D. Bajpai, 'The Extent of Capital of Daksina Kosala' by E.V. Havell, 'Sculptures of Dahala and Dakshin Kosala and their Background' by R.N. Mishra, 'A Survey on the History of south Kosala' by N.K. Sahu etc discussed about the full history of Dakshin Kosala emphasising the architectural activity of that place in general as a part of the theme. But according to my primary observation, these works dose not tell us about the full flagged architectural development and how a separate genre had been gradually evolving in South Kosala and how Tuman became the very first

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<sup>1</sup> 'Manasara' is an ancient text on Indian architecture and design. It has 70 chapters and 10,000 slokas. It is a Vastu Shastra or Shilpa Shastra of very old era. It gives detailed guidelines for building temples, sculptures, gardens, tanks etc.

Janapada<sup>2</sup> for the representation of those magnificent architectural remains. Even these secondary works lack information about how the geographical identity of South Kosala<sup>3</sup> was changing with the advent of different royal dynasties in that region and how the political and religious scenarios getting complex slowly and affected the Monument-making activity in that area. To execute my paper I not only just study those primary sources but also try to compare them side by side to readdress the issues chronologically regarding Temple Study of the Kalachuris. I visited Tuman and other places of South Kosala for a detailed field study and to observe those monuments and their sculptural representations minutely to know the hidden history of Architectural development in that Janapada which has always been overshadowed by the popular Dynastic History.

### **The Identity of South Kosala and Tuman**

According to Imperial Gazetteer of India, the term ‘Kosala’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Kausala’. It has two meanings. One denotes happiness. It also means that one who is dexterous in plucking Kusa grass which is very useful for religious sacrifices. So it normally appears that the region once used to supply Kusa grass to other regions of the Indian subcontinent. Even today, this geographical part abundantly grows grasses of various types. The word ‘Kosala’ is a linguistically corrupt form of the Prakrit term Kausala. If we considered both Indian tradition and literary sources, we came to know that this region was known as a famous country in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. This particular information we are getting from ‘Anguttaranikaya.’ Apart from this Buddhist Scripture, another Buddhist literature ‘Avadanasataka’ mentions Dakshin Kosala during the life time of Buddha. The term ‘Kosala’ has been mentioned in Ramayana and Mahabharata as well. Archaeologically, the word ‘South’ or ‘Dakshin Kosala’ first time appeared in the Kalachuri records. Generally, Dakshin Kosala suggests the region covering the major north and central part of Chhattisgarh and western portion of Orissa. Tuman is located in modern Chhattisgarh state. Chhattisgarh used to be a part of Madhya Pradesh. But back in the year 2000, Chhattisgarh became individual state. If we trace back the ancient and early medieval historical and political identity of this geographical region, we came to know that this place went through so many changes. Several royal dynasties ruled over South Kosala and stretch out their authority from that place into the neighbouring provinces. Historically, another reference to this particular area can be found as early as circa 200 BCE from an inscription found at Jogimara cave situated at Ramgarh hills of Sarguja District. After that, another wooden inscription discovered in the place called Kirari in Bilaspur District. Both of these inscriptions indirectly mentioned the ancient art tradition of Dakshin Kosala. The active political history of this area came in front when various royal dynasties intended to capture this region between the 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE. After the death of Harisena, ruler of the Vakataka Dynasty, the fate of South Kosala passed into the hands of a regional dynasty popularly known as Rajarsitulyakula. This short lived dynasty was succeeded by another local dynasty named Parvatadvarakas in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE. From Epigraphical sources like the Kesari Beda Charter of Arthapati, Podagarh Inscription of Skandavaraman, The Rajim Stone Inscription of Vilasatunga we came to know that at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE or the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Nalas became prominent power. Soon the administrative system of that area was passed into the hands of the Sarabhapuriyas. After Sarabhapuriya other Royal dynasties

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<sup>2</sup> Janapada term composed of two words. ‘Jana’ means people and ‘Pada’ means foot. It literally means the land where the jana set its foot and settled down. During 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE Janapadas and Mahajanapadas became very powerful units.

<sup>3</sup> South Kosala is a historical region of central India. It was located in what is now Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh along with some parts of Western Odisha.

like the Panduvanshis, the Somvanshis, the Kalacuris<sup>4</sup> and the Nagvanshis etc controlled the region. The Kalacuris ruled this region till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE roughly and made Tuman their first capital. After a couple of years, they shifted their capital to Ratanpur.<sup>5</sup> Geographically the position of South Kosala was very important as it is connecting the North region and the coastal area through the south eastern region. The rout is connecting major areas like Mathura, Prayag, South Kosala and Kalinga. Even one of the famous and earliest routs joined Kausambi to the Southeastern sea coast via Bharhut, Amarkantak, Malhar and Dandakaranya forest. So the cultural, architectural and sculptural currents were freely flowing from north to south-east region as well. For this reason, South Kosala was getting political, religious and cultural attention at that time.

### **The Identity and Short History of the Kalachuris**

Kalachuris ruled in Chhattisgarh not for a very long period and it had a minimum of 12 branches and sub branches and they spread out in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. The term 'Kalachuri' itself is very interesting. 'Kalli' means Long moustache and 'Churi' means sharp knife from which the term has been derived. According to the local legends, in the family of the lunar race a king was born named Soma whose preceptor was Asvatthama. This teacher appears to have protected his disciple from the rage of Parasurama by asking him to grow beard and moustache which covered up his actual identity. It is because of this that Soma had Kallichuri which means a beard and moustache as sharp as a sword and from that moment his family came to be known as Kalachuri. Apart from the mythological identity, we should consider the literary sources and archaeological sources as well. The term has been mentioned in the Epics, Rigveda, Vayu Purana and Vishnu Purana and of course the contemporary Buddhist and Jain Literature. Among archaeological sources, not only inscriptions and coins supply vital information but Monuments and different sculptures also portray the hidden political, religious and cultural story of Kalachuri Dynasty. Based on the Bilhari stone Inscription of Yuvarajadeva II, we get to know that the Kalachuris mentioned as the Haihayas. According to Puranic tradition, the early Kalachuris ruled at Mahishmati and that place has been founded by Haihaya<sup>6</sup> ruler Mahishmanta. Maybe, for this reason, we can associate Kalachuris with the Haihayas. But according to Historian V.V. Mirashi, the Early Kalachuris did not prefer to call themselves Haihayas, they always preferred to be referred to by that name – 'Kalachuris.' Among their various branches, Kalachuris of South Kosala is very unique because in that area they had different capitals which they had established in different times.

Mirashi, Stadtner and Raj Kumar Sharma agree with the fact that the Tummana and Raipur branches of the Kalachuris chronologically first appeared as the Subordinate limbs of the main Kattachuri Dyasty. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, the Tripuri house focused on establishing their new branch in South Kosala. Kalachuri rulers of Tripuri made several attempts to conquer this region. If we minutely read the 'Ratanpur Stone Inscription' of Jajalladeva I (the record was edited, with a translation and lithograph done by Dr. Kielhorn in the Epigraphia Indica, Vol. I, pp. 33 ff.), we find that the ruler was trying to establish his glorifying family genealogy mentioning how Kalingaraja left his original ancestral country

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<sup>4</sup> The Kalachuri Dynasty was the indigenous dynasty ruled in India during ancient and early medieval era. The very first kingdom of the Kalachuri Dynasty was known as Chedi.

<sup>5</sup> Ratanpur was the second historical capital of the Kalachuri Dynasty of South Kosala. It is a town in Bilaspur district.

<sup>6</sup> Haihaya or Heheya was an ancient kingdom which was ruled by Haihayavanshi Kshatriyas of Yaduvamsha of Chandra lineage. Its capital was called Mahishmati which was founded by Haihaya King Mahishmanta.

(probably Tripuri) to conquer South Kosala back 1000 CE with the help of Kokalla II. Kalingaraja selected Tuman as his very first capital. In this janapada, they ruled up to 1225 CE and Pratapamalla was the very last ruler. Based on the Epigraphic references, it can easily say that from the rule of Kalingaraja in Tuman upto Ratnaraja I, the Kalachuris of South Kosala was under the control of the popular Tripuri House. But this political authority of the Tripuri house came to an end during the rule of Prithvideva I who established their new branch at Ratanpur by shifting their capital from Tuman to form the independent Kalachuri line of the South Kosala. Professor Kielhorn also informed us that, during the reign of Kalingaraja to Prithvideva I Tuman experienced vast architectural activities. Various types of Temples are purely dedicated to Lord Siva, Lord Vishnu found from that place. Apart from religious architecture; tanks, gardens and palatial buildings were also there. The brief history of the place and the unique identity of this dynasty will help us to understand the temple-making activity of Tuman and how it helped Ratanpur to transform as the second architecturally beautiful capital of the South Kosala branch of the Kalachuris. But before we talk about the Architectural Remains of Tuman emphasising the detailed features of the one living popular Siva temple in that Janapada we have to understand the religious background and influence and the common architectural style of Dakshin Kosala.

### **Religious Background Behind the Architecture Making Activity in South Kosala, Especially in Tuman**

In Dakshin Kosala especially in Tuman Janapada Brahmanism had gained its popularity from very early times. Here Brahmanism includes different sects like Vaisnavism, Saivism, Sakta cult and other minor cults as well. During the time of Gupta-Vakataka Dynasties Dakshin Kosala went under the heavy influence of Vaisnavism. Temple making activity in Rajim and Sirpur gained huge popularity that time because of these two sites which became important Vaisnavite centres. This tradition had been carried out by the other Dynasties like Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvamsis. But During Kalachuri era in Dakshin Kosala, Saivism got a stronghold and popularity among local inhabitants. But if we tried to look back we can notice that like Vaisnavism, Saivism was also in flourishing condition in South Kosala. Under Nalas, Saivism was nourished and given the status of a State religion. Even in the time of Sarabhapuriyas Saivism was also there and gradually flourishing. But from the time of Panduvamsis religious transformation became very prominent. In the time of the Kalachuris, Saivism became the State religion and temples dedicated to Lord Siva were started building under their royal patronage. Not only the Architecture but also the sculptural activities received royal and non-royal patronage as well in South Kosala especially in Tuman under the Kalachuris. The class of patrons consisted of people of different sections of Society. Like Kings, members of the royal family, women in the royal family like the Queen, the King's mother, State Officials, Ascetics and others as well. Most of the Kalachuri rulers were devotees of Saivism and naturally, they engaged themselves in making numerous structures. They provided financial support to the religious architectures for their long-term maintenance or renovation activities from time to time as and when required. The Kalachuri inscriptions provide us with important information about not only temples but also the allied institutions which were attached to the temples like a hall for study, continuous lines of gardens, tanks, lotus ponds, mango groves etc were built under the royal patronage. Tuman is the place where we are getting a clear picture of these kinds of activities very often. Based on inscriptions and local folklore, we noticed that under Kalachuri rule not only in Tuman but also other places in the Dakshin Kosala, ascetics were given the right to provide patronage to such building-making activities like constructing temples, monasteries, roads for trading networks and linking the religious centres as well. In Tuman, Smarta Upasana or Panchadevopasana got popularity

during Kalachuri Era (10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE). The Smarta originated from the concept of Panchayatana worship where veneration of five Brahmanical Deities (worship of Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Shakti and Ganesha) was its main subject. According to historians like Prabhashankar Pandey and K.D. Bajpai & S.K. Pandey, the main objective of this form of worship in Tuman and other parts of Dakshin Kosala during Kalachuri era was to unify the followers of Vaisnavism and Saivism by avoiding communal feelings. The intention of the historians is visible here. They only focus on the power balance between Vaisnavism and Saivism. But according to my observation, it can easily say that during the Kalachuri era even in the earlier phases; Buddhism got huge popularity in Dakshin Kosala. To break the influence of Buddhism in that area it was necessary to implement Panchayatana worship by uniting the devotees of different Cults of Brahmanical religion where not only Vaisnavism and Saiva cult hold the supreme authority but also on the other hand, Shakta, Surya and Ganapatya Cult played a major role to shape down the religious background of architectural and sculptural activities.



**Figure 1: The Saiva Temple, Tuman**



**Figure 2: The Main Entrance of the Sanctum Cella**

Buddhism was a popular creed in ancient and early medieval South Kosala. Various Buddhist texts mentioned about Buddha's visit to Dakshin Kosala. Nagarjuna who considered being one of the celebrated Buddhist Philosophers was believed to have resided in Dakshin Kosla. Renowned Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang gave a vivid account of the existence of Buddhism during the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE. This information is further attested by the Archaeological remains found from Tuman, Malhar and Sirpur etc. Apart from Buddhism, Jainism did not make much headway in South Kosala during this particular time. But in a couple of areas apart

from Tuman, like in Malhar<sup>7</sup> two Arghyapattas were discovered where 24 Tirthankars had been depicted which amply attested about the fact of the existence of Jainism in this region. So it can assume that the religious life in Dakshin Kosala reflects a scene of peaceful harmony and co-existence of different religious faiths and beliefs of Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical sects under patronage especially under the Kalachuris. It is really important for the stable political, social and cultural growth of that region and it also helps us to understand the process of Religious architecture-making activities in south Kosala especially in Tuman.

### **Temple Pattern of South Kosala and Detailed Study of Architectural Remains of Tuman**

According to some historical records, the proper architectural evolution in Dakshin Kosala started during the Gupta-Vakataka era and it had a far-reaching impact. During the post-Gupta era, this movement got momentum and it was popularised by the liberal and tolerant patronage of various regional ruling dynasties who ruled over this land between the 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The temple-building activities covered a long period. The monumental and cultural heritage of South Kosala acted as a bridge between North and South. If we observe the detailed architectural styling of Dakshin Kosala especially monuments which were getting a proper shape under Kalachuri era in Tuman, we can see the successful assimilation of Chalukyan and Gupta-Vakataka art style. Even the Kalinga architectural style has been reflected through those magnificent religious and non-religious architectures. These temples have definite local characteristics which provide significant light on the sub-regional manifestation of the Nagara<sup>8</sup> Architectural Style. Maybe the masons and sculptors imitated the classical and traditional idiom in the beginning, grew mannerist with time and ended up producing a unique provincial style. It has always been expected that the Art tradition and building technique had a free flow through the region leaving an impression behind. In the case of architectures in Tuman and other parts of South Kosala during the Kalachuri era, it can say that the builders and artists show their acquaintance with the canonical texts of both North and South India. Based on my detailed observation it can easily say that temples here basically represent the Nagara Architectural Style with certain local features. There is no doubt about the fact that the innovative impulse of the masons of South Kosala rendered an immense contribution to the growth of assimilated Central Indian and Odishan temple architectures.

Rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty of Dakshin Kosala not only provide patronage to art and architecture but undoubtedly they were the great builders as well. The Kalachuri inscriptions mention about constructing different Mandiras, Vyakhyanasalas, Sattras, Gardens, Monasteries and Colleges etc. But irony of the fate is, most of the buildings of their time are no more extant due to the ravages of time. Those architectures suffered from natural calamities and human vandalism. Since the majority of the Kalachuri temples known to date bear no direct epigraphic pieces of evidence, only a closer look at their architectural and sculptural details could help us to understand the development process chronologically. Though most of the temples are in strict conformity with the general characteristics of that era, a few peculiarities too could be noticed here and there. Most of the architectures constructed at that time are built by brick or brick-stone combination or entirely by stone. In Dakshin Kosala, most of the temples are curvilinear type. Tuman is no exception. The temples of the Kalachuri era, in ground plan,

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<sup>7</sup> At present, Malhar is a small town situated in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh, India. This is considered to be one of the most ancient towns of the district. This town is in the list of "Ancient Monuments and archaeological Sites and Remains of National Importance".

<sup>8</sup> Nagara Style of Architecture is a Temple style prevalent in North India especially in UP, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal etc. The Gupta dynasty was the first known patron of the Nagara style.

consist of the Garbhagriha (enshrining the presiding deity) with a plain interior, a vestibule or Kapili or Antarala connecting the pillared hall or Mandapa with the Garbhagriha. But in Tuman whatever architectural remains we get, we didn't find any pillared hall. Temples are mostly built on a high platform on which the axial structures stand. In most cases, we have noticed that the Mandapa or the pillared hall are square or presents a rectangular form being supported with rows of pillars and pilasters. These Mandapas on many occasions have lateral transepts with the provision of Gavaksa.<sup>9</sup> Any kind of architectural formation always depends on proper ground planning following several projections. The temples of Tuman and other places in South Kosala are either having the Triratha or Pancharatha or Saptaratha plan in their chronological sequence. In Tuman we are getting references to the Pancharatha or Saptaratha Shaiva Temple. Based on my detailed fieldwork, it can say that the broken remains of the Brahmanical temples still have the intact 'Upana' part which is revealing the Triratha, Pancharatha and Saptaratha style successfully. Here the Triratha temple is characterised by one offset projection at the centre known as 'Bhadra,' and the corner projection on both sides known as 'Karna.' The Brahmanical architecture in Dakshin Kosala especially in Tuman constructed over a raised platform known as 'Jagati'. They are shaped as square or rectangular. One of the general features of the Nagara Temple architecture is having five vertical divisions from bottom to top. They are 'Vedibandha,' 'Jangha,' 'Baranda,' 'Sikhara' and 'Mastaka.' Jangha has a two-fold division namely Talajangha and Uparjangha being divided by horizontal moulding known as 'Pattika.' The 'Mastaka' above the 'Sikhara' is adorned with finials like a trident or wheel depending on the main residing deity of the Temple. Kalachuri temples of Tuman have all these architectural features.

At the central nerve of the Korba lies the concealed gem Tuman Janapada in Kartala Tehsil. This small village is famous for its artistically magnificent Shiva Temple and other architectural remains. This temple has a rich history dating back centuries and is steeped in cultural significance. This Brahmanical architecture is built of sandstone and is purely dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the principal Deities in the Brahmanical Pantheon. This magnificent Architecture is situated at the centre of the Tuman janapada. The complex is huge and restored and preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.<sup>10</sup> The west-facing main temple structure is situated in a big stone-built square compound. Apart from this particular architecture, there we find at least 4 to 5 temple complexes in dilapidated condition. Only the base is still intact. The newly renovated normal entrance gate of the whole complex is in the north direction. There is a tank on the right-hand side of the temple. According to the Ratanpur Inscription of the Kalachuri King Jajalladeva I, architectures in this complex, especially this Saiva temple which was dated Kalachuri Samvat 866 (1114 CE/1116 CE) was constructed by Ratandeva-I. He was a staunch devotee of Siva. Here the Lord Shiva is represented as the God of destruction and yogi as well. According to the local legend, this particular monument is said to be located on the spot where Siva emerged from the Earth in the form of a lingam which considered being a sacred symbol in Brahmanism displaying the God's masculine energy. In one word Tuman Siva Temple is a magnificent example of the hybrid architectural style where we find the Nagara temple art is dominating the local aesthetic sense. Three unique things about this particular monument are considered to be noticed and not mentioned by the previous researchers. The first thing is there is no lavishly ornamented Gateway or Torana in front of the main walled complex and the Shikhara portion of the monument is gone. Another thing is

<sup>9</sup> Gavaksa is a Sanskrit word which means "bull's or cow's eye". In Brahmanical architectures, their role is envisioned as symbolically radiating the light and splendour of the central icon in its sanctum.

<sup>10</sup> ASI is an Indian government agency that is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural historical monuments in the country. It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director General.



interesting yet odd that is the absence of the other three halls – Bhoga mandira, Nata mandira and Jagamohana which are referred to be the main features of the Nagara style of temple architecture. The area is earthquake-prone. So it can assume that the other parts of this Siva temple and other Monuments inside that compound had been devastated by the natural calamity. But it is also very peculiar that we cannot find the broken portion of the ground plan of those three halls of that Saiva Temple as well. Only the Square Sanctum Cella is still intact with a stretched frontal porch. There is an east-facing Nandi sculpture on the right-hand side of the temple. Temple is standing on ‘Adhithana’ (basement) and there are 10 stairs from ground level to the ‘Jagati’ (raised platform) in front and on the second part we find 4 stairs leading towards the Garbhagriha. This Saptaratha temple has 7 vertical projections. We can observe the two crucial parts of the architecture - Pistha, Bada representing the Kaling flavour of architectural style. But unfortunately, the Gandi and Mastaka portion are gone. Bada part of the Sanctum cella has been divided into five different portions – Pa-bhaga, Tala-jangha, Madhya-bandhana, Upar-jangha and Baranda. Pabhaga continues to have five moulding patterns, carved with different designs. From bottom to top, those mouldings are known as Khura, Kumbha, Pota, Kani and Vasanta. Another unique feature of this temple is the presence of the upper part of the Upar-jangha. It may represent the unique regional style developed under the Kalachuri dynasty of South Kosals. The outer wall especially the backside of the architecture does not have sculptures. Only the figures of the Bhara Bahakas are there and we can observe the chronological presence of pilasters.<sup>11</sup> The frontal outer part of the main temple is decorated with floral and geometrical motifs, diamond designs etc. The presence of the figurines of the lion, marching elephant also attracts attention.

The entrance door of the main chamber is vastly decorated with river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna along with the Saiva Dvarapalas. Both of these River Goddesses are standing in a Tribhanga position on their Vahanas and holding Ghatas and Lotuses (probably). Shiva Dvarapalas are standing in a Dvibhanga position holding Damru and Trident. Their facial expressions are bold. The door guardians stand as fierce beings, placed to guard the holy space from evil spirit. Anyone can observe the presence of the Gandharbas, Vidyadharas or celestial musicians on the lintel and the two sides of the main door frame. Here the presence of Kirtimukha<sup>12</sup> reminds us the Orissan style. In this temple, the door frame or the Lalatabimba<sup>13</sup> was vastly elaborated by the figures of Ganesha, Siva and Vishnu. Even the scene of the famous battle between Rama and Ravana has been depicted stylistically. The borderline of the door frame was widely decorated by small figures of creepers and scroll works and the lotus emblem. In the Garbhagriha, we find the main north facing Shiva Ling. There is no decoration in the inner part of the temple and the Ceiling is kind of an odd conical shaped. Apart from that, we do find the Sculptures of Brahmanical deities, Buddhist deities and the part of the monuments (like Lotus Ceiling, base of the temple, architrave etc) scattered all over that walled compound.

## Conclusion

The structural pattern of this renowned temple of Tumana is considered to be one of the earliest Kalachuri monuments of the South Kosala branch. It not only helps us to understand how rich was the gradual process of regional temple-making activities but also guides us to figure out how stable was the political-cultural-religious unity of that place during the 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>11</sup> Pilaster is a shallow rectangular column that projects slightly beyond the wall into which it is built and conforms precisely to the order or style of the adjacent columns.

<sup>12</sup> Kirtimukha is the name of a swallowing fierce monster face with huge fangs and gaping mouth, very common in the iconography of the Brahmanical temple architecture.

<sup>13</sup> Lalatabimba: In general crest figure, central symbol on door lintel.

CE. Tuman not only represents the famous Saiva pilgrimage site of Korba District but is also identified as one of the rich heritage places in Chhattisgarh.

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*A Comparative Analysis of Language and Typography Between Two Chinese Enclaves  
in Singapore for Nostalgic Design Trends*

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**Abstract**

Using the multimodality approach of Linguistic Landscape, this paper reports a comparative analysis of language composition and typographic treatment of signs found on historic shophouses in Singapore's two distinctive Chinese ethnic enclaves, Bukit Pasoh (Chinatown) and Joo Chiat Road. The choice of languages used and typographic treatment on signs are analysed in context of approaches to 'hipster aesthetics' in the marketing of nostalgia-based consumption, where private businesses have been observed to capitalize on signs found on traditional shophouses to appeal to consumers with nostalgic experiences. The analysis of signages on both sites utilize a substantial amount of English (both around 80%), followed by a similar significant number of signs displaying Chinese characters (20-30%) and transliteration of local Chinese vernaculars into romanised script (almost to 10%). Despite similarities in the top three languages' makeup of both sites, further typographic study of the signs reveals that each site has developed its own unique methods for communicating nostalgia through visual means. Signages of businesses in Bukit Pasoh have been noted to retain original typography found on the shophouses as a homage to the site's ethnic heritage, while Joo Chiat Road signages are mostly stripped of all its original typography, recreating a contemporary form of nostalgia appreciation that pays homage to Singapore's nostalgia visual communication landscape instead. By examining other modalities such as language and cultural identification in addition to the contextual placement of typography, this paper will demonstrate how the linguistic landscape frameworks can assist designers to understand nostalgic design.

Keywords: Linguistic Landscape, Typography, Nostalgia Design, Cultural Identity, Visual Communication

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## **Introduction to Linguistic Landscape and Typography**

The linguistic landscape is an emerging interdisciplinary field within the broader discipline of sociolinguistic and primarily advocates for the analysis of language beyond that of written text and oral, which is what linguistics are accustomed to doing, but rather to also consider the context of imagery, objects, and the placement of language, which is being situated in time, space and the people associated with it (Gorter, 2013; Järlehed & Jaworski, 2015).

Typography on the other hand is a longstanding genre within the discipline of visual communication (graphic design). It has traditionally been associated with the study and craft of letterform arrangements for both legibility and ease of viewing textual materials, and is often seen as secondary to the meaning of the written content (Baines & Haslam, 2005; Leeuwen, 2006). However in recent years, the definition has been renewed by Ambrose and Harris (2017) as “the means by which a written idea is given a visual form” (p.6), thus articulating typography’s capacity to impact communication in our everyday contemporary society. Typography as the art of making written language visually expressive thus offers linguistic landscape a visual modality for consideration when interpreting signs beyond text and oral. The framework used within the linguistic landscape here is thus the multimodality lens that also takes into typography as a visual communication means of the signage meaning.

As much as typography and language are intrinsically linked, these two subjects are rarely taught together. Scholars mostly work in silos within their own discipline and only a handful have made attempts to venture into each other’s genre. The disconnection between typography and language has since been pointed out by designers (Baines & Haslam, 2005) as well as linguists (Leeuwen, 2006; Machin, 2007) all calling out for more engagement and collaboration between the two disciplines.

It is however important to acknowledge that are current studies where linguistic and literacy scholars have started to make efforts to analyze signs and text by giving typography the recognition it deserves through English picture books (Serafini & Clausen, 2012), multilingual shop signs in Taiwan (Curtin, 2015) to mono-lingual signs in public space in China (Zhou, 2020). There are also designers who have been looking at typography in urban landscapes beyond its functional and aesthetic qualities, examining typography’s potential to reveal cultural stories (Banham, 2011; Lou, 2016; Villagomez, 2015), affecting emotions and cityscapes (Kwok, 2020) as well as the ability to influence human senses (Velasco, Hyndman, & Spence, 2018). However, none of the work has yet to utilized linguistic landscape frameworks for the use of visual communication understanding, particularly in typography.

## **Nostalgic Design Trends – The Rise of ‘Fauxtalgia’ Consumption**

To further contextualize our research, the research team is particularly interested in the recent nostalgic design trends evident on signs of establishments in many of Singapore’s ethnic enclaves. This is primarily due to the declaration of government conservation status as well as the removal of rent control, which has resulted in gentrification of the area where businesses started to relocate to these areas as an alternative to the high rents in downtown areas (Kong & Sinha, 2016; Tourism Information & Service Hub, 2019).

These establishments have been seen to creatively capitalized and co-exist with the historical narrative of the ethnic enclaves, creating a kind of ‘fauxtalgia’ consumption trend that has become very appealing to a younger demographic in recent years, particularly among Gen Z and millennials (Brophy, 2019).

These establishment often market themselves with “hipster aesthetics” (including signs) to audiences yearning to be associated as creative middle-class individuals whose lifestyles place an importance to the value of authentic goods and production from the past (Celhay, Magnier, & Schoormans, 2020), evoking a sense of nostalgia even if they may have never lived through that period (Brophy, 2019).

This paper attempts to fill in the research gap by analyzing the role of typography on signs in Singapore’s two Chinese ethnic enclaves using linguistic landscape methodologies so as to initiate novel methods for analyzing “typographic landscapes” (Järlehed & Jaworski, 2015), providing new frameworks for visual communication designers to consider language and the socio-cultural context in which the typography will be situated in. In addition, interviewing of business owners will emphasize on signs that evoke a nostalgic sense of design. This study considers design aesthetics prior to the year 2000 to be “nostalgic” for purposes of context.

### **Research Question**

The paper will analyze the similarities and differences between the linguistic landscapes of Bukit Pash and Joo Chiat Road, with the contextualization of nostalgic design trends. Linguistic landscape analysis is appropriate in this case because it helps reveal not only the use of languages within a specific area, it also allows for consideration of the type of current establishments that are concentrated there, as well how these establishments make decisions for their signage within the area and spaces surrounding the business.

The research questions of this study are as following:

1. What types of business, languages and language composition make up the linguistic landscape of Bukit Pasoh and Joo Chait Road ?
2. Why do nostalgia-based businesses choose to locate in these two research sites, and what is the rationale behind their choice of typography for their business signs?

### **Information About the Two Research Sites**

The two sites selected for comparison are Chinatown (Chinese ethnic enclave) and Joo Chiat (Chinese-peranakan enclave) districts. Specific areas within the enclaves are further chosen for comparison based on the high number of gentrified activities that have occurred there. The selected area within Chinatown is known as Bukit Pasoh. Joo Chiat Road is the selected area within Joo Chiat.

#### ***Bukit Pasoh***

Bukti Pasoh is about 20 acres and is one of four districts of Chinatown that retains the largest number of clans and associations, a legacy of the large Chinese immigrant support network that originated there in the 19th century. It was nicknamed ‘the street of clans.’ The Chinese community in the area expanded and used to be wealthy and bustling housing many

prestigious social clubs in the area that were instrumental to Singapore's resistance efforts during world war II. The area was also however associated with vice, and used to have a high concentration of brothels, gangs as well as opium and gambling dens (Roots, 2022; Tourism Information & Service Hub, 2019).

The area received conservation status by the government's Urban Redevelopment Authority in the late 1980s-90s and the traditional shophouses were up for sale. This gradually turned the area into a hotspot for trendy hotels and restaurants. As the area is still mainly lined with conserved traditional shophouses, it became a charming blend of the old and new alongside each other (Tourism Information & Service Hub, 2019).

### ***Joo Chiat road***

Joo Chiat road is about 31 acres and is long stretch of road located within the Joo Chiat district. The Joo Chiat area previously existed as a seaside retreat for the affluent but Joo Chiat Road itself was a dirt track running through several plantations (Chua, 2012). Throughout the the 1920s and 1930s, numerous communities gradually moved from the city center eastward to Joo Chiat establishing it as their home. This resulted in a specific Chinese community moving away from Chinatown (URA).

The area was designated as a conservation area in 1993 and the Chinese-Malay, Peranakan heritages as well as the Singaporean Eurasians are now recognized (Shaw & Ismail, 2006). However, in the early 2000s, Joo Chiat Road's reputation was marred by the influx of bars, hourly-rate hotels, dubious karaoke lounges and massage parlors. Through various government lobbying and community efforts, stricter law enforcement measures on the vice trades were eventually implemented, resulting in the closure of these establishments (Chua, 2012).

Joo Chiat has now become an attractive destination for F&B operators seeking unique suburban neighbourhoods, as it provides an alternative from the high rental typical of down town districts. The area has experienced an increase of traditional shophouses revamping, particularly along Joo Chiat Road and its surroundings, contributing to the ongoing gentrification process (The Business Times, 2022).

### **The linguistic background of Singapore**

Singapore is a multiracial and linguistically diverse city in Southeast Asia with a total population of 5.5 million people. The three main ethnic groups are Chinese, Malay and Indian. The Chinese population comprised 74.3% of the total population, constituting the majority. The Malay, Indian and other ethnic group made up 13.5%, 9.0%, and 3.2% respectively, of the population. The remaining people are classified as 'Others', which includes Eurasians, Japanese, Arabs, Koreans etc (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2020).

According to Singapore's language policies, all four languages Malay, Mandarin, Tamil and English are the four official languages of Singapore. Malay has been established as the "national language" and English has been identified as the de facto "working language." Chinese and Tamil designated as "mother tongue" (Tan, 2014). In accordance with the 1979 policy, the use of Chinese dialects like Hokkien, Cantonese, and Hainanese was discouraged. According to Wee (2009), the government views Chinese dialects as an additional burden in



the learning process, preventing Chinese Singaporeans from achieving proficiency in both standard English and Chinese.

In accordance with Singapore's bilingualism policy, all Singaporean students are required to learn English as their primary language and their respective mother tongues as a secondary language. This policy is implemented to ensure that Singaporeans have a competitive edge in the contemporary, interconnected economy. Additionally, the mother tongue plays a pivotal role in connecting Singaporeans with their ethnic groups' rich heritage, cultural expressions, and traditional values (Shang & Guo, 2016).

## **Methodology**

### ***Defining the unit of analysis***

It is important to establish the unit of analysis for what constitute a “sign” in our linguistic landscape data collection. In this study, we referenced Nikolaou (2016) paper that followed Cenoz and Gorter (2006) guideline considering each establishment as the unit of analysis and not each individual sign because ‘each text belongs to a larger whole instead of being clearly separate’ (p. 71). Nikolaou (2016) also referenced Edelman’s study (2010) where only signs displayed on the shop window were considered and any signs found in the interior were excluded.

Following preceding case studies of linguistic landscape analysis, this research defines "sign" as any textual material found on the exterior of traditional shophouses. The establishment's exterior signs will be analyzed collectively. Included are signs that are directly painted, molded, mounted, hung, projected, suspended, or attached to the exterior walls of the infrastructure. This includes the shophouses’ ‘Residential Front,’ ‘Five-Foot Way, Column’, Pilaster, Frieze, Forecourt Wall, End Gable Wall and Rear Wall (URA, 2015). Therefore, materials such as menus, merchandise ads, posters affixed to the exterior of the establishment’s shophouse infrastructure for examples are included. Signs displayed on windows or doors inside the establishment will not be considered. 3D objects, board standees, and other freestanding signs are excluded as they are not permanent and can be removed easily.

These decisions are made based on the aim of this research, which is to examine the relationship of typography in repurposed traditional shophouse buildings, and its role in Singapore’s multicultural linguistic landscape. Therefore, only signs that are directly affixed to the exterior of the traditional buildings will be counted. Signages on the interior are not permanent, ever-changing and are not directly related to the traditional building itself, thus the exclusion. Even if all the signs in a single establishment use different languages or fonts, it is the company’s decision that determines the outcome and the overall impression of the establishment as a whole.

### ***Comparative Analysis of the Two Areas***

A comparative analysis is conducted to examine the business type category and language composition in two areas for quantitative data. Subsequently, a selection process is employed to identify establishments for interview using the collected quantitative data, which is further analyzed within the framework of nostalgia branding strategies adopted by businesses. To validate the findings in relation to our research inquiries, semi-structured interviews are

subsequently conducted with the business owners, providing further qualitative data for analysis.

Our approach employed in this study consisted of taking digital photographs of the signs of each establishment, as previously defined in the unit of analysis. The determination of the establishment type count is based on its perceptibility to the observer's visual line of sight. The photographs were captured over the period of around 20 days in October 2021 for Bukit Pasoh and over the period of around 5 days in July 2022. Bukit Pasoh was our first research site and hence took longer to establish criteria that defines the parameters of our subsequent research locations.

## Results

### *Business Type Comparison*

The business types in the two research sites are broken down in Tables 1 and 2. Food and beverage businesses (F&B) came out on top for each site, with Bukit Pasoh at 28% and Joo Chiat Road at 18%, and as previously observed, many of them lead the nostalgic design trend in ethnic enclaves. We observed that Bukit Pasoh continues to retain the legacy of clubs and association at 11.7%. We observed that Bukit Pasoh retains the legacy of clubs and associations at 11.7%. Joo Chiat has a high proportion of retail and offices after F&B.

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Food & Beverages (F&B)	93	27.93%
Clubs & Associations	39	11.71%
Arts, Media & Creative Services	32	9.61%
Beauty & Wellness	31	9.31%
Vacant / Unsigned	25	7.51%
Other Services	21	6.31%
Office	15	4.50%
Finance	11	3.30%
Educational Institutions & Training Centers	10	3.00%
Retail	9	2.70%
Hotel	7	2.10%
Consultant	6	1.80%
Law Firms	6	1.80%
Managements	4	1.20%
Logistic	4	1.20%
Entertainments	4	1.20%
Medical	3	0.90%
Religious Institutions	3	0.90%
Buildings & Apartments	3	0.90%
Wholesaler	3	0.90%
Engineering	3	0.90%
Retail F&B	1	0.30%
<b>Total establishments:</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1: Types of establishments in Bukit Pasoh (of Chinatown)

<b>Business</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
F&B (on-premises consumption)	66	18.13%
Retail	50	13.74%
Office	45	12.36%
Beauty wellness	30	8.24%
Retail F&B	27	7.42%
Other services	26	7.14%
Vacant / Unknown	22	6.04%
Creative services	18	4.95%
Grocery Store	14	3.85%
Pet Services	11	3.02%
Education	11	3.02%
Entertainment	11	3.02%
Medical	10	2.75%
Well-being Services	7	1.92%
Hotel	7	1.92%
Apartment	4	1.10%
Religious	3	0.82%
Clubs & Association	2	0.55%
<b>Total establishments:</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Types of establishments in Joo Chiat Road (of Joo Chiat)

### *Language Composition*

The language composition of the enterprises in the two research sites is shown in Tables 3 and 4. Both sites' signages use a significant amount of English (around 80%), followed by a similar significant number of signs displaying Chinese characters (20-30%) and transliteration of local Chinese vernaculars into romanised script (almost to 10%).

<b>Language</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	276	82.88%
Traditional Chinese Character	72	21.62%
Simplified Chinese Character	40	12.01%
Total Chinese Character	97	29.13%
Vernacular Transliteration	32	9.60%
Pinyin	9	2.70%
Malay	5	1.50%
Tamil	3	0.90%
Other Languages (Korean, Japanese, French, Italian, Viet, Thai, Spanish, African etc)	16	4.80%
Other Languages Transliteration	11	3.30%
<b>Total Unit</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>NA</b>

Table 3: Language composition in Bukit Pasoh (of Chinatown)

<b>Language</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
English	315	86.54%
Traditional Chinese Character	36	9.89%
Simplified Chinese Character	40	10.99%
Total Chinese Character	71	19.50%
Vernacular Transliteration	27	7.42%
Malay	16	4.40%
Other Languages Transliteration	15	4.12%
Other Languages (Viet, Jap, Italian, Spanish, French, Sankrit etc)	13	3.57%
Pinyin	11	3.02%
Tamil Transliteration	6	1.65%
Pinyin + Transliteration	5	1.37%
Arabic	4	1.10%
Arabic Transliteration	3	0.82%
Tamil	2	0.55%
<b>Total Unit:</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>NA</b>

Table 4: Language composition in Joo Chiat Road (of Joo Chiat)

## Conclusion

Despite similarities in the top three languages' makeup of both sites, further typographic study and understanding of the signs reveals that each site has developed its own unique methods of communicating nostalgia through visual means.

The selection of business owners for interviews for respond to our second research question inquiry will be based on the criteria derived from the quantitative data presented in table 1-4. The business owners who will be interviewed at each site should fall into the top five categories of business types as shown in table 1 and table 2. Their signs should include the English language as one the language options, evidenced as the prominent language usage in table 3 and 4. Lastly, it is also important that shortlisted establishments should embody a brand positioning that evokes a sense of nostalgia for its audience, whether it is a deliberate or inadvertent business strategy.

Interviews with business owners are still on-going at time of writing this proceeding but we have begun to observe that signages of businesses in Bukit Pasoh have been noted to retain original typography found on the shophouses as a homage to the site's ethnic heritage (see image 1), whereas Joo Chiat Road signages are mostly stripped of all its original typography, recreating a contemporary form of nostalgia appreciation that pays homage to Singapore's nostalgia visual communication landscape instead (see image 2).

This paper has begun to demonstrate how linguistic landscape frameworks can assist designers to understand nostalgic design beyond typographic aesthetics but also inform designers about the socio-cultural narrative of these ethnic enclaves by examining other modalities such as language and cultural identification in addition to the contextual placement of typography.



Image 1: A hospitality group in Bukit Pasoh retaining original typography of shophouse signs as part of the company's strategic brand offering



Image 2: An independently family-run Vietnamese café on Joo Chiat road recreating a contemporary form of nostalgia appreciation that pays homage to Singapore's nostalgia visual communication landscape of the 70s and 70s

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***Students' Quality in Community Education in Improving the Human Development Index in Indonesia***

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**Abstract**

The Human Development Index (HDI) is taken from the average life expectancy, education (average length of schooling and expected length of schooling), and a decent standard of living. Based on the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) database in 2020, there was a slowdown in the growth of the HDI in 2020 compared to previous years. This growth only increased by 0.02. According to the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey, Indonesia is still at the bottom for the quality of education. To deal with these problems, The government must also begin transitioning from a policy of expanding access to education to one of expanding the quality of education in Indonesia in order to address the new challenges that will arise as a result of the rising HDI. Using qualitative methods through literature studies, this study aimed to describe how students' quality in community education in improving the Human Development Index in Indonesia. The result shows that community education in its educational practice needs to follow the needs of the community as students in overcoming their problems so that the quality of the community increases and so does the Human Development Index in Indonesia.

Keywords: Students' Quality, Community Education, Human Development Index

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## Introduction

The Human Development Index (HDI) is an effort to measure development progress in countries around the world which is regularly published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Human Development Index (HDI) was developed to underline that people and their capabilities should be the main indicator in determining a nation's level of development (Arisman, 2018). The Human Development Index (HDI) figure is taken from the average life expectancy, education (average length of schooling and expected length of schooling), and decent standard of living.

Based on the 2020 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) database, The Human Development Index (HDI) grew more slowly in 2020 than in previous years; it reached 71.94. This growth only increased by 0.02 and was lower than growth in 2019, which increased by 0.53 and in 2018 by 0.58. The decrease in average per capita spending adjusted due to the Covid-19 pandemic was the top factor in slowing the accretion in the Human Development Index (HDI) by 11.30 million rupiahs in 2019 to 11.01 million rupiahs in 2020.

Meanwhile, from the health sector, the life expectancy of 2020 newborns is longer compared to babies born the previous year, which is 0.13 years longer (71.34 to 71.47). Then from the education sector, there is still growth, namely the Old School Expectancy indicator (HLS) increased by 0.03 and the Average Length of School (RLS) indicator by 0.14 but this figure has slowed compared to the previous year. In 2019, the Long School Expectancy indicator (HLS) increased by 0.04 and the Average Years of School (RLS) indicator increased by 0.17.

Indonesia is working toward an equal distribution of learning opportunities, research quality, and management with the goal of making Indonesian learners smart and competitive by 2025. This is done through increased regional autonomy and attempts to decentralize education. The vision of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Departemen Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia) is: "Bringing the national education system as a strong and respected social institution to empower all citizens of Indonesia to become enlightened human beings who are able to keep abreast the challenges of the time". Its mission is to increase educational access, improve educational quality, respect children's rights and needs, increase school responsibility and professionalism, and promote community involvement through decentralization.

The program created by the Minister of Education to overcome existing problems is the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program, Thematic KKN, Teaching from Home by providing budget quotas for both educators and students, launching the Guru Berbagi portal, relaxing the use of School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds for teacher honor payments and online learning. These programs are a series of policies and programs that are expected to answer every challenge in the education sector during the current pandemic and beyond. Equitable access to quality education is also one of the steps that continues to be taken to overcome existing problems. The real evidence is that from 2013-2017, 1,191 new schools, 239 one-roof elementary and junior high schools, 52 boarding schools, 4,649 libraries, 6,419 laboratory rooms, 379 School Health Effort (UKS) rooms, 22 PKL dormitories, 67,253 rehabilitation of learning spaces have been built (Ministry of Education and Culture: Achievements of 3 Years of Equivalency Education Ministry of Education and Culture).

The above policies and programs are not only aimed at formal education but also at non-formal and informal education so that later they can answer any problems and challenges that

exist and can then increase the value of education which is one of the factors in increasing the Human Development Index (HDI). In practice, community education must also be able to become an ideal place to carry out social transformation and not only focus on developing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. However, what needs to be a special concern in community education is how the readiness of managers, educators, and students in carrying out every existing policy and program so that the expected results can be of high quality and able to increase the Human Development Index (HDI) in Indonesia.

## **Method**

This research was research using qualitative methods through literature studies. This approach was selected since the goal of this study is to describe students' quality in community education and Human Development Index in Indonesia. Using keywords relevant to this research, the author conducted systematic data collecting by looking for information on Google Scholar and the Publish or Perish program. The data were then chosen by the writers based on their study goals. The research data were obtained from various articles, books, news, and other references that are relevant to the quality of students in community education and the human development index which is then compiled to draw conclusions.

A literature review involves analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing research results, theories, or practices in specific subject areas. It is simpler to comprehend qualitative research as a method when the data being collected is in the form of statements and the output data is descriptive information about the subject of study, which is words, both written and spoken (Yusanto, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Education is the most important factor in a nation's development (Shofwan & Kuntoro, 2014). This is in line with what was said by Latchem (2014) that community education has great potential to be developed so that it can bring benefits in solving problems that exist in society. However, according to Sinclair (2002) sustainability is needed to prove that every program implemented can survive and serve the needs of the community. Not only that, the quality of each program implemented must be an important point to pay attention to because it will affect the quality of the students as an outcome. Without quality education, there is little hope of getting quality human resources. According to Ishikawa (2005), quality is defined as follows: (a) quality and customer satisfaction are linked, and (b) quality is a broad notion that includes not only product quality but also the quality of people, procedures, and every facet of an organization.

In 2018, the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) survey found that Indonesia's education was still among the lowest in the world. Its reading scores were ranked 74 out of 79 countries, its math scores were ranked 73 out of 79 countries, and its science scores were ranked 71 out of 79 countries. This value has remained the same much in the last 10-15 years (Alifah, 2021). In Indonesia, the inadequate standard of physical infrastructure, the potentially low quality of teachers, the low welfare of teachers, the low academic achievement of students, the absence of equal educational opportunities, the low relevance of education to needs, and the high cost of education, all contribute to the low quality of education.

Community education is an effective way to liberate an individual from being illiterate, dropping out of school, marginalized, or poor in his life in society. UNESCO (2011) says that in a world that is constantly changing, every individual needs to acquire and adapt their skills through all forms of knowledge in facing different challenges. This is consistent with the role of community education as a substitute, complement and/or enhancer to formal education. But in its implementation, community education experiences many obstacles such as the absence of evaluations that guarantee and validate the results obtained in each activity, inadequate management (UNESCO, 2011), complicated administration and not much socialization of the program, educators who do not have qualifications, relevant and incompetent undergraduates where this is due to the lack of human resources in community education institutions (staff) who are unable to carry out their responsibilities in selecting tutors and also due to the lack of training received by these staff, lack of training for tutors and administrators, the programs that are managed have not met the needs of students so that they can improve their quality, people who are still proud and embarrassed to continue their educational inequality, the distance where the program is implemented is far and difficult for students to reach, and the level of public awareness is still low in the world of education right, instructor facilities are inadequate, and funds are insufficient to meet existing needs (Fakhrudin, I. S, 2019).

Of course these obstacles must be an evaluation material for all people involved in community education because in fact community education has advantages that formal education does not have, namely in implementing its programs community education is more flexible and not rigid like formal education, there is room for originality and accommodate differences by using adaptation and tolerance (Norland, 2015), adjusting class situations, curriculum, learning materials, places and learning methodologies according to the needs of students. According to Sababa, et al (2016), community education is needed in third world countries where illiteracy rates are still high as well as dropout rates due to poverty, war, ignorance, and cultural values that exist in those countries. According to a study conducted by Widodo and Nusantara (2020), community education programs can strengthen the character of students which include the characters of sportsmanship, tenacity, courage, never give up and creativity, but the programs provided must be in accordance with the needs of students and their expectations.

Soedjarwo (2019) divides learning requirements into nine categories: learning requirements for work assignments, learning requirements for hobbies and recreation, learning requirements for religion, learning requirements for language and general knowledge, learning requirements for households, learning requirements for personal appearance, learning requirements for knowledge of new things, learning requirements for business in agriculture, and learning requirements for services. To find out the community's learning needs and resources, there are various techniques that can be used, such as observation, interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Evaluators in community education must be fully responsible for evaluating every policy, program implementation, and result that has been obtained in order to improve the quality of community education. The government must also begin transitioning from a policy of expanding access to education to one of expanding the quality of education in Indonesia in order to address the new challenges that will arise as a result of the rising HDI, including income inequality in the HDI results for each area in Indonesia. This will make income inequality in Indonesia worse in the long run. Second, because Indonesians live longer, they need a strong social protection program so that the elderly don't have to live in poverty. For them to live out their noble and joyful later years, the government must improve the pension system and/or protections for the elderly. Third,

Despite the fact that the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test provides insight into the capabilities of pupils, the standard of education received by children in Indonesia is much lower than that of children in Vietnam. The rise in the number of expected years spent in school as well as the amount of time students spend in school on average are both quantitative in nature and do not yet represent the quality of education (Dartanto, 2020).

The goal of community education is for improving human resource quality from preschool to old age. Community education is an educational activity that takes place outside of the school system and is systematically intended and organized to enhance students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. (Bahar, Maemunaty, & Alvi, 2018). People who have not had the opportunity to get a formal education might nevertheless benefit from non-formal channels, including equivalency education. Communities are assisted and enabled to create independent businesses, and communities can develop or acquire useful skills to meet their needs, help support the family's economy and are useful for the future. Based on a study conducted by Sababa, et al (2016) shows that around 52.0% of students view that the community education sector provides broad opportunities for illiterate people to be educated. This has led to a massive reduction in the high levels of illiteracy among both rural and urban populations. 41.5% of respondents also thought that community education can also handle various categories of formal education graduates by providing opportunities for them to obtain a better education and acquire skills. Respondents appreciated the major contribution of the community education sector in increasing literacy levels among out-of-school adults and graduates of primary and secondary education.

National development requires the role of all levels of society and not only from the government. The role of the government and the commitment of everyone in implementing existing policies and programs will lead to a massive reduction in the illiteracy and youth unemployment rates in Indonesia as well as an increase in the quality of education and students. Therefore, it is suggested that educators and students improve their quality properly in the provision and implementation of community education programs. The government should also put more emphasis on functional literacy and work skills provisions to target populations outside the formal education sector. The higher the increase in the Long School Expectancy (HLS) and the Average Years School (RLS) increase, the faster the poverty rate declines. We have high hopes that these two indices will continue to show signs of improvement so that the next generation of Indonesian workers will have a higher level of education than the generation before them, which would ultimately lead to an increase in Indonesia's Human Development Index (IPM) scores. Community education is very aware of the importance of developing a better approach in preparing people to face their lives so that every human being who becomes a learner in community education can become a leader in changing the standard of life for people.

The purpose of community education is to fulfill several goals: to offer services for lifelong education to the entirety of the community; to promote and establish communities in order to support compulsory education programs; and to construct a robust community that enables every member to realize their full potential and obtain the greatest possible outcomes from their efforts. Community education as an alternative in improving the quality of public education must continue to develop policies in its educational practice so that it can solve problems in the quality of education and meet the needs of the community. The problems that must be solved are not just literacy and numeracy, but must be able to create individuals who are able to think critically, have digital skills and entrepreneurship. Community education must continue to work on improving its educational management system in order to be able

to create students of sufficient caliber who are able to respond appropriately to difficulties on a global scale.

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*City's Study Construction: Considerations for Application of Wenzhou (China)  
Creative City*

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**Abstract**

City's Study, as the usage of design thinking in Wenzhou urban construction, has had a great development. It has significant guidance for the application of Wenzhou Creative City. This paper aimed to draw the considerations of City's Study for Creative City construction and adopted the mixed method paradigm in the study. The researchers found out that as the City's Study has various functions such as culture, entertainment, and leisure, rather than being limited to cultural functions, it has an obvious promoting effect on residents' learning and studying. This provided an advantaged position for the urban cultural construction in Wenzhou and promotes the construction of the City's 15-minute Cultural Circle due to the usage of design thinking in city construction. The findings can be used by the Wenzhou government in China to support Creative City Construction. The outcome was to take design thinking and people-oriented thought in other areas of city construction such as business and policy-making, which can be a huge boost for the application of Wenzhou Creative City and other cities can take it into consideration as well.

Keywords: Wenzhou, City's Study, Creative City, Design Thinking, Enhancement

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## Introduction

Reading space, as the key object of the continuous construction of the public cultural service system in recent years, has become a hot spot in the exploration and research of Public Library (Wu et al., 2021). Under that kind of situation, City's Study, which solves the problem of uneven and inadequate library services to a certain extent, is a new trend in the development of urban public reading space.

Since 2014, Wenzhou has started the exploration of the City's Study. From the establishment of the first City Library to the publication of the City's Study Service Specifications, Wenzhou has generated its unique "Wenzhou experience," which also provides a new path for the national public cultural Service system.

Wenzhou is preparing to apply to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to become a World Creative City. It is a new type of city form and development model that emerges from the background of economic globalization promoted by industrial transfer and industrial upgrading, accompanied by urban renewal and the rise of creative industries. According to UNESCO (2017), The UNESCO Creative Cities Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Media Arts, and Music (para.4). City's Study, as a result of the construction of Wenzhou's public cultural system, it not only meets the reading needs of Wenzhou residents but also becomes a name card of Wenzhou. Simultaneously, City's Study in Wenzhou well reflects the use of design thinking in public space, and its experience can be used as a typical reference for Wenzhou to apply for a World Creative City.

Through the intensive analysis of the user needs of the City's Study, identifying its subsidiary functions and making a clear position, so as to make it better serve the society, promote the urban development of Wenzhou, and improve the construction of a World Creative City. This study investigates the City's Study as the starting point to analyze the benefits it brings to Wenzhou's urban development and to find out its guiding significance for the application of Creative City.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem to be addressed through this study is an enlightenment of City's Study to Creative City construction. In other words, it tries to solve the following questions in detail:

1. How the establishment of the City's Study in Wenzhou has stimulated cultural reading and learning for residents?
2. What other functions does the City's Study provide instead of cultural function?
3. What new ideas does the City's Study bring to the development of Wenzhou?
4. What is the guiding significance of the establishment experience of the City's Study to the construction of Wenzhou Creative city?

## Objectives of the Study

The study aims:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of the City's Study for increasing residents' learning and reading.

2. To identify the functions the City's Study has.
3. To understand new ideas brought by the City's Study for the development of Wenzhou.
4. To find out the significance of the establishment experience of the City's Study to the construction of Wenzhou Creative city.

## Research Locale

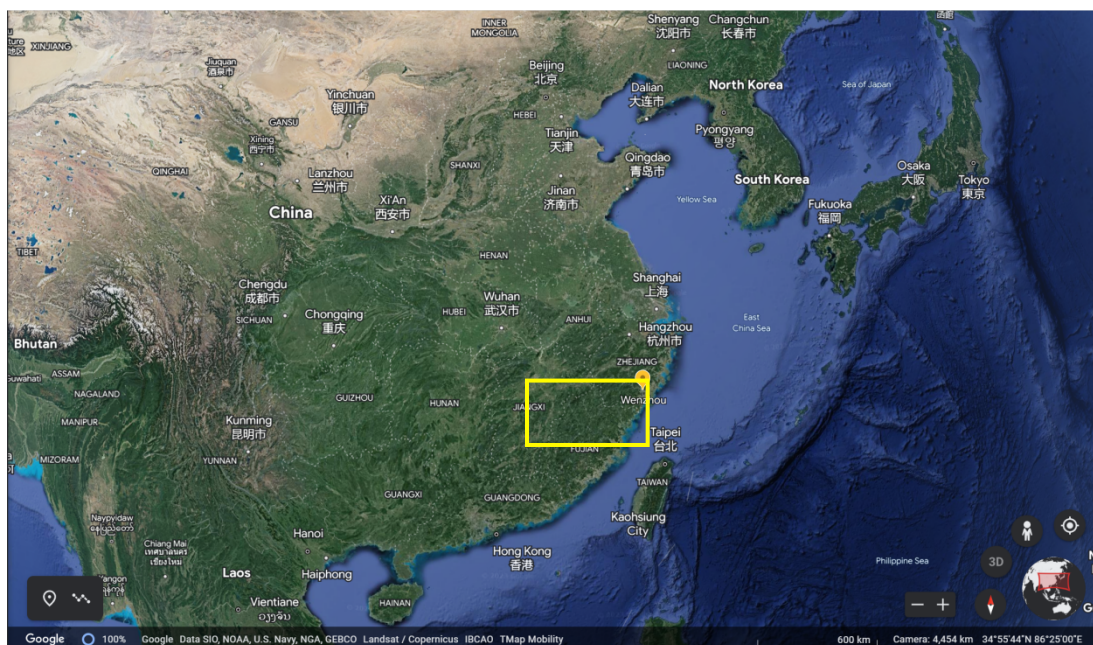


Figure 1. Wenzhou City Locale (Google Earth, 2023)

The location of Wenzhou, China is highlighted in Figure 1 with a yellow square. It is in the southeastern part of People's Republic of China and belongs to Zhejiang Province.

## Operational Definition of Terms

**Reading Space.** Relying on a variety of approaches and power, to provide a specified place for people to read.

**Creative City.** It is a concept that argues creativity should be considered a strategic factor in urban development (David, 1998). In addition to cities being efficient and fair, a creative city provides places, experiences, and opportunities to foster creativity among its citizens.

**City's Study.** Self-service public libraries are led by the government and co-operated by social forces, relying on central libraries at all levels, using automated equipment and radio frequency identification technology (RFID) to achieve unified services, and having 24-hour opening conditions (Zhejiang Administration for Market Regulation, 2019; Wenzhou Library, 2023).

**Unified services.** A model in which public libraries of different levels and sizes in the same region provide services through comprehensive sharing and unified management of resources such as literature, technology, and staff in the process of business operation and management according to the same rules and standards (Zhejiang Administration for Market Regulation, 2019).

## Conceptual Framework

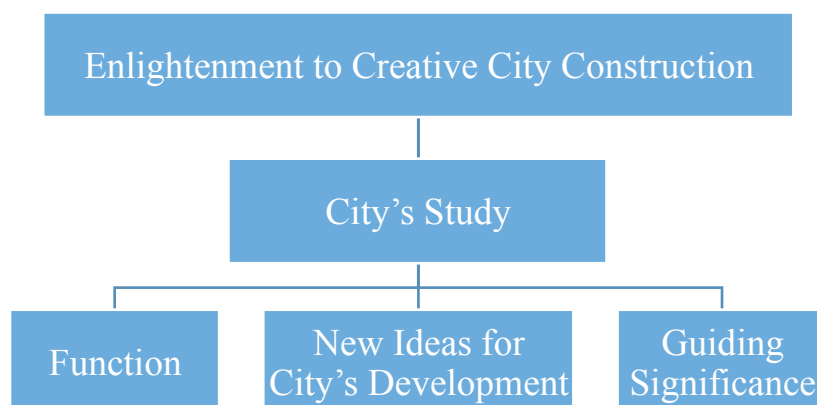


Figure 2. Schematic Diagram of the Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the concept maps model as the conceptual framework. Figure 2 shows the schematic diagram of this study. Effectiveness for increasing residents' learning and reading is the most basic evaluation criterion of the City's Study's function. And the other functions it has will bring new ideas for Wenzhou development and find guiding significance for Creative City construction then. The guiding significance and new ideas it brings are vital independent variables of the research's dependent variable, enlightenment to Creative City Construction.

## Research Methods

### Research Design

The research problem of this study aims to find out the enlightenment for Wenzhou Creative city application on the views of the City's Study construction and assessing the residents degree of familiarity of reading space . The research question focuses on the roles that City's Study plays and the function it has. And gain experience from the construction of the City's Study for Wenzhou's development and Creative City application. Hence, this research adopts the mixed method as mentioned via Creswell and Creswell (2017). It will obtain the primary data through investigation. Besides, the collected data will be used in evaluating the effectiveness of the City's Study and identifying its functions. For the sampling strategy, the main target population is the residents in Wenzhou, the sampling itself is simple random sampling, and the sampling approach is a random online questionnaire survey. As shown, it is believed that "what" and "how" questions would be best addressed by using a survey method as a research design. The researcher will collect, display and analyze the research data at an objective level to make sure the result is reliable and convincing.

### Participant and Sampling

The main target population for this study is the residents of Wenzhou. The research collected questionnaire responses from 124 participants and conducted data analysis. The researcher uses simple random sampling, and the sampling approach is a random online questionnaire survey. In order to make the questionnaire more targeted, question correlation is set in the questionnaire, that is, participants' answers to the questions will affect the presentation of their questions, so as to better conduct survey research and data collection.

## **Research Instrument**

The research used an online self-made questionnaire, which includes closed-ended and open-ended questions. It has single choice question, multiple choice questions, multiple-answer choice questions, scale selection questions and short answer question. Also, to make the survey more accurate, multiple choice questions also give participants the option to fill in their own opinions and thoughts. The questionnaire will be divided into two parts by the choice of participants: evaluation for the public library and City's Study.

## **Data Analysis**

The collected data can directly satisfy the first two research purposes: evaluate the effectiveness of City's Study for increasing residents' learning and reading (objective 1), and identify the functions that City's Study has (objective 2). Then, integrating the collected data and conducting the descriptive analysis can understand new ideas bring by the City's Study for the development of Wenzhou (objective 3), and find out the significance of the establishment experience of the City's Study to the construction of Wenzhou Creative city (objective 4).

## **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study contains three aspects. First, most of the participants are not from Wenzhou. Therefore, they do not know enough about the City's Study, and may not even know it. Second, due to the limited time and the limited scope of questionnaire distribution, there are not many valid questionnaires for the research. Third, the questionnaire is only designed to ask questions about the City's Study, and the correlation between it and the creative city can only be analyzed and established by researchers.

## **Ethical Issues**

In any process of this research, ethical issues will take top precedence. In this study, the researcher explains clearly the purpose of study before data collection. In addition to that, those data and participants' personal information will not be disclosed. The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents will be maintained and their views will also be respected. And all responses from the surveys will be bounded by ethical considerations. Lastly, the researcher will not use their private information for other use other than this study or give out their private information to others.

## **Results and Discussion**

There were a total of one hundred twenty-four (124) respondents included in the survey. Below are the results of the survey and a discussion about the presented data.

## Wenzhou Residency

Table 1. Responses on residence location

	Wenzhou Residents	Non-Wenzhou Residents
Frequency	18	106
Percentage	14.52%	85.48%

The respondents' basic information is only focused on whether they are Wenzhou Residents. According to Table 1, only a small amount (14.52%) of respondents are from Wenzhou, and a majority (85.48%) of them are Non-Wenzhou Residents.

## Respondents' Degree of Familiarity to the City's Study

Table 2. The basic response to the "City's Study"

Categorical Item	Whether have heard of the "City's Study"				Whether have been to the "City's Study"			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Residency	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Wenzhou Residents	15	83.33%	3	16.67%	2	11.11%	16	88.89%
Non-Wenzhou Residents	36	33.96%	70	66.04%	8	7.55%	98	92.45%
Total	51	41.13%	73	58.87%	10	8.06%	114	91.94%

Table 2 is a basic research result of the "City's Study" based on the responses of Table 1. It aims to give an overview of the respondents' degree of familiarity with the City's Study. As the City's Study was initiated and promoted by Wenzhou, it is obvious that the Wenzhou residents (83.33%) have heard of the City's Study much more than Non-Wenzhou residents (33.96%). And the gap is quite large which accounts for nearly more than half. However, whether Wenzhou residents or Non-Wenzhou residents, the total number of people who have visited the City's Study accounts for only 8.06 percent of the respondents, only 10 people. And there is 58.87 percent of the respondents had neither heard of nor been to the City's Study.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of respondents' visits to the City's Study among the people who have heard of it. A great majority (80.39%) of them just heard about it, but they have never been to the City's Study. And among the 10 people who have visited the City's Study, 7 of them just visit is once a month. Only 1 people go there twice a week.

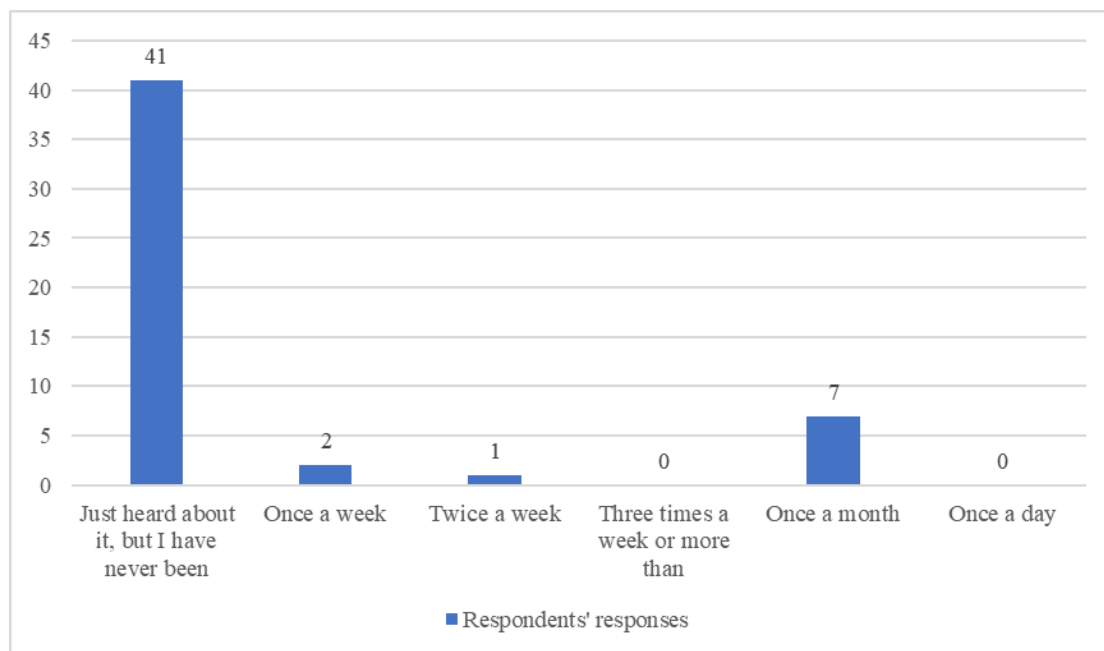


Figure 3. The frequency of respondents' visits to the City's Study

### Respondents' Degree of Familiarity to the Public Library

Considering that most respondents may not be familiar with the City's Study, correlation questions are set in the questionnaire to understand their comparative familiarity with the Public library, as shown in Figure 4. It can be seen that nearly half of them (45.61%) never go to the Public Library. And for most people (67.74% of the respondents who go to the Public Library), once a month is the most frequent visit to the Public Library. Only 0.88 percent of respondents go to the Public Library every day.

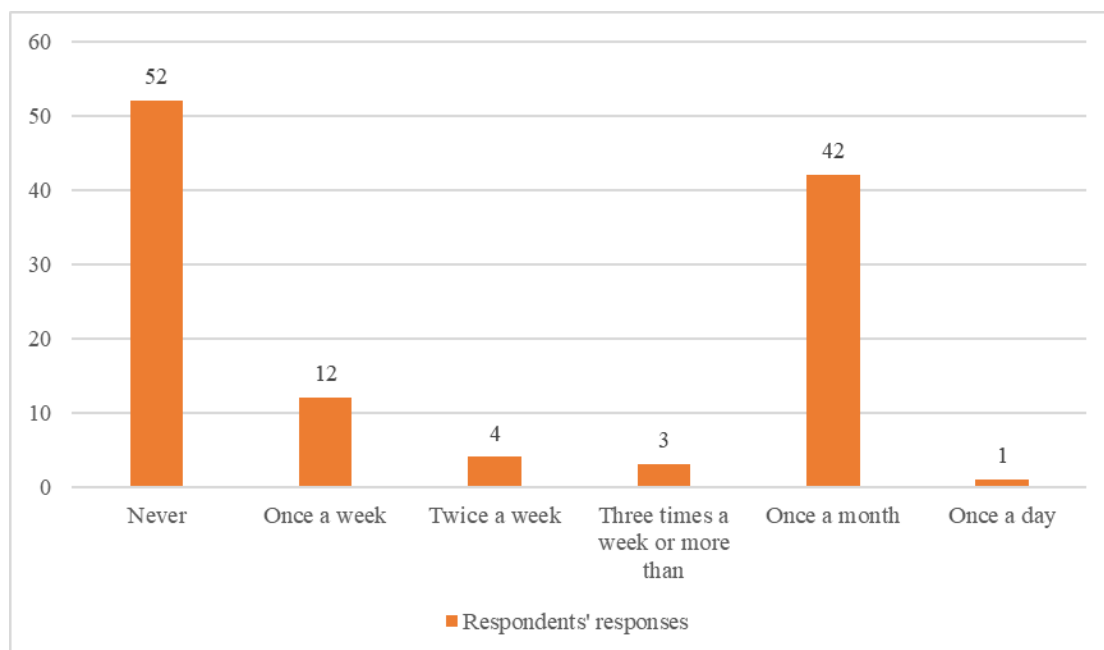


Figure 4. The frequency of respondents' visits to the Public Library

## Public Library Problems

Among the people who never go to the Public Library, they are asked to explain the reason for that. The most common answer will be “It is so far” (42.30%) and “It is not convenient” (36.54%). Also, the respondents who go to the Public Library also give the problems that the Public Library has nowadays, as shown in Figure 5. A majority of them will be influenced by decoration (58.33%) and convenience (54.17%). In addition to that, the Public Library is not good enough to meet their needs. 29.17 percent of them will think that the Public Library does not have the books they want. 45.83 percent think that it only provides book-related services and the function is too simple.

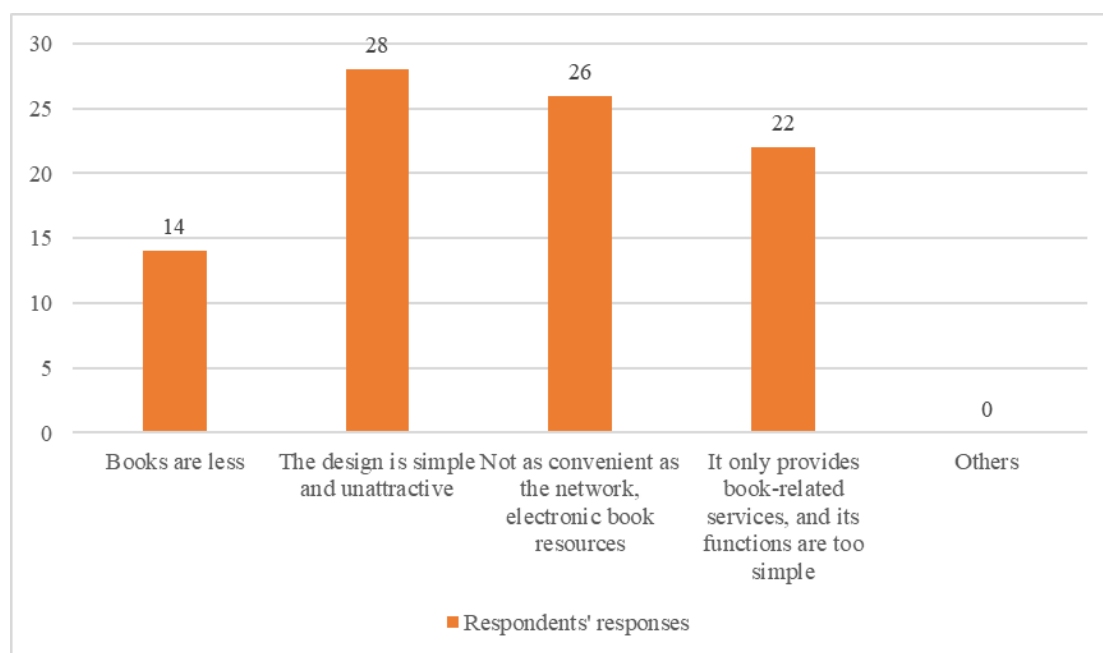


Figure 5. The problems existing in the Public Library nowadays

## Comparative Advantage of the City's Study

Respondents think that City's Study is much more convenient compared to the traditional public library. City's Study has wider distribution to build the '15 Minutes Cultural Circle' (Zhang, 2021; Wu et al., 2021), which means that residents can find at least 1 public cultural Library and two public cultural spaces walking from their homes in 15 minutes. Due to the specified design style, for instance, Zhang and Jiang (2022) mentioned that City's Study has a specific decoration theme to suit the trend of cultural and tourism integration, 40 percent of respondents think that it can be a place to take photos and share on the Internet, according to Figure 6. More than half of them think that the City's Study has both a cultural function (70%) and a recreation function (80%). In addition to that, 30 percent of the respondents think that it can provide a venue for parent-child interaction and host activities and competitions.



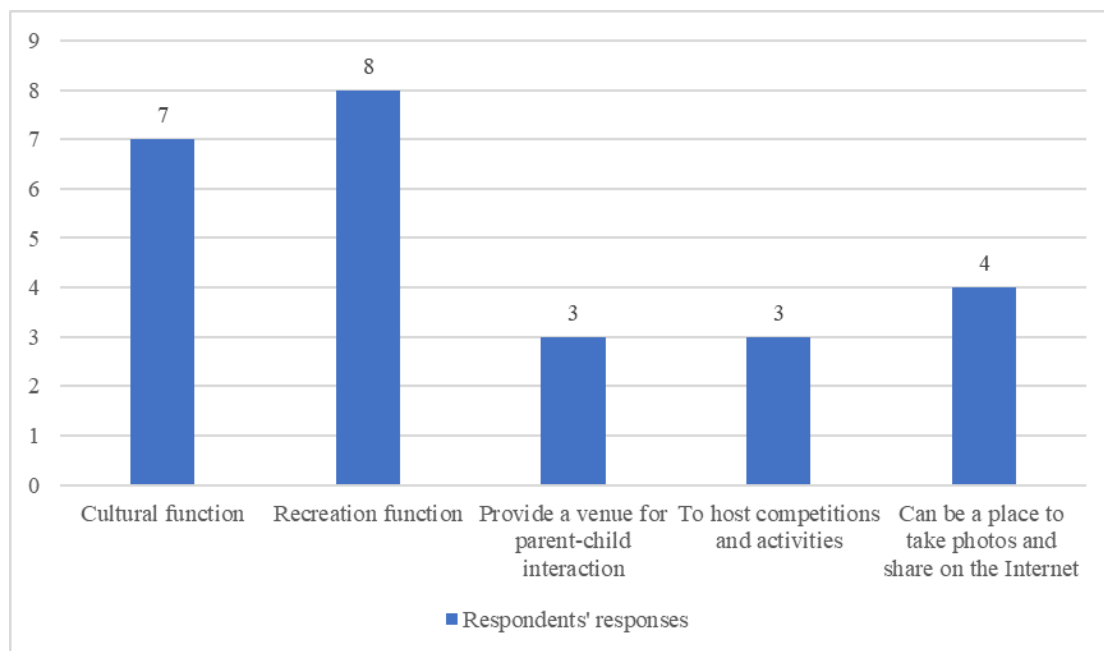


Figure 6. Functions of the City's Study

### General Evaluation of the Reading Space

Table 3 is the respondents' evaluation of the City's Study and the Public Library. Respondents are satisfied with both reading spaces that they have been to. And the City's Study has a higher degree of satisfaction than the Public Library.

Table 3. Evaluation of the Reading Space

Item	Mean	Interpretation
Degree of satisfaction with the Public Library you have been to	3.50	Satisfied
Degree of satisfaction with the City's Study you have been to	3.79	Satisfied
Average	3.645	Satisfied

And when respondents are asked the question that "If there is a public library that is designed according to a specific theme, has a unique style of decoration, and provides self-catering service 24 hours a day, would you prefer to go to this kind of library for various activities such as studying and reading?," the vast majority (89%) of them choose to will go there for studying and reading, as shown in Figure 7. This is a potential choice of the "City's Study," which shows the City's Study has a better satisfaction and attraction of the respondents indeed.

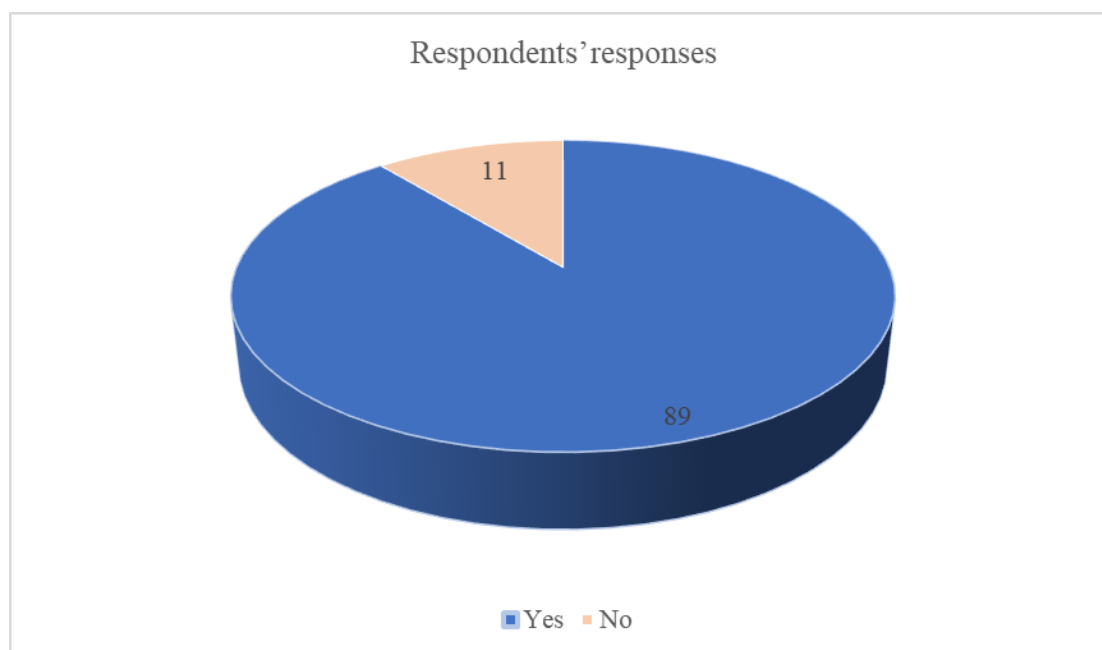


Figure 7. Choice of a Potential City's Study

## Conclusion

The study was conducted primarily to: (1) evaluate the effectiveness of the City's Study for increasing residents' learning and reading; (2) identify the functions the City's Study has; (3) understand new ideas brought by the City's Study for the development of Wenzhou; (4) find out the significance of the establishment experience of the City's Study to the construction of Wenzhou Creative city.

The City's Study has great effectiveness for increasing residents' learning and reading, and it also has the potential effect on encouraging the people who never go to the Reading space to go there for studying and learning. The cultural function is the primary function of the City's Study. It has a recreation function as well. In addition to that, it also can be a place to host competitions, activities, and parent-child interaction.

The City's Study did a fantastic job in Wenzhou's urban cultural development and promote the construction of the City's 15-minute Cultural Circle, getting full recognition of the innovative model of the provincial government (Li, 2020; Duan & Xiong, 2020). This is a great innovation of Wenzhou city cultural construction and has achieved fruitful results, which are meaningful for both government and residents. The construction and development experience of the City's Study can be taken in other areas of development in Wenzhou, which can bring new ideas for the development of Wenzhou. City's Study is an excellent example of design thinking in urban construction. Hence, this can be a considered to put design thinking and people-oriented thought into use in the future Creative City construction to help Wenzhou apply for it.

The below recommendations are based on the conclusions and displayed to strengthen the study.

1. This research can be taken as a footstone of the research on City's Study and Creative City on the sides of culture.

2. Other cities around the world can learn from Wenzhou's City's Study construction experience as well. This framework can also be applied in other cities' process of urban development and Creative City application;
3. This study can be developed by engaging more local residents' responses and more participants in the study. It can take a more objective and quantitative approach to measure and design;
4. Future work can focus on relative and interdisciplinary research. For instance, design thinking in other areas of city development is an essential point, to begin with.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks for my instructor Rose to help me revise and keep me move. Thanks for all the participants engaged in this study. I really appreciate your contributions.

**Appendix**

**Questionnaire survey on the guiding experience of City’s study construction experience for Wenzhou Creative City application**

**1. Are you from Wenzhou?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

**2. Have you ever heard of the “City’s Study”?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

**Notice: The following questions will be presented according to the different answers to the previous questions**

**3. [This depends on choice A on question 2]**

**If you have heard of "City's Study", how often do you go there?**

- A. Just heard about it, but I have never been.
- B. Once a week
- C. Twice a week
- D. Three times or more than three times a week
- E. Once a month
- F. Once a day

**4. [This depends on choice A on question 2 and choice A on question 3]**

**How often do you go to the public library?**

- A. Never
- B. Once a week
- C. Twice a week
- D. Three times or more than three times a week
- E. Once a month
- F. Once a day

**5. [This depends on choice A on question 4]**

**What's the reason you never go to the public library?**

**6. [This depends on choice B/C/D/E/F on question 3]**

Item	A. Very Dissatisfied with Most	B. Dissatisfied with Most	C. Most are common	D. Satisfied with Most	E. Very Satisfied with Most
<b>Are you satisfied with the City's Study you have visited?</b>					

**7. [This depends on choice B/C/D/E/F on question 4]**

Item	A. Very Dissatisfied with Most	B. Dissatisfied with Most	C. Most are common	D. Satisfied with Most	E. Very Satisfied with Most
<b>Are you satisfied</b>					

<b>with the public library that you have visited?</b>					
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**8. [This depends on choice A/B/C/D on question 7]**

**What problems do you think exist in public libraries today? (Multiple Response)**

- A. Books are less
- B. The design is simple and unattractive
- C. Not as convenient as the network, electronic book resources
- D. It only provides book-related services, and its functions are too simple
- E. Others \_\_\_\_\_\*

**9. [This depends on choice A/B/C/D/E on question 6]**

**What other functions besides cultural functions do you think the City's Study you have been to provide ? (Multiple Response)**

- A. Cultural function
- B. Recreation function
- C. Provide a venue for parent-child interaction
- D. To host competitions and activities
- E. Can be a place to take photos and share on the Internet
- F. Others \_\_\_\_\_\*

**10. [This depends on choice A/B/C/D/E/F on question 9]**

**What do you think is the innovation or creation of City's Study compared to traditional public library?**

**11. [This depends on choice A/B/C/D/E on question 8 and choice A on question 4]**

**If there is a public library that is designed according to a specific theme, has a unique style of decoration, and provides self-catering service 24 hours a day, would you prefer to go to this kind of library for various activities such as studying and reading?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

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## ***From Visual Tools to Body Parts: Functions of Eyeglasses in The Pickwick Papers***

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The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

The Industrial Revolution and subsequent technological advancements enabled most members of the Victorian middle class to afford eyeglasses and facilitated the improvement and mass production of frames and lenses. This explains the popularity of eyeglasses among Dickens's fictional characters such as Samuel Pickwick and Snubbin. Eyeglasses are associated with aging, social standing, power, and authority in his works; apparently, these help the characters see more clearly. Dickens's first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), explores a time when the Victorian middle class began using eyeglasses cautiously. In *The Pickwick Papers*, only characters who were financially well-off or legal professionals wear eyeglasses. Additionally, there is an invariable association between a character's temperament and the kind of eyeglasses they wear in his works. For instance, Pickwick's round eyeglasses represent a mild temperament. Initially, references to Pickwick's donning and removal of his eyeglasses are so frequent that his eyeglasses eventually appear to be a part of his body, forming his identity. Thus, this study discusses how Dickens's use of eyeglasses to represent his characters reflected his contemporaries' increasing affordability of eyeglasses.

Keywords: Charles Dickens, Victorian Middle Class, Industrial Revolution, Eyeglasses, Spectacles, Glasses, Eyewear

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## Introduction

Eyeglasses play an important role in many of Charles Dickens's novels. They serve as a symbol of social status and reflect a character's personality and physical traits. The popularity of eyeglasses among his fictional characters parallels the time when technological advancements owing to the Industrial Revolution facilitated the mass production of eyeglasses, thereby increasing the demand for eyeglasses among the middle class. Samuel Pickwick, the protagonist of *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–37), is the most popular eyeglass wearer among Dickens's characters. Dickens uses Pickwick's round eyeglasses to reflect his temperament and goodness, adding a comical tone to the story. Pickwick's eyeglasses eventually become a part of his being. Exploring this tendency in the characterization of Pickwick and those of other eyeglass wearers in *The Pickwick Papers*, this study discusses the socio-cultural connotations of eyeglasses, their increasing availability in Dickens's lifetime, and Dickens's use of them to represent the temperament, taste, and social standing of eyeglass wearers.

## Eyeglasses in the Western culture

The history of eyeglasses dates back to ancient Rome. The Roman tragedian Seneca (4 BC–65 AD) is said to have used a glass filled with water to magnify written texts for clarity (Rue). Over time, glass was cut into lenses, which were used to treat vision impairment. Around 1000 AD, reading stones, which were placed on writings to magnify the letters, were developed ("History of Eyeglasses and Sunglasses"). Reading stones aided elderly monks with presbyopia (Zeiss). Sabin states that these were the first systematic visual aid (56/838).

The first wearable eyeglasses were invented in Italy at the end of the 13th century. These were called rivet glasses because the two convex lenses placed in wooden frames with stems were fixed by a rivet. Rivet glasses were not hands-free, and the wearers had to balance the glasses on their nose or hold them in front of their eyes (Zeiss). Although unstable and inconvenient, these enabled better vision. *The Portrait of Hugh of Saint-Cher* (1352) by Tommaso da Modena (1326-79) is considered the first painting to depict a man wearing glasses.

Starting with Seneca, glasses were used to help scholars and monks read. This explains why glasses came to be associated with learning and knowledge. Most people were excluded from the use of eyeglasses. Steven Johnson suggests that Gutenberg's invention of printing in the 1440s and the spread of literacy boosted the demand for eyeglasses among ordinary citizens (25–26/302). As eyeglasses spread among the public and their designs varied, they were associated with the following perceptions in addition to studying:

**Sophistication and refinement:** From the 18th century onward, eyeglasses became increasingly fashionable and were seen as a symbol of refinement and sophistication. Wealthy people preferred eyeglasses made of expensive materials, such as gold, to flaunt their social standing and taste. For instance, in Conan Doyle's short mystery, "The Golden Pince-Nez" (1904), on examining the titular object left at the murder site, Sherlock Holmes deduces the suspect to be "a woman of good address, attired like a lady" because the pince-nez is "handsomely mounted in solid gold" (1015). His deduction is correct because the murderer is a Russian anti-government activist with "a certain nobility" and "an over-mastering dignity" (1024), and she earns Holmes' respect because of her sense of justice and loyalty toward her fellow activists.



**Seriousness or authority:** Sabin states that “the significance of glasses as a symbol of authority is an implicit bias, as social psychologists call the unconscious attribution of particular qualities to a member of a certain group. Writers exploit this bias when they have their characters wear glasses” (650/838). This suggestion is true because in certain professions, such as law or medicine, eyeglasses are often perceived as a symbol of seriousness and authority. Glasscock mentions a joke prevalent among 18th-century opticians that stated men of letters could have added 5 dollars to their hourly wage if they had purchased eyeglasses (102/373). Even today, eyeglasses perpetuate the illusion of professional competence and dignity. Another good example is the *Harry Potter* series wherein both Dumbledore and McGonagall, the headmaster and deputy headmistress of Hogwarts, wear eyeglasses. Along with their age, experience, and skills, their eyeglasses symbolize their dignity, which overwhelms their students.

**Character-defining icons:** In recent popular culture, eyewear is often used to define characters. Harry Potter is undoubtedly the most famous eyeglass wearer in 21st-century popular culture. In addition to the lightning-shaped scar on his forehead, untidy black hair, and green eyes, the character’s round eyeglasses distinctly characterize him. Other examples include the sunglasses in *Top Gun* (1986) and *Top Gun: Maverick* (2022). In both movies, the protagonist Maverick (played by Tom Cruise) wears the green Ray-Ban Aviator RB3025, which enhances Maverick’s manliness, along with his motorbike and leather jacket. The other characters also wear different types of Ray-Ban sunglasses (Sunshine Optometry). Potter’s eyeglasses are a simple fit for teenage students. However, sunglasses in the *Top Gun* series were designed to be both practical and stylish, befitting elite pilots. These examples show that eyeglasses are not merely devices for correcting vision impairment; they inform the wearer’s character, personality, tastes, and emotions.

### **The age of eyeglass mass production**

Today, various types of eyeglasses are sold, and people can promptly afford them depending on their preferences and budget. Usually, individuals pick their eyeglasses based on their attire, where they are headed, and who they intend to meet. The technological developments in eyeglass manufacturing and their subsequent mass production in the 18th century have enabled consumers to select and purchase from among a plethora of options.

Lens grinding is a complicated and lengthy process that requires skill and scientific knowledge. Thus, the increasing demand for eyeglasses could not be addressed by manual lens grinding. Around the 1750s, lens grinding machines were invented in France (Sabin 410/838; MAFO). Owing to these, better-quality lenses could be produced in shorter timeframes. In 1728, temple glasses (spectacles with side arms) were invented by the London-based optician Edward Scarlett (Zeiss, Elborough 79/323). These allowed wearers to remain hands-free and formed the basis for modern eyeglasses. Another breakthrough invention was Benjamin Franklin’s bifocal glass (Sabin 499–500/838, Elborough 88/323). Before the invention of bifocals, people suffering from both near- and far-sightedness had to carry two pairs of glasses and constantly change them. With Franklin’s bifocals, only one pair of glasses could correct both kinds of impairment (Glasscock 44/373). Franklin’s bifocals were elegant and became popular in the fashionable society of Paris (Sabin 517/838). Franklin’s contribution was enormous because he made eyeglasses not just tools for better vision but also a fashion statement.

After the 18th century, the Victorian era saw significant developments in eyeglass manufacturing technology. This was marked by the appearance of steel-wired frames. At the beginning of the 16th century, horns, tortoiseshells, and whalebones were used as material for frames; however, they were expensive (Zeiss). From the beginning of the 19th century, steel began to be used as a cheaper alternative material for eyeglass frames (Elborough 101/323). Gemma Almond highlights that from as early as the 1820s, the eyeglass market grew, and retailers sold steel eyeglasses at 20 shillings (273). The advantages of steel lie in its lightness and ease of pressing (Elborough 101, 106/323). Another benefit unseen in the previous century was steam power. Travis Elborough notes that at the beginning of the 19th century, steam-powered looms were used to assist water-powered wire-drawing machines (101/323). The introduction of machines and new frame materials enabled eyeglass manufacturing to be faster and more efficient, promising better fit.

### **What types of eyeglasses would Dickens's characters wear?**

Dickens's lifetime paralleled the period when the demand for eyeglasses increased because the middle class became more literate and had greater access to printed materials. Eyeglasses were also seen as status symbols, and many people wore them even when they did not have any vision problems. To better understand this argument, it is useful to examine the types of eyeglasses Dickens's characters wear. The following types of eyeglasses were popular during Dickens's lifetime:

**Spectacles:** These were the most common type of eyeglasses at the beginning of the 19th century. The round lenses were held in place using wire frames with side arms. When not in use, these were often worn with a chain around the neck. The majority of male characters and a few female characters (Betsey Trotwood, Mrs. Rouncewell, and Mrs. Pardiggle) in Dickens's novels wear spectacles.

**Folding eyeglasses:** These were an improved version of the spectacles that became popular in the latter half of the 19th century. These could be folded when not in use.

**Nose spectacles:** These were improved versions of rivet glasses that became popular in the mid-19th century. The lenses were held in place using a curved bridge that rested on the nose without side arms. Nose spectacles were made of gold or silver and considered more fashionable than spectacles. Sir Leicester Dedlock is supposed to wear nose spectacles.

**Lorgnettes:** These were a type of nose spectacles popular among upper-class women in the 19th century. They had handles that allowed the wearer to hold them up to their eyes. Lorgnettes were ornamentally decorated and made of expensive materials, such as gold, silver, and tortoiseshell. A lorgnette is good for Mrs. Merdle.

**Monocles:** This was a single lens held in place by the eye socket. This glass developed from a quizzing glass "Beau" Brummel (1778–1840) loved (Elborough 94/323) and became popular among fashionable men. Even after eyeglasses became popular and common, monocles remained as status symbols and were preferred by British and German officers (Sabin 585/838). Bantam and Clarence Barnacle are described as wearing a monocle.

The popularity of eyeglasses among Dickens's characters reflects the increasing availability of eyeglasses throughout his lifetime. In his works, eyeglasses are associated with aging, social status, power, and authority.

## **Eyeglass wearers in *The Pickwick Papers***

*The Pickwick Papers* depicts the period when the Victorian middle class began wearing eyeglasses cautiously. There are not many eyeglass wearers, but starting with the protagonist Samuel Pickwick, Dickens superbly uses different types of eyeglasses to differentiate the wearers' age, social standing, and temperament.

Pickwick is the most famous eyeglass wearer in Dickens's novels. In Chapter 1, he is introduced as follows:

A casual observer, adds the secretary, to whose notes we are indebted for the following account---a casual observer might possibly have remarked nothing extraordinary in the bald head, and circular spectacles, which were intently turned towards his (the secretary's) face, during the reading of the above resolutions: to those who knew that the gigantic brain of Pickwick was working beneath that forehead, and that the beaming eyes of Pickwick were twinkling behind those glasses, the sight was indeed an interesting one (4).

Reading this passage, the reader understands that Pickwick is apparently an ordinary middle-aged man with no remarkable features, but his sparkling spectacles enhance his indiscriminately kind and sweet temperament with the roundness of his appearance. In Chapter 45, Sam Weller describes Pickwick as an angel wearing spectacles (625).

Until Pickwick is imprisoned in a debtors' prison in Chapter 40, he is repeatedly seen putting on, adjusting, and removing his spectacles. His obsession with spectacles is evident from the beginning of the novel. In Chapters 2 and 4, he is delighted to see the local landscape, people, and army ceremony in Rochester using his spectacles and telescope. In Chapter 8, Pickwick is so intoxicated and excited that he throws off his spectacles and bursts into laughter. He seems to play with his spectacles very often.

As Sabin suggests (537/838), Pickwick's eyeglasses add a comic element. When Pickwick is in trouble, his eyeglasses are about to break, but they always miraculously return to him. For instance, in Chapter 9, while trying to catch Jingle, Pickwick's carriage is overturned, and he is knocked to the ground. The narrator states, "as soon as he had gained his feet, extricated his head from the skirts of his great coat, which materially impeded the usefulness of his spectacles, the full disaster of the case met his view" (121). In Chapter 30, Pickwick is piled on ice and buried in water while skating. His party is relieved to see his "face, head, and shoulders, emerged from beneath the water, and disclosed the features and spectacles" (407). These descriptions show that spectacles are firmly attached to Pickwick's face as they become part of his body.

Strangely enough, eyeglasses conveyed both negative connotations of evil and physical and mental weakness as well as positive connotations (Sabin 388/838, Almond 275-79, Elborough 92/323). Dickens was aware of the negative associations with eyeglasses, and he used them to satirize incompetent people. Pickwick's lawyer, Snubbin, is one such example. When Pickwick visits him for the first time, the narrator says:

[...] a lantern-faced, sallow-complexioned man, of about five-and-forty, or---as the novels say--- he might be fifty. He had that dull-looking boiled eye which is often seen in the heads of people who have applied themselves during many years to a

weary and laborious course of study; and which would have been sufficient, without the additional eye-glass which dangled from a broad black riband about his neck, to warn a stranger that he was very near-sighted. His hair was thin and weak, which was partly attributable to his having never devoted much time to its arrangement, and partly to his having worn for five-and-twenty years the forensic wig which hung on a block beside him. The marks of hair-powder on his coat-collar, and the ill-washed and worse tied white neckerchief round his throat, showed that he had not found leisure since he left the court to make any alteration in his dress: while the slovenly style of the remainder of his costume warranted the inference that his personal appearance would not have been much improved if he had. (420)

This suggests that Snubbin is exhausted by a task beyond his ability. His physical weakness, represented by poor eyesight and shabby appearance, tells the reader that he is incompetent. Unlike Pickwick, Snubbin's eyeglasses make him look frail and aged and intensify his clumsiness. Dickens's dislike for incompetent legal professionals later developed into Jarndyce and Jarndyce in *Bleak House* (1852–53). However, a clerk who appears in Chapter 40 of *The Pickwick Papers* is capable because he is quietly and promptly carrying out his duty in front of a crowd of clients: "All this time, the man in the spectacles was hard at work" (555). He is unnamed and appears briefly, but Dickens seems to esteem him, possibly because Dickens used to work as an apprentice in a lawyer's office. The clerk's spectacles represent their professional skills and pride.

In contrast to the unnamed clerk, Bob Sawyer is a deceitful and insincere fortune hunter. He is clever; however, he is more concerned with fashioning himself as a skilled surgeon than he is with acquiring any real medical training. He uses black clothing, green eyeglasses, and a large book to make himself "look as solemn I [he] could" (520). Glasscock states that colored protective lenses appeared in Europe in the 17th century and were promoted by opticians in the mid-18th century (85/373). Bob believes that colored lenses are far better than transparent ones at projecting him as a successful surgeon and gaining respect and trust. Therefore, he takes off his eyeglasses while enjoying practical jokes. For him, eyeglasses are a means of asserting himself and switching between duty and off-duty.

The eyeglasses of Pickwick, Snubbin, Bob, and the legal clerk are for practical use; therefore, they do not have to be ornamental. In contrast, Bath's MC Bantam's monocle is flashy, along with his clothes and other accessories as shown in the following passage:

The friend was a charming young man of not much more than fifty, dressed in a very bright blue coat with resplendent buttons, black trousers, and the thinnest possible pair of highly-polished boots. A gold eye-glass was suspended from his neck by a short broad black ribbon; a gold snuff-box was lightly clasped in his left hand; gold rings innumerable, glittered on his fingers; and a large diamond pin set in gold glistened in his shirt frill. He had a gold watch, and a gold curb chain with large gold seals; and he carried a pliant ebony cane with a heavy gold top. His linen was of the very whitest, finest, and stiffest; his wig of the glossiest, blackest, and curliest. His snuff was princes' mixture; his scent *bouquet du roi*. His features were contracted into a perpetual smile; and his teeth were in such perfect order that it was difficult at a small distance to tell the real from the false. (484)

Bantam's heavy dress and obsession with gold items reveal his vanity and extravagance. He dresses up as a sophisticated gentleman and looks down on those engaged in commerce and

industry. However, in reality, he is snobbish and empty-headed; the narrator says, “who ever knew a man who never read or write either, who hadn’t got some small back parlour which he *would* call a study!” (487). He is the target of Dickens’s dislike of the pompous upper class because his love for anything glittering is designed to show off his social standing and conceal his superficiality.

Dickens’s satirical descriptions of a monocle wearer appear again in Chapter 17 of *Little Dorrit* (1855–57), when Clarence Barnacle repeatedly drops his monocle into dishes to the displeasure of the party. Elborough notes that young men’s love for monocles was fashion-driven, and as early as the 1820s, medical professionals issued warnings about the adverse effects of monocles on eyesight (96–97/323). Uninterested in the optical characteristics of monocles, Dickens rather pokes fun at young gentlemen’s craze for being fashionable by wearing monocles because such eyeglasses are impractical and therefore, a luxury afforded to the leisure class, emphasizing the wearer’s vanity and snobbery.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, eyeglasses serve several functions in *The Pickwick Papers*, such as being tools to correct vision and indicators of age, status, and temperament. The spectacle wearers are limited to the wealthy characters, such as Pickwick and Bantam as well as middle-class experts, such as Snubbin and Bob. Although age and social standing may vary, Dickens carefully chose the eyeglasses to fit the wearer’s temperament. Pickwick’s spectacles are round, the most prevalent type among the Victorian middle class. The ones worn by the law clerk and Bob were of the kind that poorly-paid young men could afford. Bantam’s monocle is one of the most expensive eyeglasses referenced by Dickens.

When the characters in *The Pickwick Papers* begin wearing eyeglasses, they regard them as something special. Over time, they get used to wearing eyeglasses, which become a part of their bodies. Moreover, eyeglasses come to function as a means of creating a character that is different from what an individual really is.

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## *The Use of AI-Based Augmented Reality in the Work of Journalists*

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### **Abstract**

Over the years, with the development of smartphones, new technologies such as social media and user-generated content have been used in news content. The press and the media are accustomed to using cutting-edge technology to improve news accuracy, help news gathering and increase the efficiency of news production. With the rise of AI technology, more and more fields rely on AI to improve service quality. We built a prototype, added AI applications such as multiple-person tracking and crowd counting in the news production process, and used those AI-generated information marks on the screen as AR instructions to show how the new technology can help news production. We also initiated questionnaire surveys and interviews to assess the impact of these technologies on people. Finally, we reported some interesting findings that came from people from different backgrounds and found that they have different attitudes toward these new technologies.

Keywords: Augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Drone, Journalism

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## **Introduction**

The media and journalism often apply new technologies earlier than other fields. By 1600, the popularization of printing made it possible to print a large number of newspapers in Europe. In the 19th century, due to the Industrial Revolution, mass production was realized, which also led to the development of commerce and entertainment, which laid the foundation for modern newspapers. The invention of radio and television in the 20th century triggered the second revolution in the press.

It was the Internet era in the 2000s. Many websites are flourishing and various web services are provided on various platforms. At the same time, news production and broadcasting have also been digitized, and film production has changed from original movies to digital media, which is called the "integrated TV newsroom" (Powell, 1998). This is called the third revolution in the press.

With the development of information technology, the Internet came out in the 2000s, cloud computing and big data came out in the 2010s, and the main Internet devices began to shift from PCs to smartphones. It impacts journalism as well. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and user-generated content have become one of the main sources of news, and smartphone apps have become the main media for people to read news (Engelke, 2019). There are many research papers on this matter. Cloud computing, big data and the improvement of computing power enable machine learning technology to implement algorithms based on deep neural networks, which is called "deep learning." This has brought a wave of prosperity to machine learning and a resurgence of artificial intelligence.

With the development of various deep learning architectures for different applications, artificial intelligence technology has also been widely used in different fields. Journalism is undoubtedly one of the earliest fields of application of artificial intelligence. Many documents show that artificial intelligence technology is used in different stages of the news production and broadcasting process, and issues of privacy and work rights have also been widely discussed (Broussard et al., 2019). The technological revolution that AI brings to journalism is called the fourth wave of revolution in journalism.

In addition, aerial images of drones are now widely used in news screens, especially in large landscapes or parades. XR (AR, VR and MR) has also emerged due to the maturity of technology, and has become an important part of the future display technology. However, in the field of TV news production in Taiwan, they mainly rely on post-production to produce video effects instead of real-time AR technology.

Our research will combine AR display, AI real-time recognition technology, and drone streaming as an attempt to help provide a possible future option for TV news production and broadcasting. We also use questionnaire surveys and interviews to understand the views of TV reporters and the public on these technologies in the field of news production and news broadcasting, so as to provide practical references for future design of this application.

### ***TV News Production Process***

According to previous research on Taiwan's TV news production (Lin, 2014) and pre-interview information, the TV news production routine and the TV news production process are listed in Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively.



Index	Task
1	News topic collection
2	Editor's meeting
3	News interviews to shoot stories and obtain footages
4	News scripts writing
5	News text editing and modification
6	Video editing and post-production
7	Video subtitles, materials and effects editing
8	Shooting news report videos
9	News post-production
10	News broadcast

Table 1: Taiwan's TV news production team's routine

After the Taiwan government allowed the application of TV channel licenses in the 1990s, many new TV channels were established in Taiwan. Among them, the comprehensive channel and the news channel both broadcast news. For comprehensive channels, traditionally, they will broadcast morning, noon, and evening news. News channels broadcast news throughout the day, and there will be news and politics programs at night. The routine of Table 1 will be executed at least three times a day, and in this way the whole day's news will be completed. When we look at this routine, we will find that news videos play a very important role in the production of TV news.

Figure 1 illustrates Taiwan's TV new production process. In this illustration, we can see that the sources of news materials are divided into "stories" and "footages" through different processing procedures and then integrated into a piece of TV news for broadcast. These processed TV news videos will also be archived in the file system and uploaded to the Internet news platforms or mobile APPs for news audiences to watch.

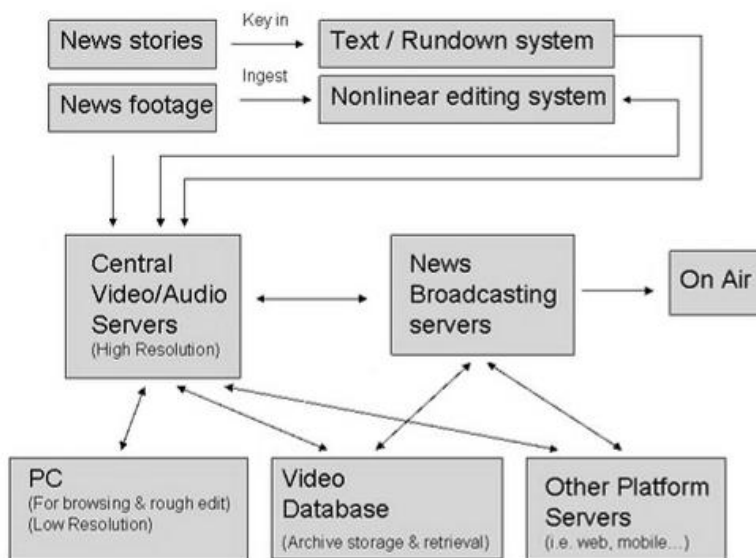


Figure 1: Taiwan's TV news production process (Lin, 2014)

Figure 2 more directly shows the composition and architecture of the digital system of TV news process and the types of devices actually used. The scripting task and the digital shooting task are a pair of news interview partners to obtain news information together. The

post-production process will make non-linear editing of the news video. The TV news production team then completed the news video on the central audio-visual server before the news was officially broadcast.

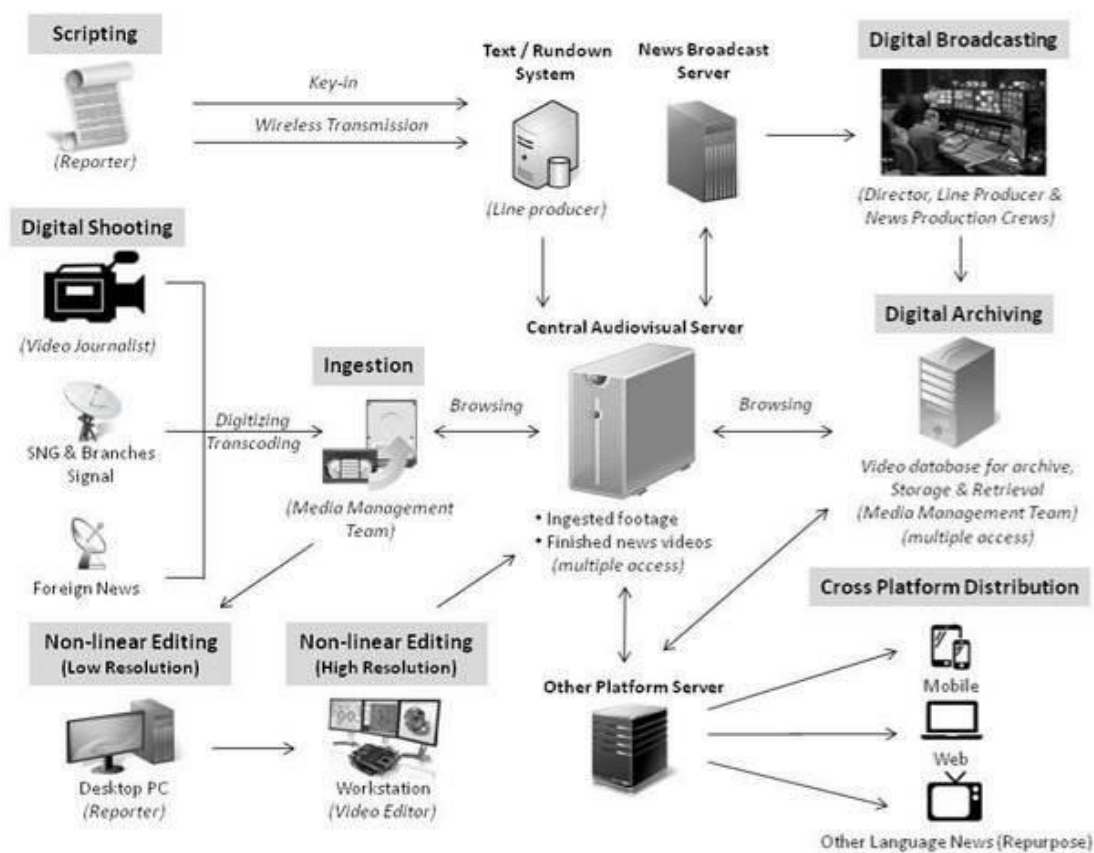


Figure 2: Taiwan's digital workflow and digital process of TV news after adopting integrated newsroom (Lin, 2014)

## The Study

Since news videos are indispensable for TV news, and computer vision related fields happen to be one of the most mature technologies of artificial intelligence at present, we hope to use additional information generated by AI and use AR to present information in real time in the "digital shooting" steps. It is used to provide interviewers with more information to assist them in conducting interviews, and to help us understand the impact of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality, on user experience and human-computer interaction on TV news production process and journalism.

Figure 3 is the system architecture modified from Figure 2, showing how we implement AI and AR in the current TV news production process. When AI is introduced into news interview work, due to the convenience of real-time identification, we can get more information from real-time photographic images to make things interesting. The information obtained from the real-time recognition of AI can be fed back to photographers and interview reporters through AR to increase the depth and breadth of the news.

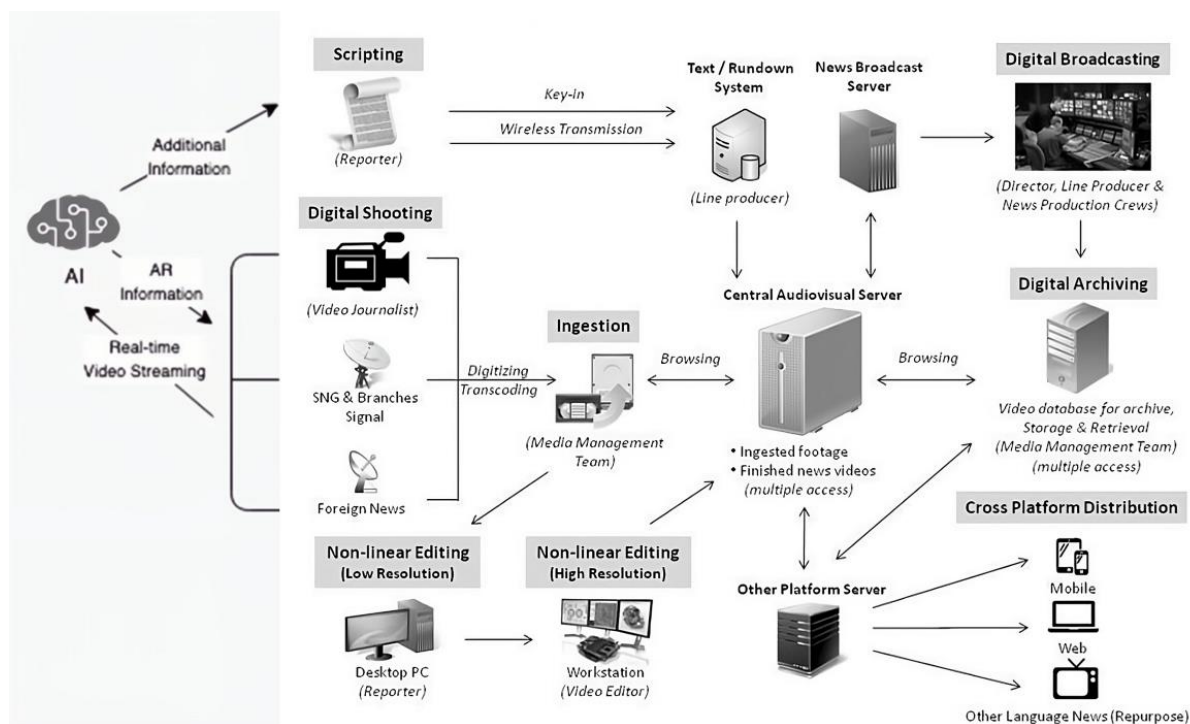
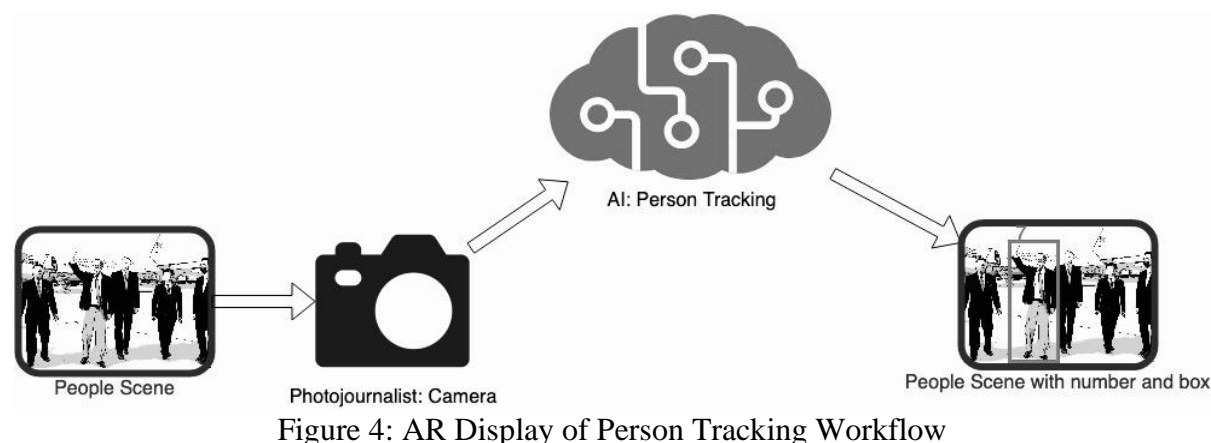


Figure 3: Digital workflow and digital process of TV news that powered by AI and AR (Modified from Figure 2, which is marked as grey background)

The best case is that we can directly implement AI and AR in the TV news production and broadcasting process to actually test the impact of the news production and broadcasting team on the new technology to change the workflow and assist them in their news editing work. However, the changes in the workflow of TV news channels and the introduction of another new system into the news production and broadcasting system have a major impact. Therefore, we planned a pilot study to apply AI real-time recognition to news films, and through extensive questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews to evaluate news production and broadcast staff and the general public's ideas about AI and AR joining the news production process.

**Approach 1: Visualization of Person Tracking**

When we are watching the news of some people, we may not know who it is? When a journalist is tracking a person, it is also possible that the target may be lost or an accident may occur during the fast movement. If we can use person tracking technology of AI to help identify and use AR markers, it might be helpful for such a situation. Figure 4 depicts such a situation. An important foreign guest visits our country. It is identified and tracked by AI technology, and can be marked on the video with AR.



### Method

We chose the Fair MOT (Zhang et al., 2021) model as our model for Person Tracking. When many people are walking in there are parts that can the screen, sometimes the images of people will overlap. In addition to the object tracking technology, the model must also have the re-identification capability to ensure that the person can be identified after being obscured by another person's image and is regarded as the same person.

In addition to modify Fair MOT into the real-time person tracking model, we also used the trained model to generate AR marked video images. In Figure 5, the left side is the original video frame, and the right side is the video frame of the AI information marked by AR. In this way, we can show the video to the subjects and ask them to participate in questionnaire surveys and interviews.



Figure 5: AR Display of Person Tracking Video.  
(Video source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khOTj1dxZ7k>)

### Approach 2: Visualization of Crowd Counting

Assume the following situation. The K party that initiated the political demonstrations claimed that their activities involved 1 million people. The ruling party D said that only 20,000 people participated in the event. The local police station, which maintained the order of the event, said it estimated that there were about 50,000 people in the event. Which is true? Finally, TV channels with different political stances quoted estimates from different sources, and voters and TV viewers felt very troubled. This is not a joke, this is what happened in reality. The combination of drone aerial photography with fixed and stable flight speed, real-time crowd counting AI model and AR display make reliable estimates possible in Figure 6.

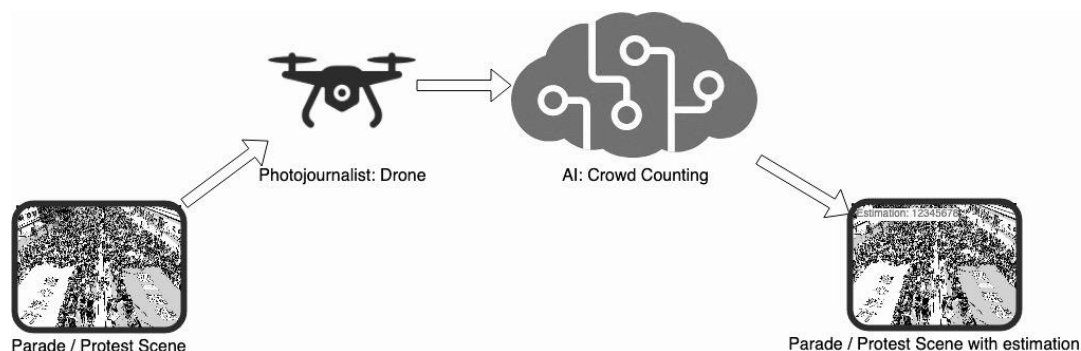


Figure 6: AR Display of Crowd Counting Workflow

**Method**

Crowd Counting is based on object recognition. When the model recognizes people in crowd counting, there are parts that can be processed because of the limited number or size. DSNet (Dai et al., 2021) uses the continuously varied scales reserves information and connect the dilation layer densely. In Figure 7, the left image is the original video frame, and the right image is its dense scale image, on which we draw the estimated text as AR information. We invite participants to fill out the questionnaire after watching the video.

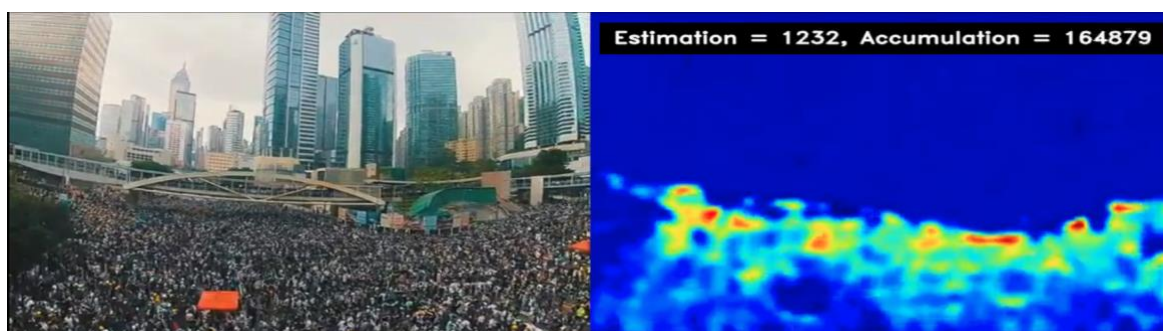


Figure 7: AR Display of Crowd Counting Video. In the left is the drone streaming image, while in the right is the dense scale map image of the drone streaming image. (Video source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCyrJTmUpNQ>)

**Questionnaire**

Table 2 is the questionnaire we used in the research. In Section 1 we obtain the testee’s authorization and related basic information. In Section 2 we try to understand the subject’s thoughts on the current news. In Section 3, we introduced the AI technology and AR display on Person Tracking to evaluate the subject’s response. In Section 4, we used AI technology and AR display in the scene of Crowd Counting to evaluate the subject's views on the introduction of this new technology into the news production and broadcasting process.

Index	Question	Option
<b>Section 1: Basic Information of Participant</b>		
1	Do you understand the purpose of the research and are willing to authorize your survey data for research reference?	Yes / No
2	Gender	Physiological male / Physiological female

Index	Question	Option
3	Age	Under 19 / 20 ~ 29 / 30 ~ 39 / 40 ~ 49 / 50 ~ 59 / Above 60
4	Education	Elementary school and below / Junior high school / Senior high school / College or university / Graduate and above
5	Whether to study news and communication related departments or work in news communication?	Yes / No
6	Continued from the previous topic, years of journalism related studies or professional experience?	Less than 1 year / 1 ~ 3 years / 4 ~ 6 years / 7 ~ 9 years / More than 10 years / Not related
7	Current main job	Non-communication related / Communication students / Communication related industry supervisor / Full-time anchor / Text reporter / Photojournalist / Director / Assistant Director / Editor / Sound control staff / Producer / Image processing expert / Professor or teacher / Other
8	Secondary/part-time job (optional)	None / Communication students / Communication related industry supervisor / Full-time anchor / Text reporter / Photojournalist / Director / Assistant Director / Editor / Sound control staff / Producer / Image processing expert / Professor or teacher / Other
<b>Section 2: General TV News Production Questions</b>		
9	I think the current news production and broadcasting process is fine	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
10	I think it is easy to collect news footages	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
11	I think it is easy to verify the information	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
12	I think it is easy to produce a piece of news	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
13	I think TV news is fair	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
14	I think TV news is not biased	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
15	I think TV news is complete	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
16	I think TV news is correct	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
17	I think TV news is reliable	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree

Index	Question	Option
<p>Section 3: TV News Production Process Powered by AI, Person Tracking</p> <p>Please read the description: This technology uses artificial intelligence to track the characters in the video. It helps the news production and broadcast process to be identified and output more quickly, and it can also avoid human errors. Please watch the following video.</p> <p>Video: US Secretary of Health Azar visits Taiwan.</p>		
18	I think this technology is convenient for news	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
19	I think the application of this technology to news is fast	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
20	I think the application of this technology to news is accurate	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
21	I think the application of this technology to news can increase viewership	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
22	I think the application of this technology to news can increase news credibility	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
23	I think the application of this technology to news can fill in the lack of news pictures	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
24	I think this technology has a positive impact on the news production process	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
25	I think the application of this technology to news can win advertising budget	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
26	I think the application of this technology to news can improve media professionalism	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
27	I think the application of this technology to news will affect the way and type of data collection	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
28	I think the application of this technology to news will reduce the workload	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
29	I think this technology applied to news videos can replace SNG videos	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
30	I think this technology should be used in the news production process	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
31	I think this video is fair	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
32	I think this video is not biased	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
33	I think this video is complete	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree

Index	Question	Option
34	I think this video is correct	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
35	I think this video is reliable	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
36	I would like to watch news that use this video	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
37	I will promote or share news about using this video	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
<p><b>Section 4: TV News Production Process Powered by AI, Crowd Counting</b>  Please read the description: This technology uses artificial intelligence technology to analyze the rally pictures taken by aerial cameras to identify the number of participants in real time, help the news production and broadcast process to obtain data on the number of people more quickly, and increase the credibility of the numerical calculation. Please watch the video.  Video: Protest in Hong Kong.</p>		
38	I think this technology is convenient for news	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
39	I think the application of this technology to news is fast	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
40	I think the application of this technology to news is accurate	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
41	I think the application of this technology to news can increase viewership	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
42	I think the application of this technology to news can increase news credibility	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
43	I think the application of this technology to news can fill in the lack of news pictures	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
44	I think this technology has a positive impact on the news production process	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
45	I think the application of this technology to news can win advertising budget	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
46	I think the application of this technology to news can improve media professionalism	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
47	I think the application of this technology to news will affect the way and type of data collection	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
48	I think the application of this technology to news will reduce the workload	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
49	I think this technology applied to news videos can replace SNG videos	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree



Index	Question	Option
50	I think this technology should be used in the news production process	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
51	I think this video is fair	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
52	I think this video is not biased	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
53	I think this video is complete	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
54	I think this video is correct	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
55	I think this video is reliable	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
56	I would like to watch news that use this video	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree
57	I will promote or share news about using this video	1: very disagree / 2: disagree / 3: normal / 4: agree / 5: very agree

Table 2: Questionnaire on the new technology used in the new TV production process

### Analysis and Discussion

A total of 38 people are surveyed in this questionnaire survey. The gender ratio is 26 women and 12 men, of which 63.1% are not related to news production or communication, and only 5 of them are current journalists.

The survey results are very interesting for the current TV news production and broadcast views, 81.5% of people think there is no problem with the current news production process. More than half of people think it is easy to collect news materials and produce a piece of news. However, 65.7% of people think it is difficult to verify whether a piece of news is correct (Figure 8). In the era of smart phones, it is really not difficult to collect information and record videos. There are also many people who set up personal news channels on platforms such as YouTube. But with the development of artificial intelligence, tools such as DeepFake (Güera & Delp, 2018) are also very convenient to use to generate fake videos, and we are currently unable to deal with this problem perfectly (Karnouskos, 2020).

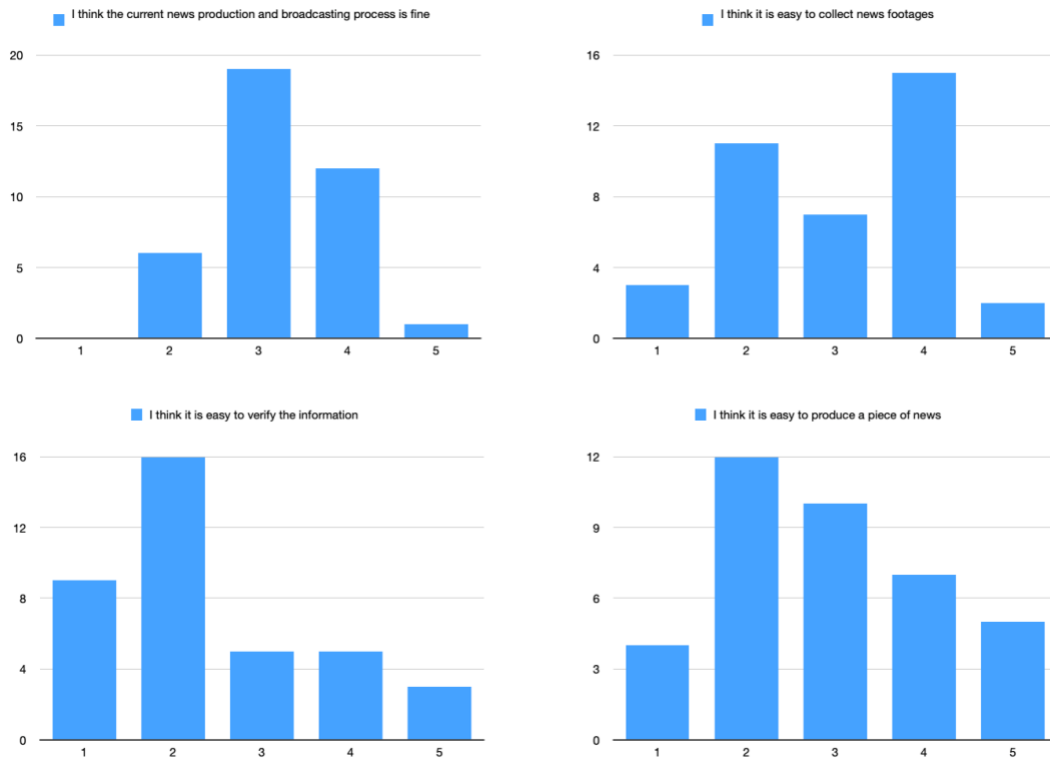


Figure 8: Survey results on current TV news production views

Regarding the content of TV news, 81.5% of people think that TV news is unfair, 84.1% of people think that TV news is biased, 71% of people think that the content of TV news is incomplete, and 73.6% of people think that the content of TV news is not fair. It is correct, and 86.8% of people think that the content of TV news is unreliable. Figure 9 expresses people's distrust of TV news content.

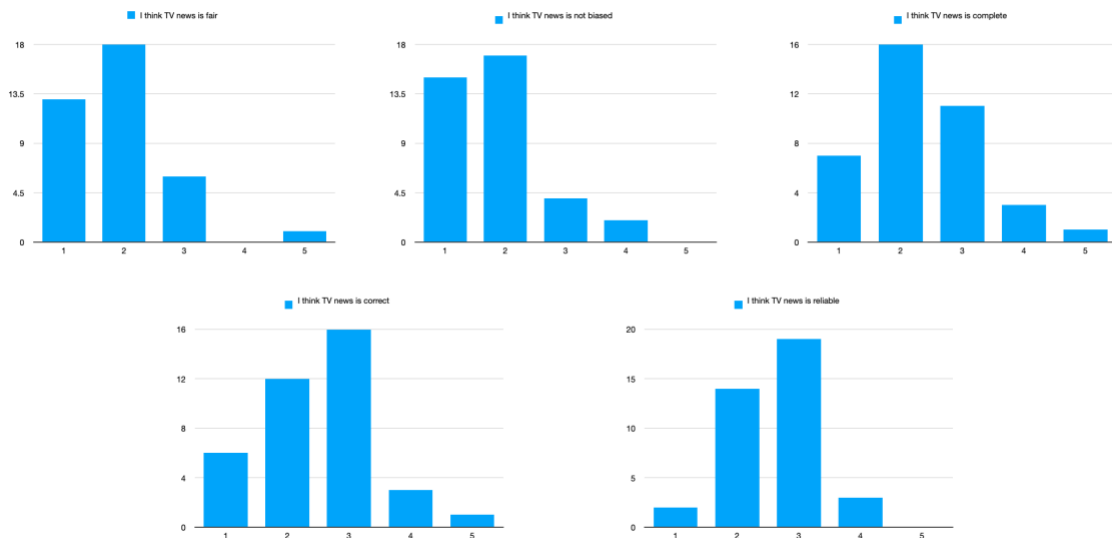


Figure 9: Survey results on current TV news views

Due to the special political and national conditions in Taiwan, most of Taiwan's television media environment is not only due to the different positions of domestic political parties, but also faces attacks from China's information warfare and fake news.

In the following chapters, we will separately analyze and discuss the questionnaire survey on joining AI and AR applications such as Person Tracking and Crowd Counting.

### Person Tracking

For the Person Tracking technology with AI and AR, as shown in Figure 10, most of the testees consider it positively helpful in terms of news convenience, news production speed, and news accuracy.

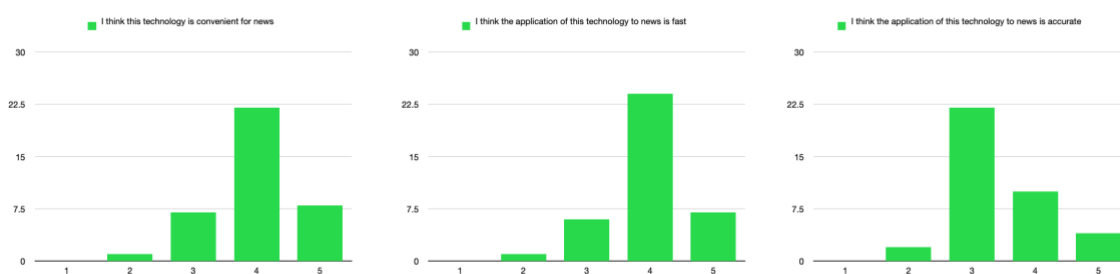


Figure 10: Survey results on Person Tracking

Adding Person Tracking based on AI and AR, from Figure 11, it can be seen that news programs are considered to be significantly helpful in news ratings, news credibility, and lack of news.

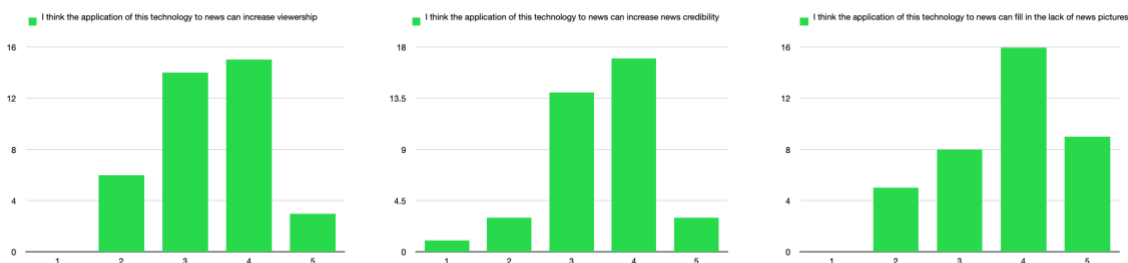


Figure 11: Survey results on the application of Person Tracking to news programs

The results in Figure 12 are interesting. Most of the test subjects think that using Person Tracking is positively helpful to the news production process and news professionalism. But it is not so helpful for fighting for advertising budget.

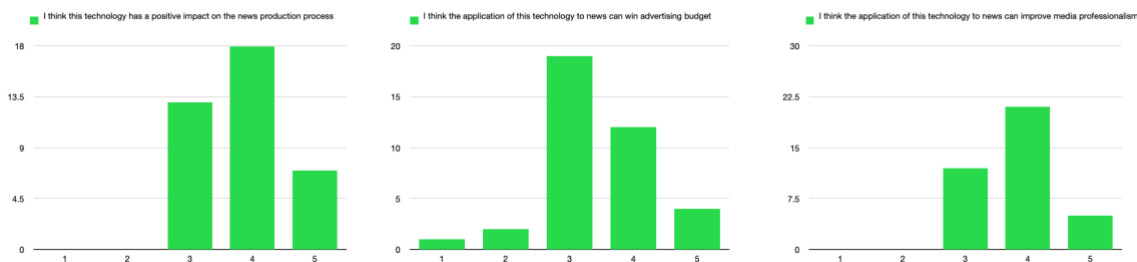


Figure 12: Survey results on the application of Person Tracking to the news production process

Figure 13 shows that the use of Person Tracking is considered helpful in helping news data collection and reducing the burden of news production workload, and it should be used in news production. But this technology cannot replace the functions of SNG cars.

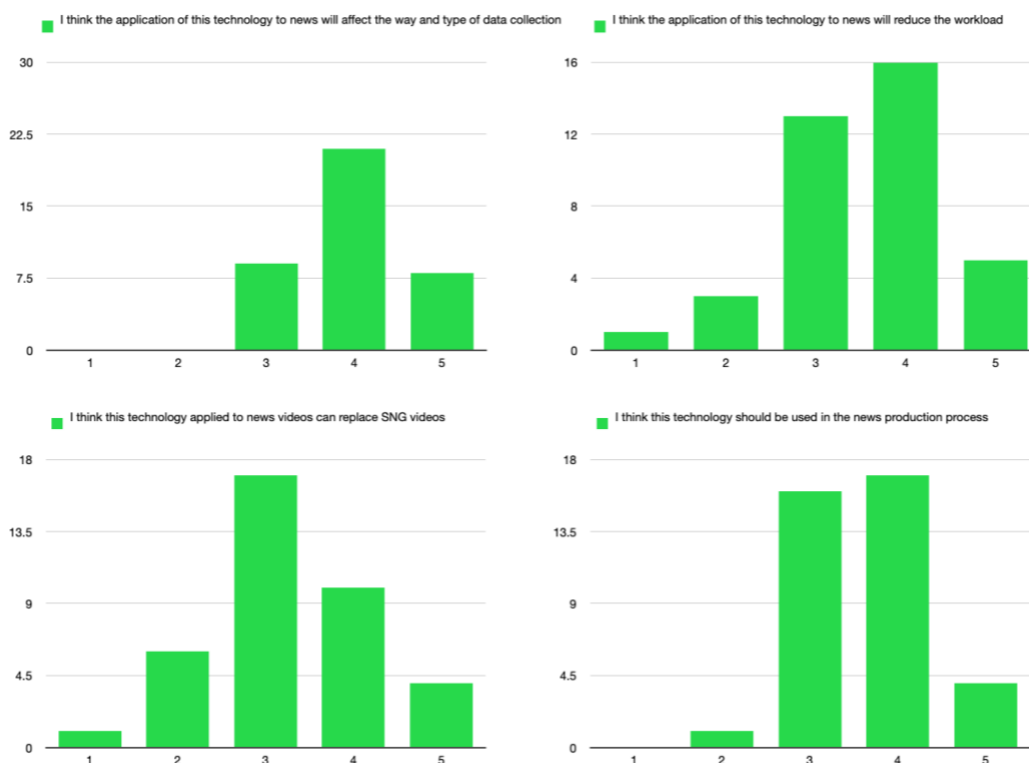


Figure 13: Survey findings on the application of Person Tracking to journalism

It can be seen from Figure 14 that the testees believe that the news produced by Person Tracking technology is fairer, less biased, more complete, more accurate, and more reliable.

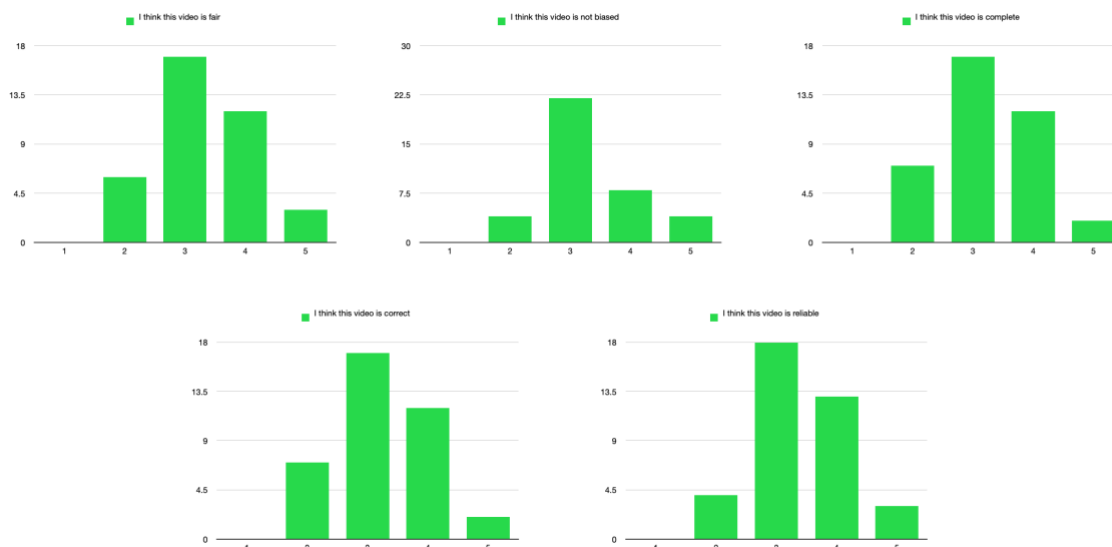


Figure 14: Survey results on the news produced by Person Tracking

The audience will want to watch the news marked by Person Tracking and be willing to share it (Figure 15). Therefore, we believe that the application of this technology has great potential in the news production process.

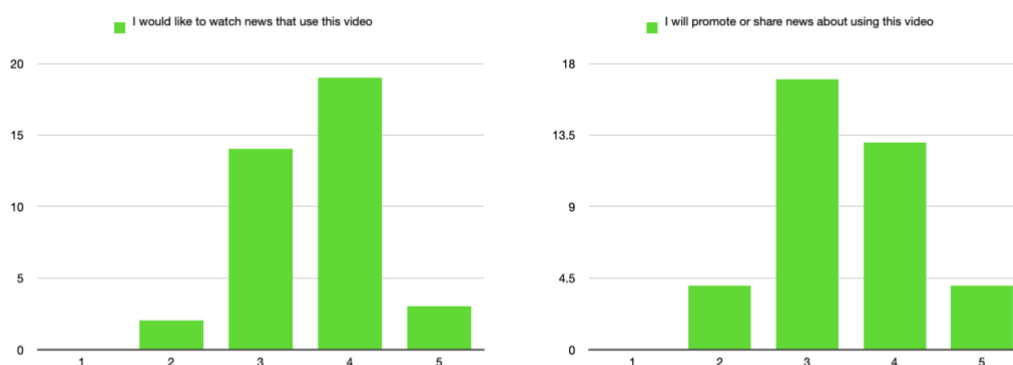


Figure 15: The survey results are like the application of Person Tracking to news

### Crowd Counting

In Figure 16, we can see that the subjects gave positive affirmation to the use of Crowd Tracking with AI and AR, believing that this new technology can provide convenience, make news production process faster, and be more accurate.

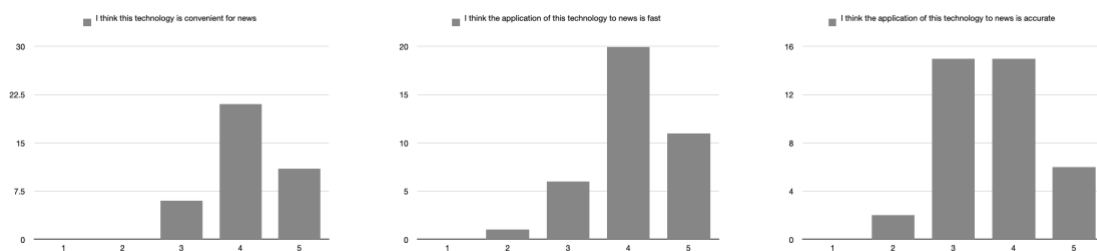


Figure 16: Survey results on Crowd Counting

For news programs, using Crowd Counting can increase ratings and news credibility, and can make up for the lack of news images (Figure 17).

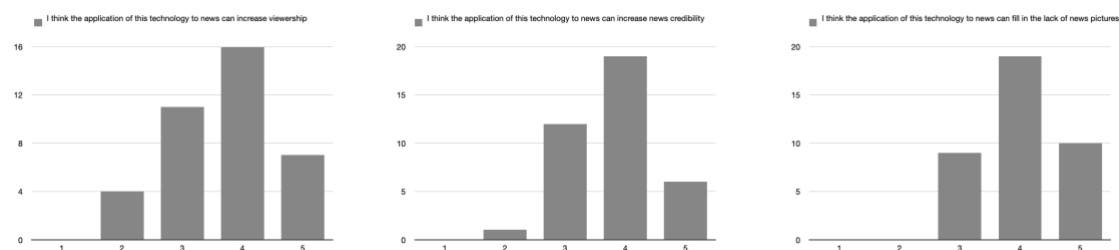


Figure 17: Survey results on the application of Crowd Counting to news programs

For the news program production team, the introduction of Crowd Count is also considered to have a positive impact, which can help news data collection and also help to obtain budget (Figure 18).

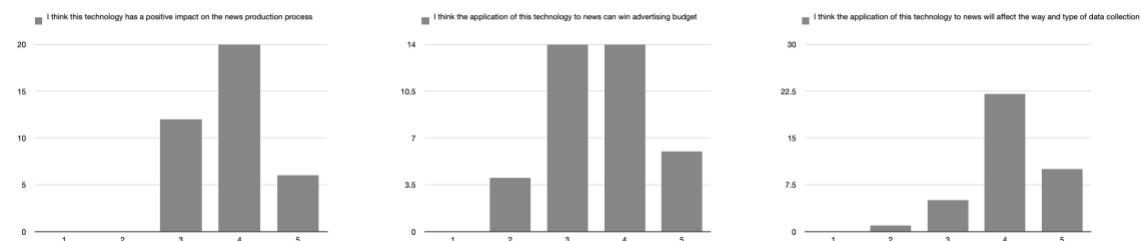


Figure 18: Survey results on the application of Crowd Tracking to the news production process

For the news production process, as shown in Figure 19, using Crowd Counting can help increase journalism professionalism and reduce the burden of journalism. Even unlike Person Tracking, more than half of the people agree that this project can replace the broadcast of SNG cars. Therefore, it is recommended to use it in the news production process.

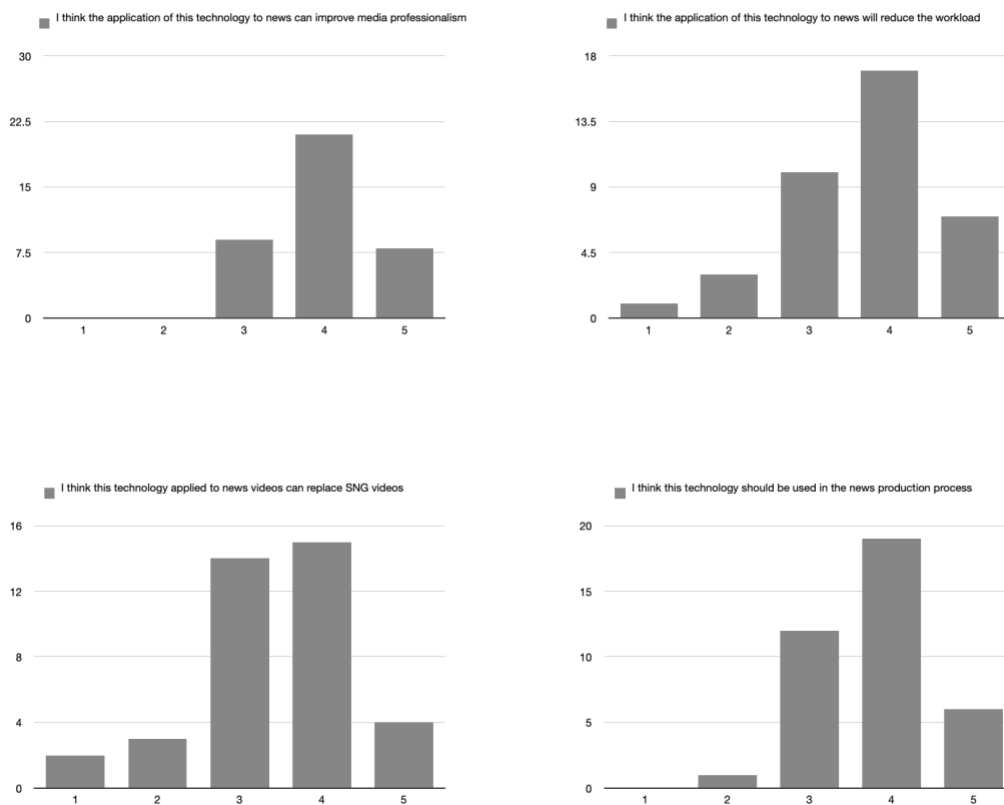


Figure 19: Survey results on the application of Crowd Counting to journalism

For news content, in addition to thinking that it is fairer, less biased, more correct, and more reliable, news integrity is also better after the introduction of Crowd Counting (Figure 20).

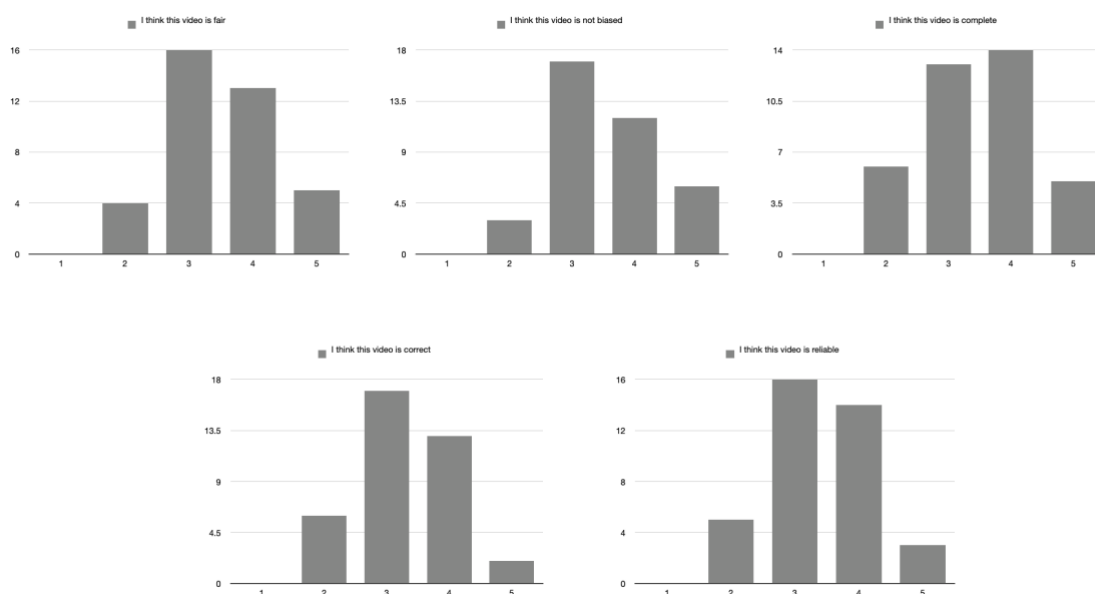


Figure 20: Survey findings on the news produced by Crowd Counting

People are also more willing to watch and share news produced by Crowd Counting technology (Figure 21).

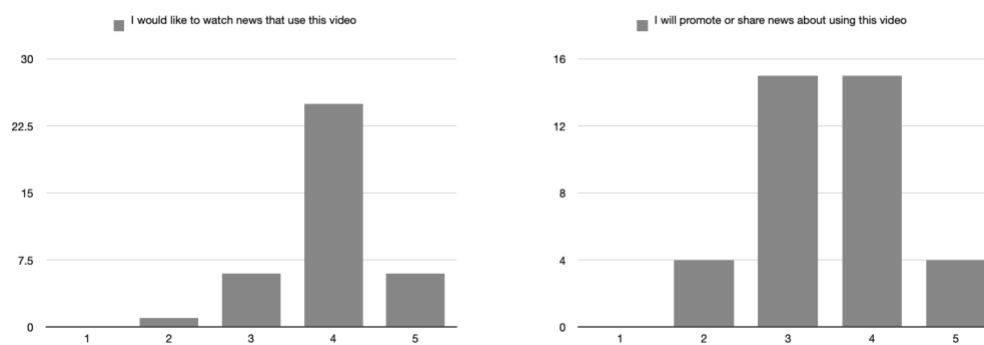


Figure 21: The survey results like the application of Crowd Counting to news

## Conclusion

In addition to the questionnaire survey, we also interviewed two TV channels and one Internet news channel, and randomly selected 5 of the 38 questionnaire survey subjects for interviews.

In the TV channel section, they stated that the Person Tracking marker box would block their sight, and for the number of parade activities, they would use the numbers provided by the organizer, so they do not need the assistance of Crowd Counting technology with AI and AR. The opposite is the Internet news channel. They welcome these technologies to help them provide better online news services.

The interviews with the test subjects also provided us with a good reference. Some people believe that Crowd Counting is an indispensable technology in news production, so it can provide accurate statistics for large-scale events, rather than each media reporting a different number of people in the same parade. At the same time, the calculation of the number of people must be instant, which is very important for those who are concerned about the parade. The other is that Person Tracking must provide characters in the news screen, otherwise the audience may not understand what the news screen wants to represent? Another question is how to use Crowd Counting to ensure that the estimated number of people will not be wrong? If the estimated number of people differs greatly from the actual number of people, is there a reliable technology that can make up for it in real time? This is also one of the themes of journalism and communication research (Koivula et al., 2020).

Let's compare people's views on TV news with the use of AI and AI technology-assisted news (Figure 22). We can find that after the introduction of new technologies, people think that such news content is fairer, less biased, and more complete. More correct and more trustworthy. Therefore, we have enough reasons to believe that using AI and AR technology rooms in news production and broadcasting process is very helpful. These are all the directions we can work on in the future.



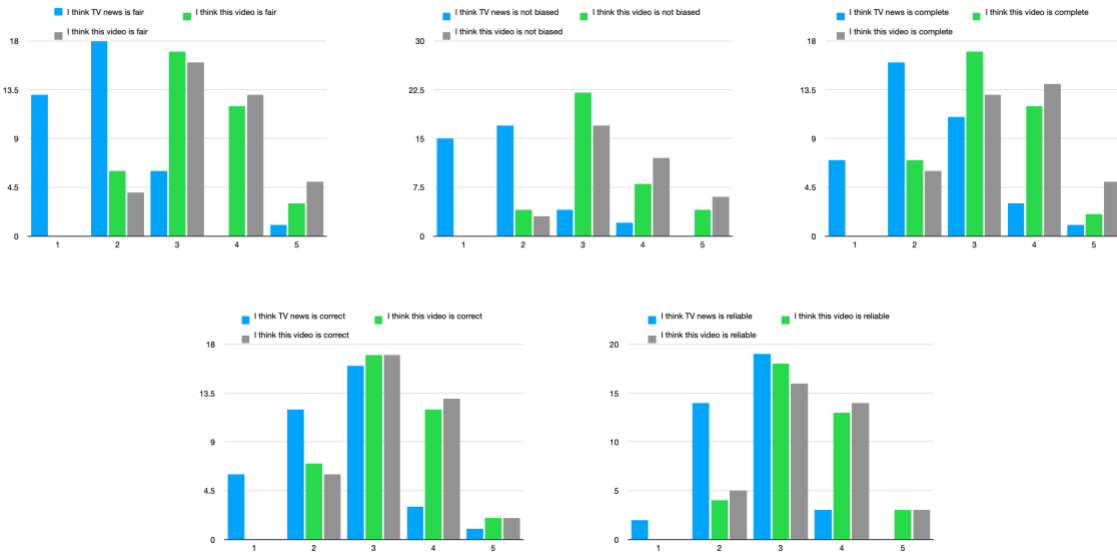


Figure 22: Compare views on current TV news, news using Person Tracking, and news using Crowd Counting. The blue is the current TV news, the green is the news using Person Tracking, and the gray is the news using Crowd Counting.

### Acknowledgment

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***Combating Corrupt Governments Through the Imagination of Public Sphere:  
Textual Analysis of TV Series “Sluga Narodu”***

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**Abstract**

Former comedian Zelenskyy successfully became the president of Ukraine through the comedy series “Sluga narodu.” It is worth exploring the public meaning of this pop culture phenomenon for people suffering similar structure searching for a paradigm for salvation. This article uses concepts of public sphere such as forums, private citizens, connection, public opinion, authoritative representatives, legitimation to conduct textual analysis for this TV series. This paper found that it is the people, who build the base of democracy from humanistic perspectives by insisting truth, human dignity and integrity with firm belief in autonomy through virtues, morality and ethics, to overturn nightmares from poverty and corrupt to happiness and prosperity. The saviors come from “we the people” rather than elites, experts, or foreign powers.

Keywords: Servant of the People, Public Sphere, Democracy, Corruption

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## Introduction

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, former comedian and the actor playing president in TV Drama *Servant of the People* (*Sluga narodu*), successfully became the President of Ukraine through the comedy series. It offers a good opportunity to study the relationship between popular culture and imagination of democratic reformation. By exploring the public meaning of this pop culture phenomenon, people suffering similar structure can search for a paradigm for salvation. Fans, with public spirits in mind, see popular culture as ways for communication, collaboration, production, and resistance (Fisk, 2010).

Popular culture, public consciousness and democracy are connected to help the Zelenskyy phenomena. In the text of the three seasons of this TV series, the corruption system is almost invincible. The network and system is embedded not only to the nation, the establishment, but also individuals' values in this TV series. The spirit of comedy is to show the absurdity of reality and salute the values which are needed to reverse the invincible enemies and phenomena: Oligarchs in Ukraine, Ukrainians' universal and long-term compromised values with the corrupt government, the degenerate political elite of perpetual reincarnation, the deteriorating failure to discover the truth, the oligarchy's shameless lies to steal national resources without limit, dysfunctional public opinion and checks-and-balances in political systems.

Defining democracy focuses too much on the process of choosing leaders may fail to discuss how alternative choices and outside of the process, are possible. Huntington (2012) explains that studies of political campaigns explain institutional strategies to reach political decisions are popular; however, more factors of the quality of democracy should be explored. For examples, the nature of democratic institutions, the way how they function, and the reasons why they develop and collapse. Huntington explored how the third wave of democracy happened and reverse waves of democracy collapse (2012).

This study argues that citing classic theories about the spirits of democracy such as will of the people and common good should be explored in this study. For example, how the will of the people as sources of authority for government and the purposes of the government for common good might be the decisive power to challenge the ongoing failing governmental system after Ukrainians did choose a non-traditional politician as their president both in this drama and reality.

In addition, when national crisis breaks out, whether the people of Ukraine could demonstrate that the public has the power to conduct autonomy for their nation is important. Otherwise, when heteronomy happened, nationals may face consequences such as revolution, divisions of a nation or invasion from other nations. These questions are more likely to get answers from classic political theories about the rise or fall of democracy and how democratic education and universal suffrages of a republic are related for freedom and equality. Similar concepts could help answer the following questions about how this TV series described its context to solve the crisis of Ukraine such as the idea of humanism.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, a native Russian speaker with a law degree, pursued a career in comedy and created the production company Kwartal 95 from which *Servant of the People*, TV series was produced and aired from 2015 to 2019 and gain immensely popular. In this dram, Ukraine as a failed nation, its democratic system is corroded by the never-ending

greedy and white lies. To meet needs of the public, a political party with the same name as the TV show was created in March 2018 by Kvartal 95.

In this comedy series, Zelenskyy played a fictional Ukrainian president but he finally turns drama in to reality. In 2018, he announced his candidacy in presidential election and won the election with 73.23 percent of the vote in the second round in 2019, defeating then President Poroshenko. The party, Servant of the People, won the absolute majority in the following congress election which he dissolved after he inaugurated as the sixth president.

As current president of Ukraine, Zelenskyy refused to escape from War zone of Kyiv when Russia attacked Ukraine in 2022 and media predicted that Russia was going to win the war within weeks. After the war broke out more than one year, Zelenskyy wins more international military and financial support to maintain its independence and is expected to take back the Russian-occupied territory. In this hardship phase of Ukraine, fans of this TV series are joking by saying Zelenskyy's leading Ukraine to fight with Russia's invasion by uniting his nation is now the fourth season of Servant of the People.

In the really world, Transparency International indicated growing security risks and authoritarian threats may make conditions of corruption worse. Issues underlined high-level corruption is closely linked to political instability, weakened institutions and – in the most extreme cases – violent conflict. It warns that governments undermine democratic processes, crack down on civic space and restrict media freedoms in a vicious cycle of corruption and authoritarianism (Transparency International, 2022). Table 1 listed Ukraine as 116 out of 180 on the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) with a score 33 out of 100. It's a long road for Zelenskyy's dream to come true.

Figure 1. Corruption Perceptions Index for Ukraine

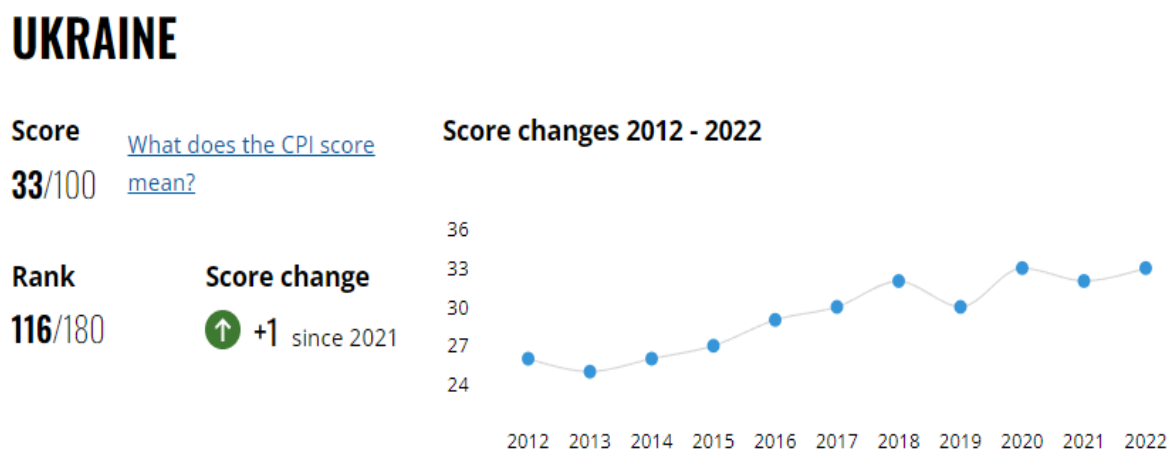


Figure and data retrieved from Transparency International 2023.  
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022/index/ukr>

### Textual Analysis of TV Series as Combating Corrupt Governments Through the Imagination of Public Sphere

Text are analyzed through following concepts and constructs of public sphere: forums, private citizens, conversion, public opinion, authoritative representatives, legitimation and people's will with the common good. Possible solutions to fight corrupt systems are further explored as follow: professional knowledge of governing the country and important issues in society, people with values are able to judge this knowledge and common good under the

classic theories of democracy, social media plus media people with conscience are some of the cores that provide this shared knowledge and goodness. Corruption and its cycle in Ukraine failed the public sphere. However, the protagonist in this drama emphasizes truth, values, dignity, and confidence is the one to conduct mission impossible to break through the social structure and lies.

Sun (2002) recommend one should start from the economic and cultural aspects to solve corruption as a problem. Fisk explained that fans' preferences can be demonstrated as cultural connotations and challenges to consensus and the relevance of fans represents the connection of loyalty to different social groups. The symbols may escape from everyday norms and authentic control. The strength of spirit and identity of fan to produce meanings and content are similar to that of the status of experts, scholars, and officials. Fans Challenge society's existing collective memory and knowledge. Dominance and resistance may rise from popular culture. Dominance needs to be earned and maintained. Through continued dominance, resistance from the opposition momentum can be strengthened if popular culture can form information and symbols from opposition perspectives. An old symbolic society and its maintenance is challenged by the new symbolic production of rationalization, negotiation, and resistance (Fisk, 2010).

## **Findings**

Based on analysis of corruption from Caiden (1988), corruption systems in this drama are described as: Political scandals and corruption criminals include enterprise oligarchs, bureaucratic elites, political figures, justice systems, and every class and walk of life. Crimes usually are large-scale misappropriation of public funds, improper distribution of public assets through public bidding processes, granting economic privileges based on special interests and extensive political donations and bribery.

Due to capital scarcity in this drama, criminals compete for domestic markets and public funds; officials usually are ineffective bureaucracy and lack patriotism. For them, corruption becomes a way of life. In addition, massive payments of public funds are made to special interests, privileged beneficiaries and political donations. Bribes are exchanged for favoritism and discrimination under the bias of the ruling party. In this drama polts, Ukraine is about to collapse and immense of refugees are gonna run away as the country is predicted to turn anarchy.

This paper found that, in this man-made catastrophe in this drama, the saviors for dire Ukraine to combat corrupt governments come from “we the people” rather than elites, experts or foreign powers. The function of democracy turns into a joke. When the process of democracy totally failed, it is the will of people and the definiton of the common good to solve the crisis. The public who build the base of democracy from humanistic perspectives by insisting truth, human dignity and integrity with firm belief in autonomy.

Autonomy defined here as taking one's own consciousness as the starting point to recognize, grasp, and understand the object or reflect on specific perspectives of oneself, in contrast to objectivity (Wu, 2007). To pursue subjectivity, concepts such as identity, independence, autonomy, and being subjective, should be considered, Wu explained . In this drama, through virtues, morality and ethics, the leader with the background of a history teacher from high school overturns people’s nightmares from poverty and corrupt to bring happiness and

prosperity to the public. The protagonist, Vasiliy Goloborodko's closing line after the end of the entire drama is as follows:

*We don't have a privilege to choose the country of birth, nor the language, nor the time of coming to this world. We only have one choice: to be humans!*

Wu (2006) explains that humanism broadly refers to a doctrine that affirms the value of human nature, advocates for the development of individuality and intellectual liberation, and establishes a human-centered worldview. It emphasizes inherent rights such as personal freedom and dignity, cares about human suffering and happiness, and affirms the central importance of humans. Humanism gradually expanded to encompass theories and practices concerning the study and education of humans, philosophy of life, moral norms, social ideals, and political science (Wu, 2006). He explained that after entering the modern era, Western humanists became dissatisfied with the dominance of Catholicism; in continental Europe, this dissatisfaction gave rise to existentialism; in the United Kingdom, influenced by the empiricist tradition, utilitarianism continued to develop; in the United States, a discourse of pragmatism emerged. He emphasizes that Pragmatism combines empiricism, utilitarianism, and materialism, with the purpose of life being the pursuit of the secular; therefore, the continued development of pragmatism will inevitably lead to individualism.

These words can be interpreted as reforms appeal to us Ukrainians should be treated with the dignity of human beings; therefore, “we the people” should be able to demonstrate the capacity for “our” own autonomy in this drama. Therefore, in the narratives of fourm will be how to define who we are, why we make what choices, and what makes us instead of instigation or manipulation by hate, fear, benefits or relief.

The ideal of liberalism gradually emerged with the concept of freedom of the nationals, replacing the earlier political authoritarian practices that subjected people to the arbitrary will of government authorities (Dewey, 2011). In the TV drama analyzed here, the dilemma turns to be: the people are subjected to the control of Oligarchs, a small group of conglomerates. Through Oligarchs’ manipulation and deceitful tactics against the people, Ukrainians turn country bumpkins or “yokels,” described by the protagonist.

Here how the protagonist asks Ukrainian people stop stealing and respect themselves and further explain how Ukrainian people become yokels from innocent babies after self-reflection (Boldfaces added by the author):

*I'll explain. **We are to blame. People like you, Yana, like me. All of us. We are to blame. It starts at birth. With a bribe at the maternity ward. With a bribe at the maternity ward. It's a must. Pay the doctor. No bribe, go back inside. Then we bring the baby home, where it's still a Ukrainian. Once it starts to think, it becomes a yokel. He first sees his dad. Dad is sitting watching TV, of course, and says: "These A-holes are to blame for everything, these bastards, these damn politicians!" While saying this, he counts the 200 hryvnias he got at a rent-a-rally yesterday protesting against these bastards and putrid lawmakers. If dad doesn't, someone will in his place. I think we are all born Ukrainians. So, once we are born, it means we deserved it. We, our parents, or ancestors. No difference. This person was also born a Ukrainian.***

Above is the truth about A circle of Yokel from the protagonist's narratives. Pursuit of truth and we find back ourselves and freedom. Here are the protagonist's words about values of truth by describing lies are daily life encounters for Ukraine from the text:

*It's an easy and comfortable lie. And if you lie, all the news guys and propaganda pricks will carry your lie around the world immediately. Such things spread quickly, like plague. **One day, a moment will come when you'll have to say the truth. But nobody will believe you then.** That's why here in this office and in this chair. There must be a man, me or someone else, it doesn't matter who never lies. The guarantor of the truth.*

However, politics are full of lies when the inappropriate demands come with IMF loans. No politicians in Ukraine agree with the protagonist to tell the truth and all lie to their citizens about the IMF deal prerequisites. Below is the narrative from the text about maintaining autonomy of Ukraine and demanding for respects when IMF asked Ukraine to accept nuclear waste as EU waste storage as requirement for loans (boldface added by the author):

***We are not beggars.** I want to thank the head of the IMF and the board of directors for their time and for a very constructive conversation. It is with a feeling of deep gratitude that I want to say...Get lost. And this condition is obligatory. Am I being clear? We're not beggars. We're not migrant workers. I want you to remember once and for all. we are not a borderland between the Orcs and the Elves.*

***We are a normal, strong beautiful and rich country.** And if we're down right now that doesn't mean you have to take advantage of us. But I am grateful to you really, I am. For opening my eyes so that I could see that we really are...standing on the edge of the abyss.*

***But we still have a chance to become a great country. We are a nation of open minded intelligent and talented people. And when we realize that...when we realize that we have to respect ourselves...realize that stealing and scamming is shameful...That we just have to roll up our sleeves and start grinding away. Not yell shame and treason at the drop of a hat. You can't build Ukraine up with talk alone. When we stop trying to out patriot each other dividing Ukrainians into us and them, and unite instead. Only then will Glory to Ukraine be heard, not just here. but in the whole wide world. But for now, get lost.***

Here are the words from the Prime Minister Yuriy Ivanovich Chuiko, antagonist later turned ally in the drama, was forced to expose that the protagonist and his private dealings that they deceive Ukrainians that the Prime Minister is dead.

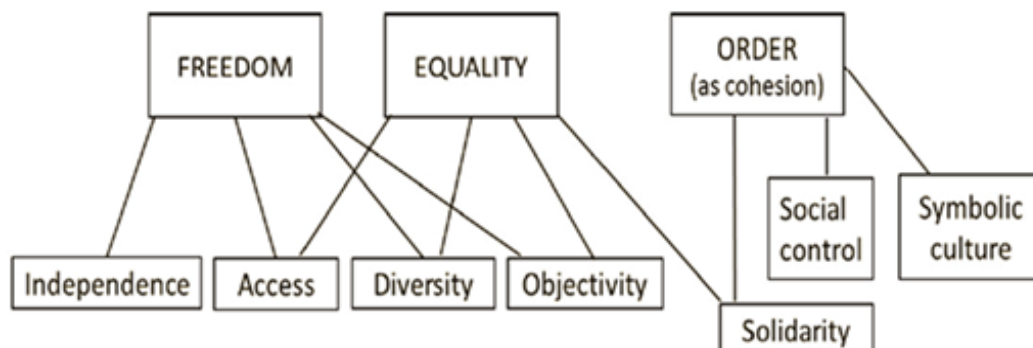
*...for the first time in 25 years or maybe even in the entire history of this State, You got an honest person.*

“Stop stealing” “Stop white lies.” Praising honest, truth, believe yourself, and asking for respects are common themes in crucial discussion. Since the six important elements of public sphere are failing to ask for accountability from politicians and political party. The protagonists ask the people to support him as a human worth to respect and reform by



changing themselves and get united as a nation. As a democratic education, Ukrainians are asked from the President in the drama to act differently as they interacted with the other politicians before.

Figure 2. Remade by the author is from Media Performance



Mass Communication and the Public Interest by Denis McQuail, 1992.

The figure above explains the relationship among freedom, equality, and order to explain media performance for three sectors. This study uses this figure to discuss how media as the forum is to serve the needs of the people to satisfy their freedom, equality and order which are usually related to the political, economic, social, cultural domains. The text of this TV series portrays the classical perspective of Western democracy, which emphasizes the success of individual freedom.

For the perspective of freedom, pragmatic American scholar Dewey raised the question of the future of democracy, specifically how democracy can achieve security when the majority of people find themselves in an economically insecure environment and are economically dependent on the will of others (Dewey, 2011, 1946).

Combining Figure 2 and Table 1, the idea of freedom is to seek independence and access. With corrupt systems and officials of embezzlement, people failed to regain their freedom as the private sectors as civil society to earn their economic freedom. In terms of equality, as poor people in this drama, their definition of equality turn to be sharing the international relief funding and therefore may waste the opportunities of development infra-structure for future. Corruption system goes much deeper into the people's desire of grasping any penny they can for any condition as they lose their dignity in terms of ethics.

As poor people consider even illegal or non-ethical money can bring them economic dignity; however, from perspective of ethics, individuals achieve the human dignity from self-legislation and self-accountability. Without them, people will live under lies, accept unethical behaviors, and not be able to make narratives when they cannot be themselves and fail to win trust from others. In the personal realm of the private section (Table 1), people turn greedy when family and friends are eager to discuss how to steal national resources. The nature of human turn corrupts and failed to reflect the spirits of humanism.

In the section of order (Figure 2), it covers two sets of ideas: control vs. solidarity; authenticity and hierarchy. Due to corrupt systems, the government has been failing control for law and order in terms of economy as the government failed to pay financial expenditure on time and failed to take responsibility to offer basic infra-structure for daily life routine.

From social and political perspective, the way to save the nation in this drama is to resort for people's solidarity as cohesion to reform in public sector both for public sphere and the government (Table 1).

In this drama, creating an environment where individuals can pursue economic success through personal freedom is more important than solely demanding equality for social welfare or the redistribution of national resources. The dilemma between democracy and the truth is how to balance between freedom and equality (Rumelia, 2009). The protagonist choosing from ethical perspective by practice the ideas that individuals can achieve the dignity of autonomy (self-legislation) and self-accountability. The president uses his power as the leader to give up the easier money from the E.U. and seek for responsibilities and sacrifices from Ukraine's people to build up their dreams for developing hi-tech industries rather than turning Ukraine into Nuclear Waste Storage Site for the E.U. He also refused to accept the belittled fate arrangement offered by the E.U. Narrative identity encompasses identification and belonging, presenting the self through subjective storytelling; the process involves continuous fluid construction and mediation (2008, Hu). After the leadership from historical perspectives, the national narratives as symbolic culture about Ukrainians are changing, people finally are very much confident about their life and are very satisfied with government performance in the drama.

In this TV series, failed systems were characterized by oligarchs as manipulating emotions, hiring people for staged protests, bribing people with policy favors, fabricating public opinion through false events, and nurturing political leaders who only showed loyalty to the oligarchs. The play ironically depicts the impossibility of social mobility when corrupt officials and their families and relatives inheriting government positions which leads to the impossibility of equality, freedom, and private assets due to there is no way to gain economic success. Therefore, in the sector of "order," the leader explained to the public by changing their values into symbolic culture change to show the values of real Ukrainian people.

The analysis of this study focuses on breaking through the corruption structure: demonstrating how private individuals divided and merged into citizens, with what strategies upright new leaders ignited citizens to support reforms and collided with oligarchs and confront political puppets through conspiracy struggles, how geopolitical showdowns can bring back Ukraine esteem, why citizens finally took due action to save their nation, and how the Ukrainian collective identification helped each other through the national crisis transformation. After the struggle of Ukrainian people and leaders expanded the journey of cultural transformation in the public sphere and Ukraine in the drama finally became a successful country and complete mission impossible.

Table 1. Two views of the public/private divide and what goes wrong in Ukraine in this TV series

Public	Private
<p><b>The state:</b> apparatus of government</p> <p><i>In a failed state: The concept of public sphere failed to eliminate corrupt uthoritative representatives. Corruption, political cronyism, clientelism, rent-seeking, and briberies were daily routines.</i></p>	<p><b>Civil society:</b> autonomous bodies- businesses, trade unions, clubs, families, and so on</p> <p><i>In a failed state: civil society lost its freedom to search for economic goals for failed policies.</i></p>
Public	Private
<p><b>Public realm:</b> Politics, commerce, work, art, culture, and so on.</p> <p><i>In a failed state: Media failed to oversee the government. Public opinion and election results could change bad policies.</i></p>	<p><b>Personal realm:</b> family and domestic life</p> <p><i>In a failed state: individuals tried to grape any opportunities to steal money or get benefits from the government and resist to pay taxes and fail to become respectable persons.</i></p>

Italics are added by the author. Part of the table is from Heywood, A. (2019). Politics (5th ed.). p.7. Red Globe Press.

Table 1 shows the division of the public and the private. Heywood (2019) explained that back to Aristotle, politics has been seen as a noble and enlightened activity precisely because of its public' character; in addition, scholar Hannah Arendt argued in *The Human Condition* (1958) that politics is the most important form of human activity because it involves interaction amongst free and equal citizens.

Heywood cited Jean-lacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill to explain from this perspective, it thus gives meaning to life and affirms the uniqueness of each individual through political participation and personal, moral and intellectual development of individuals. Here is the base of the confidence for universal suffrage and in fact it is who are the nationals and with what nature of nationals could save a failed republic from corrupt systems. How the public changes are discussed as the follow.

The Table 2 below outlines six processes and explains the comparison between a failed state, a normal state and a reverse state (reversion from a failed state). People need to transcend political systems and demand an improved public system that serves the common good. However, this requires paying the price of reform. In the TV series, Ukrainian people engage in discussions about reversing their country's state and pursuing the common good. They pay the price of reform and succeed under the protagonist leadership.

When people's values change, political and economic changes occur, and cultural codes also undergo changes. The Ukrainian people transitioned from a corrupt nation to a leading nation in terms of economic and technological development in the drama. In practice democracy in reality, this transformation is a precious outcome of the reversal of people's values and their resonance by following the leaders' struggles and determination (See Table 2).

Table 2. People's responses among three types of nations: normal democratic nation, failed nation, and reforming nation

	Normal democratic states	Failed states	Reversing states
Forum	Political party elites and media oversight	Elite corruption and media controlled by conglomerates	Major oversight from online social platforms and interpersonal networks when media fail to oversee
Private Individuals	Self-reliance, independent judgment, good markets to develop economical chances for personal properties	People with low income. Local markets full of disqualified and failed companies or corrupt public services	Citizens are willing to bear the pains of reform such as donations, inflation, high taxes, reduced welfare.
Convergence	Discussions through various channels and space	Network convergence failed to stop thieves stealing from the nation, political posturing	Media professionals are willing to risk of being dismissed to send the truth and join reformation.
Public opinion	Satisfied public	The public is only concerned about welfare and benefits but not interested in paying taxes	Demanding for better government performance after citizens' sacrifice of paying higher taxes and benefitting fewer welfare in a short term
Authoritative responses	Responsible politics	Vote-buying policies, emotional instigation	The public has the dream of changing their nation into a strong country to get rid of corruption and oligarchs.
Legitimation of government performance	Good policy results from governmental rationality  Failing to meet the expectation of the public, leaders will face replacements in next elections.	The public only cares about benefits from the government  Political party rotations or changes of political leaders bring the same corruption results.	Leaders make good use of geopolitical strategies without compromising to hurt their own mother nation.

		Corrupt elites are willing to cooperate with international geopolitics for elites' own benefits.	
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Table 2 is made by the author to demonstrate how people need to change for democratic reversion when compared to people from failed or normal nation.

### **The Beauty and Sorrow of Geopolitics for Ukraine’s Miracle Autonomy: The EU and IMF as Significant Others**

Stopping corruption makes miracles happen—national autonomy becomes possible. True freedom and objective opportunities emerge. Social and cultural orders materialize to improve political and economic conditions.

Using geopolitics wisely, the protagonist engages in both conflict and cooperation with the EU. Despite being criticized by the entire nation, the protagonist loses the opportunity for an EU loan then but strives for the new reforms that could come with it. This drives the country towards new development opportunities for the practice of the laws.

During the protagonist's imprisonment for lying about the death of the Prime Minister in the drama, the protagonist leverage human rights as prison welfare, utilizing the European Union again to show his public talents. Predictably, the proxy politicians become incompetent, causing inflation and eventually leading to a coup and a nation division later. Concerned about the worsening situation in Ukraine and the potential refugee crisis, the European Union rescues the protagonist and arranges for his return as president, proving that he won the election.

The four stages of Ukraine facing in this TV series is listed as the follow A, B, C, and D in Figure 3. For Stage A, Ukraine as a very weak state which is known by its corruption. For the transition from A to B, the nation almost failed its fiscal planning and was in a hurry to make loans from the IMF. Later a failed leader in the drama caused inflation by printing its bills unlimitedly to cover her political promise. When the nation was in deep mess, an armed coup broke out. The nation turned to be run by a dictator as Stage B. Later Ukraine divided into several states and was about to collapse into anarchy as Stage C. After witnessing Ukraine possibly will turn into anarchy, EU is afraid to accept immense refugees from Ukraine, they brought out the protagonist from prison, corrected the presidential result, and made the protagonist as the president of Ukraine. Finally, Ukraine turned into the D stage as an economically strong nation.

Figure 3. Four distinct forms of Ukraine in the TV series presented in this study

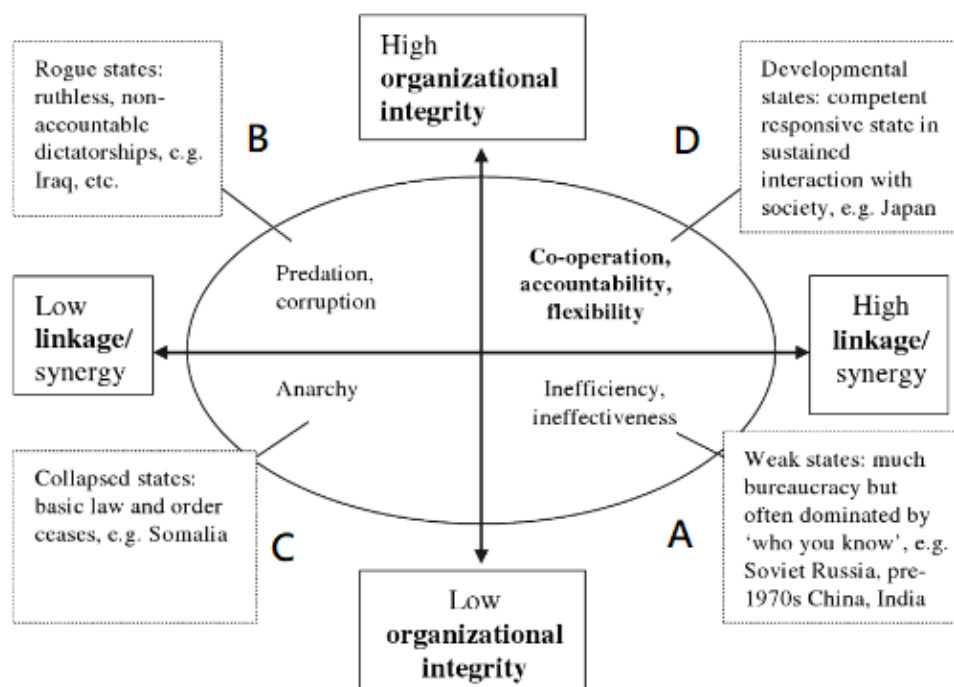


Figure 3 is redesigned and added by the author. Original Table is from Halper, D. (2005). p.24. Social Capita. Cambridge. Polity Press.

During the campaign period, the third season of the series serves as Zelenskyy's campaign promotion, portraying the Ukrainian people's contributions to repay the IMF and establish the country's true position for independent development. Subsequently, Ukraine achieves the status of a developed country and becomes an economic powerhouse. In this television series, a successful portrayal of a democratic nation overturning a corrupt government. Setting a model for the public to practice Ukrainian dreams; no only then, may be possibly to defeat Russia's invasion in the future. *Servant of the People* may turn the drama that saves Ukraine.

## Conclusions

This paper found that it is the people, who build the base of democracy from humanistic perspectives to overturn this corrupt system in the drama. High school students put their history teacher's critique and ways to change the nation on social platform and won people's support. The leader, the funding, the forum are both from people rather than elite class. The leader united people and converge them as a force to search for truth, human dignity and integrity with firm belief in autonomy through virtues, morality and ethics, to overturn nightmares from poverty and corrupt to happiness and prosperity. Narratives connected Ukrainians and they may again to imagine their nation as a pride nation. Leaders are no longer controlled by oligarchs or geo-political power in the drama. The saviors of Ukraine come from "we the people" rather than elites, experts or foreign powers. No more yokels is the important change of a symbolic order. Ukrainians are finally defined as they wish.

For further studies, conducting in-depth interviews with fans could help explore their real challenge for democratic practice and sacrifices.

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*Naturalism and Realism: An Interplay in the Works of Stephen Crane*

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**Abstract**

All literature is founded on some concept of the nature of man. When any major literary trend appears, it assumes or defines man's place in the universe. The medieval idea of man was that of a fallen creature, living in a dualistic world that was divided between good and bad, moral and immoral, God and Satan, eternal and temporal. Man has been living an accursed life since his fall from the grace. His desires and instincts corrupt his reason and lead him astray. Since literatures are products of physical, social and intellectual environment, they can best be interpreted through their setting. Taine, the French philosopher applied scientific method to the study of art and literature. His theories of race, milieu and moment challenged the traditional concepts of man, who was subjected to the rigidity of determinism. Emile Zola, regarded as proponent of French Naturalism, but it was Frank Norris who introduced it to America where it gained considerable momentum around 1890s. It appeared as a harsher variant of realism with a focus upon the scientific observation of life minus all idealism. The influence of Darwin's Evolution Theory also was equally evident in the objective and frank portrayal of characters who were a sum of heredity and environment.

Keywords: Realism, Naturalism, Determinism

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## Introduction

All literature is founded on some concept of the nature of man. When any major literary trend appears, it assumes or defines man's place in the universe. The medieval idea of man was that of a fallen creature, living in a dualistic world that was divided between good and bad, moral and immoral, God and Satan, eternal and temporal. Man has been living an accursed life since his fall from the grace. His desires and instincts corrupt his reason and lead him astray. Since literatures are products of physical, social and intellectual environment, they can best be interpreted through their setting.

In this paper, I shall focus upon Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Maggie, A Girl of Streets* that have contributed greatly to the canon of American realism and naturalism. I shall trace the meaning of both the terms, their merger into one another, their points of departure before dealing with the underlying themes, the innovations and scientific discoveries that became the hallmark of the literature of that period. I shall also touch upon the effect of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, the scientific temperament and the pessimistic determinism.

## Realism

Realism, a literary and aesthetic movement that emerged in France around the 1840s, was a reaction against the tenets of the-then popular exotic and poetic conventions of romanticism. It made a dramatic shift towards the everyday experiences of the common masses and presented them with photographic fidelity. The realists shunned the prevalent social values, standards and mind-sets of the upper classes, critiquing the exaggerated emotionalism, rejecting the heroic and the supernatural that characterized that period, portraying instead the sordid lives of the people affected by rampant commercialization and industrialization. They were deliberately selective of their subject matter, preferring the mundane over the rarer aspects of contemporary life, describing the stark underbelly of the society under the grip of heredity and environmental forces, thereby setting the stage for a new movement in modern art and literature that would steer clear of various forms of classical or romantic idealism. W.D. Howells (1889), regards realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material" (p. 966). It is a literary technique of "verisimilitude" that is undertaken by various schools of writing to describe the most uninteresting and banal events and characters. It attempts to forge a connection between the ordinary and extraordinary, the apparent and unapparent that lies at the core of human nature. In his article, "The Novel and its Future," in *Atlantic Monthly*, George Parsons Lathrop (1834) summarizes it as, "where we thought nothing worth of notice, it shows everything to be rife with significance." Realism in literature is not "unlimited, ultimate reality but the fragmented, flawed world of quotidian experience" (Slattery 1972: 55 - 62).

In the United States, "realism" encompassed the period from the American Civil War till the end of the century. Its effects were visible both in fiction and popular attitudes. It reflected at once people's faith in science and their doubts about the modern scientific world. The growth of industrialization, urbanization, commercialization, influx of immigrants, coming up of slums, the great divide between affluence and poverty, shift in culture were some of the factors that contributed to its rise. Honoré de Balzac and Gustav Flaubert were the earliest exponents of realism who introduced complex characters and detailed observations of contemporary society.

## Naturalism

Naturalism, on the other hand, was an extension or continuation of realism with the addition of pessimistic determinism. It dealt with raw and unpleasant experiences of the poor, uneducated and unsophisticated masses that struggled to survive against all odds. The characters were portrayed as playthings controlled by the intermingling of chance, instincts and hereditary forces. Naturalism embraced and adapted the principles of physical sciences in its ambit, especially Darwin's view of nature, his doctrine about "the theory of evolution" which emphasized the impact of heredity and environment on man's life. The phrases, "survival of the fittest" and "the human beast" (Zola 1890 *The Human Beast*) became catchwords and brought about a massive change in the outlook of many authors and intellectuals, and produced an attitude of all-pervasive gloom and dejection that defined that period. Naturalists sought to apply the sociological and scientific theories to their artistic representations, thereby critiquing the prevalent social organization. The heroic and the adventurous in the violent and desperate acts were brought out without any dehumanization.

William Harmon and Hugh Holman (1995) bring out the subtle difference between the romanticists, realists and naturalists in their work, *A Handbook to Literature*, when they state, "Where romanticists transcend the immediate to find the ideal, and the naturalists plumb the actual or superficial to find the scientific laws that control its actions, realists center their attention to a remarkable degree on the immediate, here and now, the specific action, and the verifiable consequence" (p. 428).

Both realism and naturalism presented a slice of contemporary life with all its accompanying details without resorting to moral judgements of any kind. Naturalism widened the scope of realism by incorporating and adapting within it the principles of natural sciences, especially Darwin's theory of evolution and the principles of scientific determinism.

This led writers like Stephen Crane to emphasize man's irrational, accidental, physiological nature over his moral or rational side. Individual characters like Maggie, Jimmie, Pete, Henry Fleming were portrayed as helpless, pessimistic creatures at the mercy of social and economic pressures from the outside and strong, instinctual drives from within. The strong, warring emotions of lust, seduction, violence, greed for power, desire to dominate held man in the sway. He sometimes found himself pitted against the gods or against other men or against his own self, struggling hard to maintain his veneer of civilization despite innumerable external pressures that threatened to release the brute within. The universe was sometimes hostile and sometimes indifferent towards him.

"Nature never did betray the heart that loved her" was the romantic vision of William Wordsworth but by the time we reach Stephen Crane, it was:

'A man said to the universe:  
"Sir, I exist!"  
"However," replied the universe,  
"The fact has not created in me  
A sense of obligation.'" (Poem 21, *War is Kind & Other Poems*)

The cynicism of these lines finds a resonance in the man's plight. "When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates

deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples (Crane: *The Open Boat*).” He is hit hard by the fact that nature is indifferent to his very plight and that shatters him. “Crane’s fiction plainly reflects the naturalistic concept of man as a helpless animal, driven by instinct and imprisoned in a web of forces entirely deaf to the hopes or purposes of humanity” (Hartwick: 221).

Henry Fleming faces a similar dilemma in *The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War* (Crane:1983). He is unable to determine his own destiny and gets tossed around by forces of nature and humanity. Whether it is a story about the American Civil War or whether it is a Christian story of a young man’s redemption or whether it is a tale about a beast with illusions, it could be debated on various premise. But it is definitely the story of a naïve recruit who goes through fire, discovers himself and with the knowledge attained, comes to terms with the imperfections of the world around and attains manhood. It is the journey of trials and tribulations of this young American who enlists himself for war against the advice of his mother. But dreams of Homeric glory occupy him until the war becomes imminent. “He had . . . dreamed of battles all his life—of vague and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire. . . Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them. Henry had read of marches, sieges, conflicts, and he longed to see it all. His busy mind had drawn for him larger pictures extravagant in color, lucid with breathless deeds” (46).

He finds himself at loss to share his dilemma with his other comrades whether to stay back and face the onslaught or run away. It is a literal baptism by fire for Henry who learns to fight his own inner demons throughout the course. Through him Crane presents the absurdity of war where no one really knows what’s in store for each one. No one knows how they’d behave under the fierce onslaught of any attack. The illusory glamour accorded to the American Civil War gets critiqued and the sentimental falsities attached to it are exposed threadbare.

At the very first opportunity, Henry flees in blind panic and what follows is a series of self-reproaches, self-justifications, a damning sense of guilt and determined rationalization at his own reaction. He sees a commonplace squirrel and throws a commonplace pine cone at it. When it too flees in panic, Henry feels triumphant exhibition in nature that reiterates the need for self-preservation above everything else.

“Nature had given him a sign. The squirrel, immediately upon recognizing the danger, had taken to his legs without ado. He did not stand stolidly baring his furry belly to the missile, and die with an upward glance at the sympathetic skies...He was an ordinary squirrel too—doubtless no philosopher of his race. She reinforced his argument with proofs that lived where the sun shone” (101). The realistic manner in which Crane delineates the scene speaks of Crane’s vision of the true nature of reality that surrounds the naïve young man. The irony too becomes glaringly evident when moments later he enters a place where “arching boughs made a chapel” (101) and finds a decayed corpse sitting upright against a tree, crawling with ants and staring straight at him. He flees in panic only to hear the deafening sounds of battle. He sees the wounded returning from the battle and the field littered with clothes and guns. Battle appeared to him as an immense and terrible grinding machine which was churning out dead bodies. This wasn’t the life that he had dreamt of. It was a far cry from the glorious burial that he had envisaged as a war hero. The simultaneous presentation of the grotesque along with the deterministic forces debunked the popular notions and romantic illusions of heroism in the battlefield.

By giving the readers an insight into the mind of the protagonist from a third person's point of view, the author brings out humanity's lack of free will. His reaction to flee is a natural instinct. It is not a question of free will. He does not even pretend that it is his free will. He simply abandons his free will to the will of nature. The narrator of the tale reveals that Henry had convinced himself of having taken the right decision when in fact his thought process could not really evaluate the real situation at hand. The entire sequence brings out his flawed thought process instead. Henry is too naïve to believe that nature could be cruel or indifferent for he conceived "nature to be a woman with a deep aversion to tragedy" (100). Throughout the work the indifference and apathy of nature is talked about. "It was surprising that nature had gone tranquilly on with "her" golden process in the midst of so much devilment" (89).

Unsigned Review, *Spectator* (1896 June 27) calls the novel "an interesting and painful essay in pathology" which "presents the effects of physical danger, in the thousand forms which danger wears in modern warfare, upon the human nervous system in a youth who is morbid, hypersensitive and over conscious..."

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets & Other Stories* (Crane: 1995), is another hard-hitting tale full of bitter irony, seething passions, destructive morality and treacherous sentimentality. It has been referred to as "the first dark flower of American Naturalism" that portrays the fall from grace of a girl "blossomed in a mud puddle" (Knapp: 1). Throughout the novella, Crane exposes the dark and seamy underworld of conflict and violence which his age pretended did not exist. His pen lays bare the gutter slang in its most ferocious form as he describes the vilest exchanges vividly. In a few, brief terse chapters, he pulls the rug from under sentiment and shows all the dirt, squalor, fear, misery and sordidness of much of life that his generation chose to gild with an artificial thing called "good taste."

"The slum-setting and the overpowering effect of the environment, it sounds in synopsis like a perfect bit of sordid determinism – a girl raised in violence and squalor, charmed, seduced and abandoned by her flashy lover, rejected by her family, descends rapidly through street-walking to suicide" (Walcott: 67). Crane himself appeared to supply a naturalistic gloss to the novel when he wrote to friends that *Maggie* was about the effect of environment on human life. (Stallman: 79). He insisted that he had no other purpose in writing *Maggie* than to show people as they seem to him. "If they be evil, make the most of it." This reflected Howell's definition of realism as "truthful treatment of material," which Crane picked up. It does not mean mere photographic reality, but "the novelist be true to himself and to things as he sees them."

Hamlin Garland was quick to recognize the grim picture of Bowery slums that Crane created for he too had explored Boston slums and had written about them in his *Jason Edwards*. He wrote "...It is not written by a dilettante; it is written by one who has lived the life. It gives the dialect of the slums as I have never before seen it written – crisp, direct and terse. It is another locality finding a voice." Hamlin Garland in *Arena* (1893 November) issue reviewed *Maggie* under the heading "A Modest American Story."

*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, focuses on the life of slum and slum-dwellers but refrains from moralizing, commenting or offering solutions. The story unfolds through a series of impressionistic scenes wherein the brutal and sordid details are amassed to such an extent that it frequently surpasses Emile Zola's *L'Assomoir* in its cumulative effect. The character delineation is from third person's point of view which makes it thoroughly objective, detached and clinical. Maggie's death in Chapter 17 is a glaring illustration of this authorial

detachment. She is simply referred to as “the girl.” Crane writes, “She went into the blackness of the final block. The shutters of the tall buildings were closed like grim lips...The varied sounds of life, made joyous by distance and seeming unapproachableness, came faintly and died away to a silence” (Crane: 51). Maggie’s death by drowning also comes across as an assumption.

Environment has a terrible power over all human beings in the world and frequently molds lives regardless. This gets amply substantiated through Crane’s writings. Maggie, is a helpless victim of the physical degeneration of the Bowery slum in which she lives, and of the destructive, inflexible rules of a conventional morality shared by rich and poor alike.

“A very little boy stood on a heap of gravel for the honor of Rum Alley” (Crane:1). The opening line of the novel sets the theme in motion wherein man uses conventional but abstract values such as honor, justice, love, respect, responsibility etc. as weapons of disguises behind which he can take refuge. In the light of this statement, it would be worth exploring the lives of the principal characters, the moral values that control their thinking. Their lives are a perpetual battleground. The novel opens with Jimmie fighting the children of Devil’s Row and then with one of his own gangs. His father separates them with a blow, Maggie mistreats the babe Tommie, Jimmie strikes Maggie, Mrs. Johnson beats Jimmie for fighting. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson quarrel. Mrs. Johnson beats Maggie for breaking a plate, Mr. Johnson strikes Jimmie with an empty beer pail. Mr. Johnson comes home drunk and he and Mrs. Jonson fight – all this in three short chapters.

Crane fuses elements of poverty, ignorance and intolerance in a context of violence and cruelty to create a nightmarish world wavering between hallucination and hysteria. This is established through violent verbs, distorted vignettes and sensory transfers. A sampling of the first few pages of the novel would take the reader through a horrendous roller-coaster ride with words and phrases like, “lurid altercations,” “dreaming blood red dreams,” “a worm of yellow convicts came from the shadow of a grey ominous building” so on and so forth.

A dominant idea that grows from this landscape of hysteria is that these people are victimized by their idea of moral propriety which is so utterly inapplicable to their lives that they constitute a social insanity.

Home is no longer a safe haven from the struggles of the hostile world of the outside. It becomes a battleground for even more intense fights and violence with no holds barred. Both Maggie and her brother are petrified of their parents who were hardcore drunkards, veritable beasts under the influence of alcohol. When Jimmie, Maggie’s brother, comes in bloody from the fighting... “the mother’s massive shoulders heaved with anger. Grasping the urchin by the neck and shoulder, she shook him until he rattled...The babe sat on the floor watching the scene, his face in contortions like that of women at a tragedy. The father...bellowed at his wife...” (Crane: 5). The hereditary propensity for consuming alcohol so strong in Jimmie did not come to fore in Maggie but both fall prey to it.

Through the food imagery in the narrative, “The babe with his feet dangling...gorged his small stomach. Jimmie, forced with feverish rapidity, the grease-enveloped pieces between his wounded lips. Maggie, with side glances of fear of interruption, ate like a small pursued tigress” (Crane: 6), Crane suggests that Johnson’s world is one of fear, fury and darkness, that it is a world in which no moral laws are applicable, since the Johnson’s fundamental

guide to conduct is instinctive amorality, a need to feed and to protect themselves (Pizer: 124).

The image of the amoral, animal world is maintained throughout the novel. It had hardened Jimmie who had studied human nature in the gutter believing that this world is composed of despicable creatures. The only possible outcome of a life so crippled from the beginning by heredity and environment is utter degeneration and degradation.

The Johnsons display their high moral ground which brings approbation and satisfaction when displayed before others. It accords them gratification and self-justification. Maggie's abandonment and ouster from her own household was a corollary to that. Pete, her seducer, also rejects her pleas of help because she threatens the respectability of the bar where he works. Secure in their moral stance, it is they and their false priorities that push Maggie towards her doom. She is destroyed not so much by the reality of the slum life as by the middle-class morality imposed on them – a morality which allows its users to both judge and to divorce themselves from the responsibility of those they judge. Like most of the naturalistic characters both Jimmie and Maggie are not merely products but helpless victims of the hostile environment. Their life is a never-ending series of struggles, hardships and insults. They have no free will and whatever freedom that they think they have is also circumscribed by their own conventional belief systems. The real malaise behind the tragedy is the moral duplicity that has the society in its grips rather than any inherent evil in Maggie's character.

## Conclusion

Jean Jacques Rousseau in his book *The Social contract* says "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains," holds true of naturalistic literature which deal with the struggle between the fiercely deterministic forces operating in the world and the individual's desire to exert his free will. Man's freedom has its own limitations but he is not devoid of all values. Crane's fiction takes us away from the idealism and romanticism of literature towards a portrayal of greater fidelity of contemporary life caught in the throes of deterministic forces where man's raw passions are exposed. The violent and vulgar language lifts the veil from many a seamy aspect of their lived reality of slums. Stephen Crane stands out as a realist, naturalist, social chronicler who has painted the contemporary life in his fiction with all its changing flux, unredeemed toil, breakneck competition, ceaseless struggles, skepticism, darkness and despondency and moral anarchy that had gripped not just America but the entire world. As such, their all-time relevance will never go out of vogue.

*Note:* In this paper, I shall focus upon Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and *Maggie, A Girl of Streets* that have contributed greatly to the canon of American Naturalism.

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