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HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH

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Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research

About the Journal

Overview

Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (JHSSR) is an open-access academic journal published by BP Services, independently owned, dependent upon donations and run on a non-profit basis for the benefit of the world-wide social science community. It neither accepts nor commissions third party content. It is an online scientific journal and does not impose any publication or page fee on authors intending to publish in the journal. It publishes the scientific outputs.

Recognized internationally as a leading peer-reviewed scholarly journal devoted to the publication of original papers, it serves as a forum for practical approaches to improving quality in issues pertaining to social and as well as the humanities.

JHSSR is currently a **bi-annual** (*July* and *December*) periodical that considers for publication original articles as per its scope. The journal publishes in **English** and it is open to authors around the world regardless of the nationality.

The Journal is available world-wide online.

Aim and scope

Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research aims to develop as a pioneer journal for the social sciences with a focus on emerging issues pertaining to the social sciences as well as the humanities.

JHSSR is a principal outlet for scholarly articles. The journal provides a unique forum for theoretical debates and empirical analyses that move away from narrow disciplinary focus. It is committed to comparative research and articles that speak to cases beyond the traditional concerns of area and single-country studies. JHSSR strongly encourages transdisciplinary analysis of contemporary and historical social change particularly in Asia, or beyond by offering a meeting space for international scholars across the social sciences.

Scope of the journal includes HUMANITIES– Field of Languages, Linguistics, Literature, and Education. SOCIAL SCIENCES–Anthropology, Economics, Law, psychology, Political Sciences, sociology, music, sport, and Technology Management.

History and Background

A premier journal in its field, JHSSR was established in 2019, and has been in circulation continuously since then. Horizon is an open access scholarly journal that currently publishes *semi-annually*. The journal uses a stringent **double-blind peer-review process** and follows code of conduct stipulated by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

It primarily publishes for dissemination of academic research meant for scholars and scientists worldwide. It publishes on non-profitable basis and does not have any income from subscription or other sources. The journal does not impose any publication or page fee on authors intending to publish in JHSSR.

JHSSR is distributed worldwide to more than 1000 institutions via *e-alerts*, in addition to authors upon request. To provide expert evaluation of the various segments of the broad spectrum of Humanities and Social Sciences research, the editorial office is assisted by scholars who serve as Associate Editors, editorial board members, Emeritus editors and international advisory board members from academic institutions across 35 countries, and ad-hoc reviewers chosen for their expertise. They provide constructive evaluation and, fair and rapid editorial processing. The frequency of citations to articles published in JHSSR by scientists, students, and others increases each year. It therefore aims to achieve its SCOPUS status within 2 years of publication.

To facilitate review, the Editor-in-Chief and the Chief Executive Editor previews all submitted manuscripts and independently or in consultation with an Associate Editor, decides if a manuscript is appropriate for review by members of JHSSR's editorial board and/or ad hoc reviewers. Manuscripts outside of the scope of JHSSR or those articles in poor English are returned without the delay of a full review, generally within a week of submission.

Authors may contact the Chief Executive Editor in advance to inquire about the potential suitability of their research topic for review.

Manuscript submissions and inquiries are encouraged. Manuscript style and formatting are described in the **"Instructions to Authors"**. Manuscript submissions should be made using JHSSR online manuscript submission system, or manuscripts should be mailed through email to the Chief Executive Editor. Direct inquiries to CEE.horizon@gmail.com

Goal

Our goal is to bring the highest quality research to the widest possible audience. Our objective is "**Today's research, tomorrow's impact**".

Quality

We aim for excellence, sustained by a responsible and professional approach to journal publishing. Submissions are guaranteed to receive a decision within 14 weeks. The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 3-4 months.

Editorial and International Advisory Board

The editorial and the advisory board of the Horizon has a presence of an international base of renowned scholars from various disciplines of research with diverse geographical background.

Our editorial team is engaged with **universities in 35 countries across the world** including **Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Fiji, Finland, Germany, India, Iran, Jordon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA,** and **Vietnam**.

Abstracting and indexing of *Horizon*

As is the case with any new journal, indexing in all prestigious relevant databases takes some time, and is heavily dependent upon citations the articles generate.

The Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (Online ISSN 2682-9096) is a *high-quality, peer-reviewed* academic journal in its field.

It is a Gold Open Access journal and indexed in major academic databases to maximize article discoverability and citation. The journal follows best practices on publication ethics outlined in the COPE Code of Conduct. Editors work to ensure timely decisions after initial submission, as well as prompt publication online if a manuscript is accepted for publication.

Upon publication, articles are immediately and freely available to the public. The final version of articles can immediately be posted to an institutional repository or to the author's own website as long as the article includes a link back to the original article posted on JHSSR. All published articles are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

The journal has been indexed and abstracted in: SSRN, CrossRef, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Google Scholar, EBSCOhost, ProQuest. The journal has been listed in: CiteFactor, Cornel University Library, CrossCheck, DRJI, Journalseek, openaccessarticles.com, Open Access Library, Rubrig, Scirus, Ulrichs. In addition, the journal has been archived in: Academia.edu, National Library of Malaysia.

The journal editors and the publisher are doing their best for this journal to be included in the top abstracting and indexing databases; however, for the journal to be indexed in any indexing body is beyond the Journal's direct control. Nevertheless, the journal ensures that the papers published are of high quality. The publisher from time to time recommends the journal to the indexing and abstracting bodies.

The authors must also ensure that the manuscripts they submit to JHSSR are of top quality and are innovative.

Citing journal articles

The abbreviation for *Horizon* Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research is ***Horizon J. Hum. Soc. Sci. Res.***

Publication policy

Horizon publishes original work and its policy prohibits an author from submitting the same manuscript for concurrent consideration by two or more publications, and is not under concurrent consideration elsewhere at the time of submitting it to Horizon. It prohibits as well publication of any manuscript that has already been published either in whole or substantial part elsewhere in any language. It also does not permit publication of manuscript that has been published **in full** in Proceedings.

Originality

The author must ensure that when a manuscript is submitted to Horizon, the manuscript is an original work. The author should check the manuscript for any possible plagiarism using any software such as **TurnItIn, i-Thenticate** or any other similar program before submitting the manuscripts to the Horizon journal.

All submitted manuscripts must be in the Journal's acceptable **similarity index range**:

< 25%– PASS; **30-35%**– RESUBMIT MS; **> 35%– REJECT**.

Publication Ethics and Publication Malpractice Statement

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The Horizon Journals takes seriously the responsibility of all of its journal publications to reflect the highest in publication ethics. Thus, all journals and journal editors abide by the Journal's codes of ethics. Refer to Horizon's **Code of Conduct** for full details at the Journal's web link https://horizon-jhssr.com/code-of-conduct.php

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In case of any queries, contact the Journal's Editorial office via email to info@horizon-jhssr.com

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Horizon JHSSR **does not impose** any submission fees, publication fees or page charges for those intending to publish their research in this journal. However, as JHSSR is an open access journal, in norms with all open access journals, the journal imposes an Article Processing Charge (APC). To publish in JHSSR, authors are currently required to pay an APC of **USD100 per article**. A waiver to this available for academics with a heavily subsidized fee of USD75 per accepted manuscript.

In addition, this journal offers discount on Article Processing Charges to authors based in any of the countries which were classified by the World Bank as Low-income economies or Lower-middle-income economies. All requests can be sent directly to the journal's Chief Executive Editor.

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However, in case of a print version, if it is necessary for the figures to be reproduced in color, a charge of USD50 per figure will apply.

International Standard Serial Number (ISSN)

An ISSN is an 8-digit code used to identify periodicals such as journals of all kinds and on all media–*print and electronic*. All Horizon journals have an e-ISSN.

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Lag time

A decision on acceptance or rejection of a manuscript is reached in 3 to 4 months (average 12 weeks). The elapsed time from submission to publication for the articles averages 4-5 months.

Authorship

Authors are not permitted to add or remove any names from the authorship provided at the time of initial submission without the consent of the Journal's Chief Executive Editor. Requests for changes to authorship must be directed to the journal's chief executive editor. Changes in authorship will only be permitted where valid reasons are provided and all authors are in agreement with the change. Post-publication changes to authorship will typically be made via a published correction and authors may be charged for this additional service.

One author will need to be identified as the corresponding author, with their email address normally displayed in the article. Authors' affiliations are the affiliations where the research was conducted. If any of the named co-authors moves affiliation during the peer-review process, the new affiliation can be given as a footnote. Please note that no changes to affiliation can be made after your paper is accepted.

Manuscript preparation

Refer to Horizon's **INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS** at the back of this journal or visit
https://horizon-jhssr.com/manuscript-prepparation.php

FORMAT-FREE SUBMISSION

A well-formatted manuscript follows all journal instruction. All elements of the manuscript are printed in English with 1-inch margins at top, bottom, and sides. Right margins are unjustified. Horizon journals accept manuscript submissions which uses any consistent text— Format-free Submission! This saves you time and ensures you can focus on your priority: the research.

However, citations/ references must be formatted by you as per APA format.

Checklist for Manuscript Submission

- Cover letter
- Declaration form
- Referral form
- Manuscript structure

(Title, Author details and affiliation, Abstract, Keywords, etc. using the **IMRAD** style).

Each submission must fulfil the following criteria and documents listed below must be submitted along with the manuscript for intended publication.

1) Cover letter

Your cover letter should be complete and make a strong pitch. The cover letter should include all these details:

- Author(s): Full contact details (email, institutional address, telephone number, etc.) of all authors listed including who the corresponding author will be [full name(s) written as First Name then Last Name]. Understand the differences between lead author and co-author(s). Lead-author: who has done most of the research and writing; Co-author: Has collaborated with the lead author and contributed some parts.
- A brief explanation of your article's relevance and impact.
- Disclosure of whether you have published this study previously elsewhere or if it is in consideration by another journal.
- Disclosure of any commercial or financial relationship that may be viewed as any potential conflict of interest.
- A brief statement explaining why the journal should publish your study.

(Refer to sample available at https://horizon-jhssr.com/download.php).

2) Declaration form

Do not forget to complete the declaration form and submit it along with your manuscript. Sign the declaration that your manuscript is original, you have NOT published this study previously elsewhere in any language and is not under concurrent consideration elsewhere at the time of submitting it to Horizon.

3) Referral form

The authors are strongly recommended to complete the "Reviewers Suggestion" form along with the manuscript during submission. Authors should suggest up to 3 names of potential reviewers experts in the subject area of

Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research
Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research

the manuscript, and are not the co-authors listed in the manuscript submitted. The suggested reviewers may be from any part of the world. The journal is not, however, bound by these suggestions.

4) Language and flow

A well-written manuscript has greater chances of acceptance. Some tips:

- Avoid long, complicated sentences; keep it simple. Your sentences should be understandable.
- Your ideas should flow smoothly.
- Use correct terminology, avoid excessive jargon and grandiose language.
- Make sure there are no grammatical mistakes.
- It is highly recommended to approach an editing service for help with polishing your manuscript. The journal has a long-term proven affiliation with a good certified editor at Beyond Proofreading Services PLC.

You may contact **Dr. Brown at Beyond Proofreading**, beyondproofreading@gmail.com at your own discretion.

Language Accuracy

JHSSR **emphasizes** on the linguistic accuracy of every manuscript published. Articles must be in **English** and they must be competently written and argued in clear and concise grammatical English. Contributors are strongly advised to have the manuscript checked by a colleague with ample experience in writing English manuscripts or a competent English language editor.

Author(s) **should provide a certificate** confirming that their manuscripts have been adequately edited. A proof from a certified editing service should be submitted together with the cover letter at the time of submitting a manuscript to Horizon.

All editing costs must be borne by the author(s). This step, taken by authors before submission, will greatly facilitate reviewing, and thus publication if the content is acceptable.

Refer to JHSSR's **Manuscript Format guide** at https://horizon-jhssr.com/online-submission.php

Editorial process

Authors are notified with an acknowledgement containing a *Manuscript ID* upon receipt of a manuscript, and upon the editorial decision regarding publication.

JHSSR follows a **double-blind peer-review** process. Authors are encouraged to suggest names of at least three potential reviewers at the time of submission of their manuscript to Horizon using the **Referral form**. The editors are not, however, bound by these suggestions.

The Journal's peer-review

In the peer-review process, three referees independently evaluate the scientific quality of the submitted manuscripts.

Peer reviewers are experts chosen by journal editors to provide written assessment of the **strengths** and **weaknesses** of written research, with the aim of improving the reporting of research and identifying the most appropriate and highest quality material for the journal.

The Review process

What happens to a manuscript once it is submitted to *Horizon*? Typically, there are seven steps to the editorial review process:

1. The Journal's chief executive editor and the editorial board examine the paper to determine whether it is appropriate for the journal and should be reviewed. If not appropriate, the manuscript is rejected outright and the author is informed. Linguistically hopeless manuscripts will be rejected straightaway (e.g., when the language is so poor that one cannot be sure of what the authors really mean).

2. The chief executive editor sends the article-identifying information having been removed, to three reviewers. Typically, one of these is from the Journal's editorial board. Others are external specialists in the subject matter represented by the article. The chief executive editor requests them to complete the review in three weeks.

   Comments to authors are about the appropriateness and adequacy of the theoretical or conceptual framework, literature review, method, results and discussion, and conclusions. Reviewers often include suggestions for strengthening of the manuscript. Comments to the editor are in the nature of the significance of the work and its potential contribution to the literature.

3. The chief executive editor, in consultation with the Editor-in-Chief, examines the reviews and decides whether to reject the manuscript, invite the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript, or seek additional reviews. Final acceptance or rejection rests with the Editor-in-Chief, who reserves the right to refuse any material for publication. In rare instances, the manuscript is accepted with almost no revision. Almost without exception, reviewers' comments (to the author) are forwarded to the author. If a revision is indicated, the editor provides guidelines for attending to the reviewers' suggestions and perhaps additional advice about revising the manuscript.

4. The authors decide whether and how to address the reviewers' comments and criticisms and the editor's concerns. The authors return a revised version of the paper to the chief executive editor along with specific information describing how they have answered' the concerns of the reviewers and the editor, usually in a tabular form. The author(s) may also submit a rebuttal if there is a need especially when the author disagrees with certain comments provided by reviewer(s).

5. The chief executive editor sends the revised paper out for re-review. Typically, at least one of the original reviewers will be asked to examine the article.

6. When the reviewers have completed their work, the chief executive editor in consultation with the editorial board and the Editor-in-Chief examine their comments and decide whether the paper is ready to be published, needs another round of revisions, or should be rejected.

7. If the decision is to accept, an acceptance letter is sent to all the author(s), the paper is sent to the Press. The article should appear in print in approximately three months.

The Publisher ensures that the paper adheres to the correct style (in-text citations, the reference list, and tables are typical areas of concern, clarity, and grammar). The authors are asked to respond to any minor queries by the Publisher. Following these corrections, page proofs are mailed to the corresponding authors for their final approval. At this point, **only essential changes are accepted**. Finally, the article appears in the pages of the Journal and is posted on-line.

SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

Owing to the volume of manuscripts we receive, we must insist that all submissions be made electronically using the **online submission system™**, a web-based portal. For more information, go to our web page and click "**Online Submission**".

Please do **not** submit manuscripts to the Editor-in-Chief or to any other office directly. All submissions or queries must be directed to the **Chief Executive Editor** via email to CEE.horizon@gmail.com

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Do not raise the bar unnecessarily by exaggerating requirements for successful publication, but rather encourage young researchers to try and experiment. Researchers can raise their ambition level through gained experience.

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FOREWORD

Editor's Foreword and Introduction to Vol. 5 (1) Jul. 2023

I would like to welcome you to *Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research's* **first issue of 2023**. JHSSR (eISSN 2682-9096) is a **peer-reviewed open access** and broad-scope scholarly journal that aims at bringing innovative research to both academics and practicing professionals. It is published rapidly by BP Services. Find out more here.

The journal is independently owned, and runs on a *not-for-profit* basis for the benefit of the world-wide social science community.

Service. Integrity. Excellence

Original articles of archival value covering research and development topics, which span all areas of humanities and social sciences, are published by this journal. In addition to new advances in traditional and more established areas of humanities and social sciences, we strive to include findings on both emerging and interdisciplinary issues.

This issue, Vol. 5(1) Jul. 2023, consists of *21 articles* including one invited article from our prestigious Editor-in-Chief, Dean Emeritus Professor Dr. Brij Mohan. In addition, the issue has three review, two opinion pieces, 14 research articles and a book review.

These articles are written by authors that come from *12 different countries*, such as *Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Singapore, Thailand, USA* and *Vietnam*.

This remarkable statistic of *varied geographical background* clearly shows that this journal is truly an international journal with diverse authorship as well as editorship. The articles in this issue span a wide range of topics, including issues of *Business and Finance, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Literature, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, Music, Personal Development and Empowerment, Pragmatics, Psychology, Religion, Sex Education, Sociology, Social Studies, Urban Studies and also interdisciplinary studies*.

The invited article sheds light on the increase of global inequality, authoritarianism, violence and terror, as manifestations of the new bourgeois class's evil profligacy. The author talks about post-industrial society and liberal democracies in countries such as the USA.

The systematic review article is significant because it examines sustainable entrepreneurship in the context of the FinTech industry involving Shariah and conventional compliance, thus forwarding the much-needed generalisable results in terms of sustainability entrepreneurship of firms in Malaysia. The article is expected

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to assist Islamic FinTech leaders in offering solutions to cater to the bottom 40 small and midsize enterprise's (B40 SMEs) access to better financial health opportunities and empower sustainable entrepreneurship. The reader will find it exciting and beneficial that the proposed next-generation model for B40 SMEs will shape and empower them as future enterprise sustainability leaders where Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/ Environment, Social, and Governance (ESGs) values shape them to contribute towards Malaysia's interest in a sustainable social and environmental development and shifting their economic levels from B40 to M40 income groups.

The next review article sheds light on the process of exchange and acculturation of ideological flows in literature culture as there is an inherent trend that contributes to the development and strengthening of cultural–ideological ties between Vietnam and other nations in the region. The article should be of interest to readers in the areas of literature and anthropology.

The final review article is significant because people have been interested to know about stars and the Universe since time immemorial. This article discusses cosmology as understood in science today. Therefore, it will be of interest to readers who want to know about Astronomy, Astrology and Cosmology. Additionally, it will be intriguing for Sikh scientists and theologians to see how much *Nanakian* Philosophy about the 15th century Cosmology is similar to the Cosmology of today.

The opinion piece on Heritage and Culture showcases vibrant *Patialavi* culture in the Indian state of Punjab. This culture is rich and traditional, has long been a part of people's everyday lives and has left a significant legacy for heritage and culture that has impacted the lives of many others in many different ways. Although *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti* and *Salwar* have become popular fashion trends, they have extensive and complex histories that explain their evolution and transformations.

The second opinion piece focuses on *Mulao* folk songs. Its significance lies in the inheritance and development of minority music culture in Southwest China. The author anticipates that through this study, more scholars and experts will pay attention to *Mulao* music and culture which predominantly exists in the Guangxi region of China.

The research article on 'Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh' contends that the COVID-19 has exacerbated, reinforced and perpetuated women's unpaid reproductive work burden. The authors hope that this new research will fill the knowledge gap and would also be beneficial for academics and researchers who are keen to further explore the field of women's vulnerability in the context of disease outbreak. The article fills in the void in existing research and contributes to the theory and practice of gendered impact of COVID-19. The article should be of interest to readers interested in the areas of gender, women, human rights, pandemic, violence against women and other related topics.

The next research article is significant as it intends to act as a resource in helping educate instructors to teach reading skills more effectively. This study provides promising guidelines and effective modern strategies that can be helpful in improving the reading classes drastically, and on the other hand, assist students in using the strategies for a more effective and reliable reading environment. The students can therefore use the recommended strategies to learn the texts and read and understand them deeply. Readers of this journal will find this study interesting as it offers some new and exciting strategies for teaching reading in a more fun and interesting way both for teachers and learners. Readers with an interest in the areas of education, language instruction, teaching and learning will find the material interesting.

The article on ‘Sustainable Business Practices and Value Creation’ is significant because it highlights the reason and challenges in practicing sustainable business strategy by ecotourism operators and small and medium enterprises in Sandakan, Malaysia. In view of the ongoing issues of palm oil sustainability between Europe and Malaysia, an overview of the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) Certification criteria is also discussed in this article. The strict standard in the MPSO Certification had provided credible sustainable management, ensuring that Malaysian palm oil will be able to compete in the global market. The article should be of interest to readers interested in the areas of sustainable practices in business and its potential for value creation through their business strategies and operation.

The focus of the next article is on a pilot study conducted in Oman in which the researchers investigated the relationship between students’ home environment and their proficiency in English. The authors believe that this is the first time that these variables are studied in the Omani context. The researchers selected three factors (educational background, socioeconomic background and technological background) and reviewed them against the students’ English language proficiency. The results revealed varied impacts of these factors.

The eleventh article discusses the need to empower, inspire and share the knowledge about choreography creation from the standpoint of a global societal concern. The article proves helpful in producing a choreography, ‘SOPAN’, which provides an ideology and approach in raising the rights and causes of women’s power in a community. It also touched upon the opposing view of women as sex symbol which can be seen from different aspects. Readers interested in performance studies, choreographers and cultural anthropology should find this work interesting.

The following article focuses on a study of toxic workplace environment, employees’ well-being and emotional intelligence. Employee well-being is a key issue of discussion in the workplace today. Various triggers may have a negative impact on employees and lower productivity, performance, and pleasure. A few strategic requirements are necessary for employee well-being at work. Readers interested in human resource management and well-being should find this article interesting.

The study in the next paper is conducted to identify biomedical students’ perceptions on the significance of online quizzes towards enhancing their understanding on the subject taught. This paper is significant because the findings from the survey conducted among Biomedical science students support the contention that online assessments have significant positive effects on learning. The paper should be of interest to readers who are involved in teaching and learning at colleges and universities. Publication of this article would encourage educators in the Biomedical science field to expand their assessment methods from purely traditional practical assessments to more advanced and interesting online methods.

The paper on “A Psychoanalytical Reading of Paul Auster’s *City of Glass*” is significant because of its novelty in a new sense of crafting identities in postmodern societies. The paper should be of interest to readers in the areas of sociology, linguistics, English literature.

This fifteenth paper on education demonstrates on using the “single-blind” group teaching experiment method by the students of Xinxiang Medical College in China whereby they use this method as experimental subjects to explore and reveal the inner relationship between the appearance of tennis forehand stroke and technical specifications, as well as the degree to which students master the technique of tennis forehand stroke. The paper should be of interest to readers in the areas of Education.

This paper on "Internet Education and Teaching" is significant because online education become a global phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students have started taking online lessons from home, leading many to believe that students' grades have declined. Since many people are concerned about the effects of online education, this paper studies the learning outcomes of online education students in Ningxia, China, using analytical software. The paper should be of interest to readers in the areas of Education and Economics.

The next paper is based on the flow theory where the researchers have summarised relevant researches on the flow experience of musical performance and summarise the four most important flow antecedents of musical performance: affection, challenge-skill balance, confidence, and clear goals. The authors also designed a flow-facilitating procedure showcasing that a flow antecedents of musical performance can facilitate a more intense flow experience for students. The paper should be of interest to readers in the areas of music psychology and music pedagogy.

The paper on "Internal and external integrated teaching mode in University's public physical education curriculum of China" is important because the research content of this project is based upon an experimental study conducted on the combination of the teaching model and the table tennis elective course.

This nineteenth paper is significant because during the Chinese epidemic in the face of new network teaching mode, which type of teaching application is adopted that brought about historic transformation to music education. The paper should be of interest to readers in the areas of "online teaching music education".

The last research paper in this issue is interesting as it discusses the perspective of course content on an experimental study conducted on the combination of the teaching model and the Tai Chi elective course.

We conclude this issue with a book-review on a very interesting book titled "Fake News & Fact-Checking", a simplified edition by Renu Nauriyal. This book provides a vital understanding of the threat of fake news to democracies worldwide and has been designed especially for first-generation English learners.

I believe this issue would be intriguing, thought-provoking and useful in reaching new milestones. I would be grateful if you recommend the journal to your peers and students to make this endeavour more meaningful.

I am glad to share with you that as of now JHSSR has surpassed a total of about **1,100 articles from across the globe** for intended publication in JHSSR, of which only 200 got accepted and published. Which also means an *acceptance rate of only about 18%*. The reasons for this high rejection rate are mainly the manuscript failing the technical screening, manuscript not falling within the journal's scope, weak hypothesis, poor methodology, and high similarity index.

Our Quality

All the papers except the book-review published in this edition underwent a rigorous yet relatively rapid **double-blind peer-review process** involving a minimum of three reviewers comprising internal as well as external referees, which translates to benefits such as timeliness of publication, widespread dissemination, high visibility, and likelihood of high citations and broader impacts. This was also to ensure that the quality of the papers justified the high ranking of the journal, which hopes to be one at par with one of the renowned and heavily-cited journals not only by authors and researchers in Malaysia and America but by those in other countries around the world as well.

While I hope this issue will have particular appeal to new readers across this region and beyond, I am confident that the articles published will raise interest among our regular readership of scholars and postgraduate students elsewhere, thanks to the relevance and diversity of contributions on a region whose future bears central importance to us all.

I would also like to express gratitude to all the contributing authors for their trust, patience, and timely revisions, who have made this issue possible, as well as the reviewers and editors for their professional contribution. Last but not least, the assistance of the journal's editorial office in Texas, particularly Jessica Whitsitt, Lucy Fernandez, and Judy Meester—my adorable assistants, is greatly appreciated.

The Editorial Board of JHSSR welcomes your contributions and looks forward to many years of fruitful research to come. We continue to welcome submissions in all fields of humanities and social sciences. Horizon JHSSR is currently accepting manuscripts for its **second 2023 issue** based on original qualitative or quantitative research that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation. Empirical articles should demonstrate high rigor and quality. Original research collects and analyses data in systematic ways to present important new research that adds to and advances the debates within the journal's fields. The editors hope that the authors publishing in this journal can support the noble cause of JHSSR in reaching its goals.

Let me conclude by saying that with the publication of this issue, we are now almost completing five years of continuous and successful scholarly publication of Horizon JHSSR. Changing publishing norms and expectations have given rise to a new wave of publishing standards that we'll be riding into 2024 soon and beyond. I am confident that the upcoming year will bring yet another challenging year of emerging scholarly articles.

Only time will tell what the next decade has in store, but one thing for sure is we will likely see greater innovation in all areas of scholarly publishing. If you are observing other scholarly publishing trends, please do share your thoughts with the Chief Executive Editor!

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Perils of Decadence

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ABSTRACT

Post-industrial society and liberal democracies are plagued by their own contradictions and conflicts. Cultural decadence is not confined to developing nations. Rise of global inequality, authoritarianism, violence, and terror mark the evil profligacy of the new bourgeois class. A brief requiem for liberalism and democracy seems in order.

Keywords: New Leviathan; Mayhem and Gun Violence; Global Inequality; Freedom and Oppression

Tumbling into January 2023 has not been easy. Americans have hardly overcome the horrors of last January's insurrection and mob violence on the Capitol. A six-year-old boy shot his first-grade teacher in Newport News, Virginia (January 6, 2023). A year ago, the 45th President of the United States assumed an impresario role to unleash a violent attack on the Capitol (January 6, 2022). These two actors of chaos represent an unmitigated crisis of 'human' and 'social' development which impacts life, liberty, and freedom. A *New Leviathan* has replaced Thomas Hobbes' old *Leviathan.* Robert Ross writes:

> "The characteristic terror of the Old Leviathan was the police power of the state. The characteristic terror of the New Leviathan is unemployment, wage cuts, the fear that family or community's aspirations for environmental or economic improvement may cause the agents of the New Leviathan to take their investments to some other place where working people are more vulnerable to the demands of their employers." (1990: 3 quoted by Renton, 2001: 7)

The evolution of this new monster represents the failure of both society and culture, men and women, rulers and the ruled. Children, workers, and employees are increasingly vulnerable to stunted developmental processes which dehumanize the innocent and nourish the predator. The visible indices of techno-advancements and consumerism disguise this predatory process at the expense of social progress which is muffled and thwarted by lack of civility in modern society.

The atavistic character of the *New Leviathan* is markedly different than what Robert Ross had diagnosed. The macro-transformation of humans is a function and indicator of a failed society governed by dysfunctional institutions. A six-year-old kid shoots his teacher; a President of the world's most advanced democracy unleashed the reins of terror at the altar of his narcissistic ego and insatiable lust for power and greed.

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Global humanity is still going through a pandemic which has killed more than a million people in the world. There is a subtle paradigm shift in human experience and societal governance. I make a modest attempt to unravel both paradox and paralysis of modern society. Insurrections have occurred in history. This one unleashed by white supremacists under the leadership of Donald Trump was quite different.

Digital, information revolution ironically facilitated a climate of falsehood and conspiracy theories. Denial of reality—rejecting outcome of a national election—became the new normal which legitimized both criminality and bigotry in the world's most advanced democracy. Covid 19, its variants in their 4th year of global threats, further empower the state's power to misgovern populace. A recent National Report reveals 330% rise of hate and violence against Asian Americans during 2021 and 2022[2].

A disturbing clue to the prejudiced minds which generate carnage and mayhem is a convenient belief that Chinese people caused Covid 19). The *New Leviathan* is a wolf child of misplaced anger, resentment, and myopic perspective on human life and happiness.

The issues and aspects analyzed here embody the soul and soullessness of forces that perpetrate against humanity. The rise capitalist prosperity at the expense of massive deprivation and alienation of the common man is a disturbing reality. This *paradoxical development* is more than dysfunctional: It's rooted in poisonous systemic barriers against consciousness; it nurtures a delusional death- wish; and it retards progress. Rampant political violence, endemic economic inequality, and pervasive social injustice are faces of this phenomenon.

Tara Zahra, in her new book *Against the World* (2022) writes about Trumpian times followed by a myriad of things—from Pandemic to Ukraine—that challenge global comity. New barriers tend to deglobalize social movement, international trade and interactions that made a widely diverse world 'smaller.' The utopian dream of a borderless world has morphed into a Hobbesian dystopia which has gated communities, national walls, and cultural barricades which define new caste systems inclusive of racial hierarchies and class structures.

Graeme Wood contends, "The mayhem is not about you" On the Chinese Lunar Year of the Rabbit, January 21, 2023, Huu Can Tran, a 72-year-old shot and killed 11 people in a Dancing Hall in Monterey Park, California. On the heels of this mayhem, two days later 66-year-old Chunli Zhao shot 7 people dead in Half Moon Bay near San Francisco, California. The "motiveless malignity" of these shootings--noting the place, age and ethnicity of both victims and killers--calls for introspective reckoning to mitigate this unrecognized insanity of our culture. Alienation of the aged in one's own community fraught with generational hiatus muffles intra-familial-communal communications which warrants analysis before branding this malignity as a mental health issue.

Social Sciences muddled through dualism of objective and subjective tracks narrowly simplifying mitigating conditions. Racism, sexism, ageism and discrimination against LGBT groups usually define contours of the human condition. The invincibility of corporate power, what I call 'corporate despotism,' is the most oppressive force that bedevils humanity. Public policy, new bourgeoise, and mental health industry reinforces this profligacy which retards progress.

What makes people to kill each other? Is it "war of all against each other"? Or something structurally ingrained in the environment that transforms the 'social animal' into a 'feral beast'? Conceptions of human telos and nature interact with each other depending on one's ideological predilection. The net result is profligacy and evil thrive at the expense of tranquility, progress, and hope.

Politics, ethics, and *power* have often been in the minds of great thinkers: Aristotle, Descartes, Rousseau, Kant, Nietzsche, and Marx have significantly shaped Western philosophy in the classic and modern traditions. The contemporary galaxy of philosophers often follow various strands that follow premodern and modern thoughts.

Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* emphasized the final 'purpose' (end; function; nature) of humans which determines *ethics.* 'Virtue' and 'excellence' are seen within a *cosmos* as human reality. Rousseau, Descartes, Kant, and Nietzsche may be called revolutionary modernists who signify the essence of human experience as the primary focus of universal existence. The trajectory of individualism, liberalism, socialism, and totalitarianism springs from this evolutionary passage.

In contemporary cultures worldwide, we encounter a mix of these trends that determine liberal and autocratic

[2] "Two Years and Thousands of Voices What Community-Generated Data Tells Us About Anti-AAPI Hate"; https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Year-2-Report.pdf; retrieved January 22, 2023

forms of democratic and republican structures. There is no purity in these systems of governance. Fragility of American democracy is best demonstrated by Donald Trump's diabolical role in his attempt to destroy world's oldest constitutional democracy. People in power—Narendra Modi, V. Putin, Xi Jinping etcetera—tend to weaponize their own agendas than serve public interest. Majoritarian support and authoritarian clout devoid of *ethics* do not legitimize power. Perhaps Kantian 'moral' imperative is essential to understand this immoral world.

"I think, therefore I am" (*Descartes)*. "There are no facts, all interpretations" (*Nietzsche*). "The history of all hitherto society is the history of class struggle" (*Marx*). "Existence precedes essence" (*Sartre*). These are a few iconic gems in the transformative history of thought. Rousseau was perhaps the first thinker who defined "social". This was a threshold, a dawn, a primordial *paradigm shift* in the entire history of social and political thought that challenged the age-old classic orthodoxies. When Mohandas K. Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see in this world," he challenged the modern civilization to assume responsibility for its own actions. Much of cultural morass today is an outcome of this counter-praxis manifested by populist liberalism, hideous individualism, and predatory capitalism. Socialism has already devoured its own children. Look at Russia and China. Classic, premodern thought—unifying telos and nature—have been wrong. Patrick Deneen has a point: Progressive liberalism accepts telos, but it's not in nature:

> "To realize this potential, human beings need to be freed, not as economic animals, but as social animals. We need to be freed from constraints in the social sphere, the kind of informal constraints that limit our ability to become the creatures that we can become through this development" (2023: 25)

The dialectic of freedom and oppression offers a developmentally optimistic view of the human condition. Much of my oeuvre is inspired by and dedicated to this idea (Mohan, 1986; 1993; 2022).

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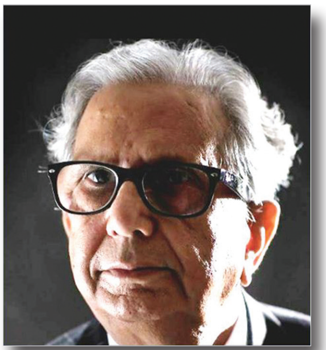

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SYSTMATIC REVIEW
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Sustainable Entrepreneurship Model in Islamic Fintech: *A Systematic Literature Review*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to review the literature on selected social enterprises that offer a business model based on Islamic financial technology. The systematic literature review is conducted based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) checklist. Limited studies were found, and some potential gaps were examined among the Fintech social enterprises which offer Islamic business model perspectives. Significant impact on the performances due to the COVID-19 crisis contributed to the limitation agenda on the social enterprises to build its successful offerings. Database of the WOS and Scopus was used to collect results on the systematic literature review, which was done using several keywords. Articles and review papers were selected based on the year of publication (2018-2022) and those with high-ranking English journals. The results of this review are four themes of the social enterprise with Islamic Fintech and their focus on sustainable entrepreneurship that correspond to the issues of society, environment, economics, and finance. This paper concluded that limited empirical evidence associating Islamic Fintech offerings from social enterprises and sustainable entrepreneurship in the Malaysian setting. This paper recommended that future research may explore an Islamic unique element that will explain Fintech leadership with sustainable entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Islamic Financial Technology, Islamic Fintech, Sustainability, Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Malaysia

1 Introduction

1.1 Islamic financial technology

Global crisis has raised greater public awareness of the impacts of business on societies at large. Based on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG), legitimate stakeholders, governments and societies are increasingly urging businesses to be economically, socially, and environmentally responsible (Kassem & Trenz, 2020). The term "sustainable entrepreneurship," as set in this paper, refers to the intersection of sustainable development and entrepreneurship. It does emphasize the concept of need, especially the essential needs that should be given to the world's poor. Social enterprises had to deal with this nature of limitations of ideas due to the new technology that emerged and the extent to which it can bring about a capability to solve various solution offerings to meet the present and future needs of the market.

Fintech social enterprises, as human-centered society are facing issues finding the right balance between generating revenue and achieving their social mission (Rabbani, Ali, Rahiman, Zulfikar, & Naseem, 2021; Nakayama, 2019). Limited studies were found, and some potential gaps were examined among the Fintech social enterprises which offer sustainable Islamic

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business model perspectives. Significant impact on the performances due to the COVID-19 crisis contributed to the limitation agenda on the social enterprises to build its successful Islamic Financial Technology offerings (Syed, Khan, Rabbani and Thalassinos, 2020).

The terms Islamic Financial Technology and i-Fintech are used interchangeably to indicate Shariah-compliant practices using financial technology. According to Dawood, Al Zadjali, Al Rawahi, Karim, and Hazik (2022), i-Fintech offerings using emerging technology can bring potential values in the delivery of an artificial intelligence-driven and blockchain-based Islamic capital market, brilliant Islamic asset and wealth management, digitalizing supply chain management, and modernizing fara'id, waqf and zakat processes, and transaction. Rabbani, Ali, et al. (2021) further claimed that i-Fintech might shape social enterprises to offer sustainable entrepreneurship as the crisis of COVID-19 has shifted the use of online platforms, which contributed to an increase in Islamic finance economic growth. The economic growth in Islamic finance is expected to offer some $4.7 trillion, while in 2024, the assets will be growing to approximately $3,472 billion (Rabbani, Bashar, Nawaz, Karim, Ali, Rahiman, & Alam, 2021).

From the contemporary perspective, there are two modes of business models in Fintech perspectives. According to Lee and Shin (2018) and Imerman and Fabozzi (2020), the two modes of the Fintech business model are shaped vertically and horizontally. This is further supported by Dawood et al., (2022), who claimed that the financial offerings might be in the form of how technology shapes the sharing in digital economies. Thus, it offers online transactions involving payments, wealth management, crowdfunding, lending insurance, capital market, digital banking, and property (Dawood et al., 2022). Meanwhile, the horizontal type is based on functional areas and emerging technologies such as functional and technology types (Imerman & Fabozzi, 2020). The functional sub-type includes aspects of regulations in dealing with financial processes, risk management, funding, and valuation. By contrast, the technology sub-type includes blockchain or distributed ledger technology (DLT), Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cybersecurity, biometrics, open application programming interfaces (APIs), cloud computing, quantum computing, virtual or augmented reality and automation or robotics. Table 1 depicts the Fintech business model as mentioned.

In pursuing these offerings, social enterprises are encountering several challenges besides aiming to offer social values in their financial technology services. Based on Lee and Shin (2018), the challenges in vertical Fintech are investment management, customer management, regulation, technology integration, security and privacy, and risk management. The impact of COVID-19 also shows a great challenge on the vertical and horizontal–functional types (Dawood et al., 2022) such as the impact of big data (Li & Xu, 2021). Despite the challenges, there are many essential roles played by i-Fintech for sustainable development in the country.

The paper is aimed to examine the literature review on the emerging studies associating i-Fintech pursuit among social enterprises with sustainable entrepreneurship between 2018 and 2022. The time period of 2018-2022 is recent and particularly important when studying rapidly evolving fields such as i-Fintech. The method is done using a systematic literature review (SLR), and it is analyzed within the empirical studies published under WoS and Scopus databases. The SLR analysis also aims to offer a specific theme for sustainable entrepreneurship among social enterprises with the i-Fintech perspectives. It is hoped this paper can shed a new perspective on Islamic values to explore potential gaps and emerging findings.

2 Methodology

2.1 Systematic Literature Review

A systematic literature review is conducted by analyzing relevant papers to identify associated factors that appear

Table 1. A Fintech Business Model based on Dawood et al. (2022)

Horizontal →	**Functional**	**Technological**
	Regulation Funding Risk Valuation	Blockchain (DLT)/Smart Contract/ Cryptocurrency IoT AI Big Data Cybersecurity Biometrics Open Source/APIs Cloud Computing Quantum Computing VR/AR Automation/Robotics
Vertical ↓	Payment Lending Crowdfunding Wealth Management Digital Banking Insurance Property Capital Market	

to be relevant among i-Fintech social enterprise that pursue sustainable entrepreneurship. The comprehensive protocol as set in this paper helps the researchers to specify the criteria for the data search, such as choosing reliable sources of databases, identifying search strings, determining the inclusion or exclusion criteria, deciding quality standards, and so on (Pittaway, Holt & Broad, 2014).

Database source. The relevance of databases is the primary source of publication metadata and bibliometric indicators. Selecting an appropriate data source is crucial to determining the reliability of the study. The two primary bibliographic databases that are frequently used are Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus (Pranckute, 2021). The requirement for a database to do a systematic literature review should be more than one (Bramer et al., 2017). Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus were reviewed by Li, Rollins, and Yan (2018) as "the world's leading scientific citation search, instruments, and analytical information platform which has frequently been used in systematic reviews across knowledge." Thus, this paper uses Web of Science and Scopus Elsevier as the study's primary data sources, as these databases are the two world's most comprehensive, prestigious, and competitive citation databases (Zhu & Liu, 2020; Aghaei et al., 2013).

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA). This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) will be guided by the review protocol of "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA). PRISMA was first released in 2009, which includes revised reporting criteria that reflect changes in how to identify, select, assess, and summarise studies. It is a tool that helps researchers communicate their literature reviews and meta-analyses more effectively (Moher et al., 2009). As shown in Figure 1, the systematic literature review for this paper included ways to find data sources, study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions, as well as methods for putting together information from different studies, such as network meta-analysis.

Identification of Article Sample Heading. During the identification process, researchers expand basic keywords. The database could obtain more relevant articles when researchers utilize more keywords. Several basic concepts must be established before selecting effective keywords (Mohamed Shaffril, Samsuddin, & Abu Samah, 2021). The identification process begins with identifying keywords or phrases with precisely or nearly the same meaning (synonym) and related terms and includes all word variations. The sources of keyword searching are based on previous related articles' keywords, keywords proposed by the database, online treasures of synonym words, and keyword suggestions by experts (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021). Therefore, the advanced search string keywords are:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Islamic financial technology" OR "Islamic Fintech") AND ("sustainability" OR "sustainable" OR "sustainable entrepreneurship").

The number of articles found by using the advanced search above is 34 articles in WoS and 79 articles in Scopus. The exact search string was added with 'wild card' and limitation or filter of exclusion and inclusion criteria as in Table 2 checklist to ensure that all items in PRISMA are included (Zorzela et al, 2016). The filter search string includes a limit to final and article document types that are published in the subject area of business, social science, and economics.

Screening Extraction and Eligibility. Proceeding process after article identification, the careful screening is adopted to identify the duplicated article. During this process, 47 duplicated articles were excluded. The second stage was title screening, 3 articles were not retrieved because this article was not related to the Islamic Fintech study. The third stage was eligibility, whereby 62 full articles were accessed. After careful examination, a total of 23 articles were excluded due to access to the full article problem and the abstract did not relate to the research objective. The exclusion reason is also due to the non-focus on the output of Islamic Fintech for sustainable entrepreneurship.

The final stage of the review indicated a total of 39 articles were used for the final analysis. As shown in Figure 1, the review process is done through identification, screening, eligibility, and included

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Year	2018 - 2022	Any previous year of 2018
Language	English	Any other language
Document types	Final journal article	Book, book chapter, etc.
Sector	Islamic Fintech	Any study which does not include consideration of Islamic Fintech
Journal types	Business management, economics and social science journal	Other than business management, economics and social science journal

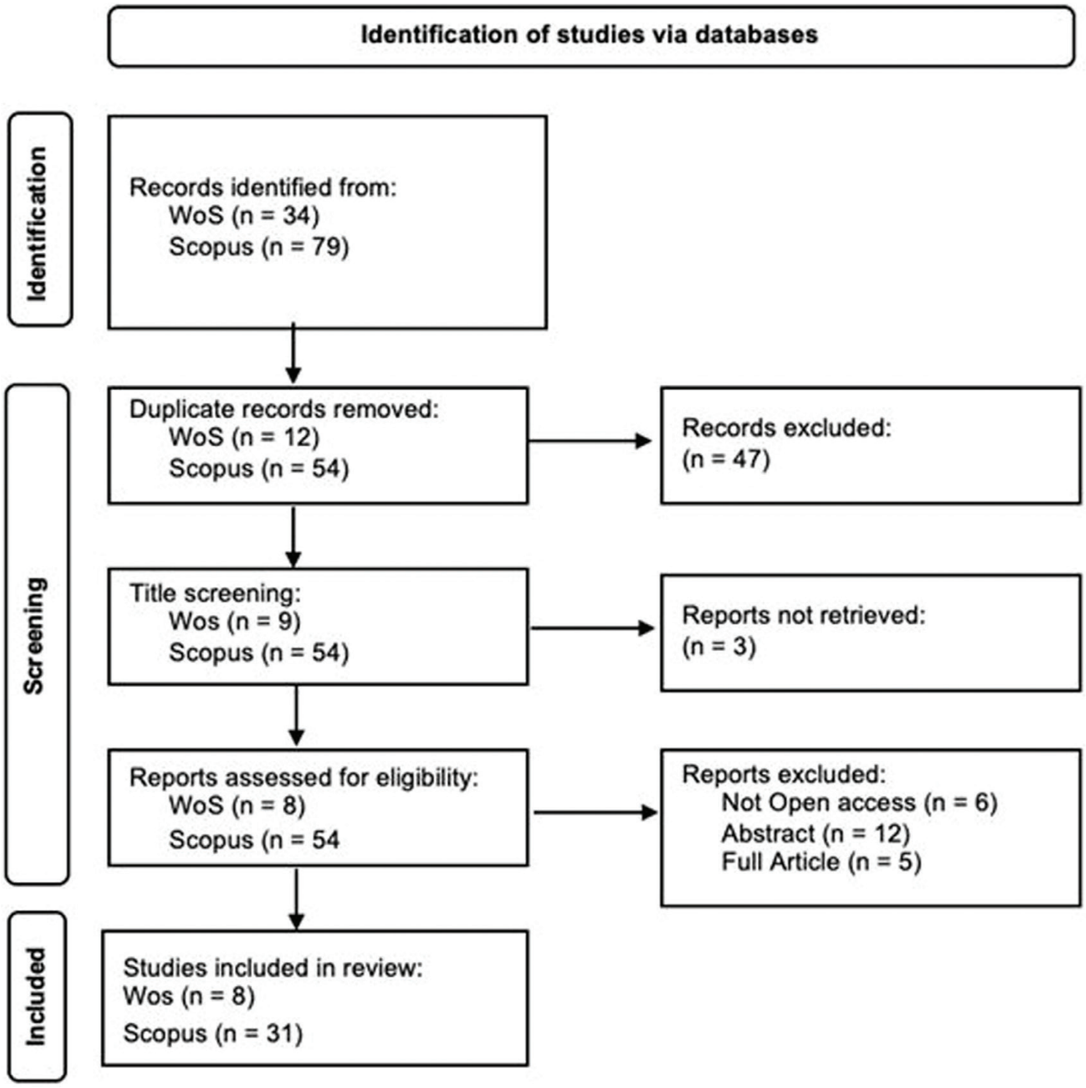

Figure 1. A PRISMA Flow Diagram for Systematic Review based on Page et al., (2021)

stages (Moher et al., 2009). 39 articles were included in the review for a comprehensive synthesis of academic literature on Islamic Fintech for sustainable entrepreneurship will be conducted using Kraus et al., (2020) and Mohamed Shaffril et al., (2021) systematic review approach.

Data Abstraction and Analysis

The articles were then evaluated and analyzed accordingly. Specific studies were carefully examined so as to understand the interest and factors associated to it. The researchers plan to design appropriate themes and reviews were conducted from the full articles. Consequently, the Atlas.ti version 9.0 was used to analyze the content qualitatively. This is done in order to produce the categorization of the themes associated with Islamic Fintech and sustainable entrepreneurship. According to Hsieh & Shannon (2005), the aspect of qualitative analysis is focused on the content where the interpretation of the text data is derived from the content and is done through a systematic process of classifying. As such, this process involved activities like coding and developing themes and patterns that emerged from the content analysis.

3 Review and Discussions

3.1 PRISMA identification

A total of 39 articles and review papers were extracted during the process of PRISMA identification. At this stage, all the criteria as set in the systematic literature review were met. Figure 2 illustrates a varying number of publications that exist from 2018 to 2022.

Scholars have debated and argued on the rise of the social enterprise offerings of i-Fintech and sustainable entrepreneurship. This is evidence as illustrated in Table 3. Emerging field sustainable entrepreneurship was derived from the finance, economic and social journal, including

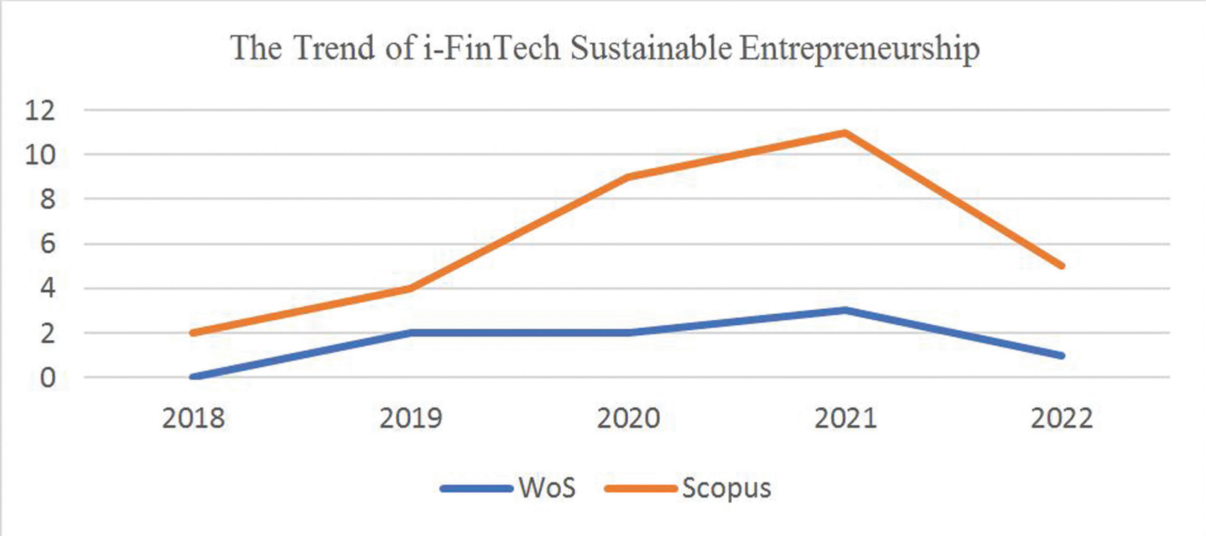

Figure 2. The Trend of i-Fintech Sustainable Entrepreneurship Article in Scopus and WoS Database

Table 3. Journal Name and Number of Papers

Journal Name	Papers
Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities	1
International Journal of Economics and Business Administration	1
Al-Shajarah 2019 (Special Issue Islamic Banking and Finance 2019)	1
European Business Law Review	1
Heliyon	1
Technological Forecasting and Social Change	1
Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research	1
Journal of Information Technology Management	1
Studies in Computational Intelligence	1
Foresight	1
Cogent Economics and Finance	1
International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research	1
Journal of Economic Cooperation and Development	1
International Journal of Business and Systems Research	1
Pacific Accounting Review	1
Journal of Islamic Marketing	1
Institutions and Economies	1
International Journal of Social Economics	1
International Journal of Law and Management	1
Journal Of Risk and Financial Management	1
Geografia-Malaysian Journal of Society & Space	1
Journal of Financial Economic Policy	1
3C TIC	1
Turkish Journal of Islamic Economics-Tujise	1
Journal of Entrepreneurship	1
Journal of Asian Finance Economics and Business	1
Annals of Operations Research	1
Total	**39**

the International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management (6 articles), Qualitative Research in Financial Markets (4 articles), and Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity (2 articles), with the highest concentration of papers. Excluding the case of these three journals, papers on i-Fintech and sustainable entrepreneurship were found to be published in another field of study. Furthermore, these journals were identified as coming from different of backgrounds and disciplines as illustrated in Table 3.

It was further found that there are numerous citations associated with the term performance as an indicator. This emerges in the field of research policy and systems. It is also beneficial to understand that the citation count is critical as it implies explaining the quality of the research. Listed below in Table 4 are the most citations among 39 articles from Scopus and WoS. The highest cited article is by Syed, Khan, Rabbani and Thalassinos (2020), with 36 citations.

Theories in the Study. One of the significant factors of theories is that they encompass both technical and social contexts within the phenomena under study. The use of socio-technical theory to underpin a study could be viewed as the core of research (Mkhomazi & Iyamu, 2013). A theory that underpins a study is featured as; (1) to help exhume the dependence and relationships which exist among actors within the environment, (2) provides guidance for empirical data interpretations which were gathered over time and within context, (3) creates awareness of social events, processes, and activities which takes place in the development, implementation and practice of information technology and systems, (4)

Table 4. Most Cited Articles

Title	Authors / Year	Citations
An artificial intelligence and NLP based Islamic Fintech model combining zakat and Qardh-Al-Hasan for countering the adverse impact of COVID 19 on SMEs and individuals	Syed, Khan, Rabbani & Thalassinos (2020)	36
Challenges for the Islamic finance and banking in post COVID era and the role of Fintech	Hassan, Rabbani, Mohd & Ali (2020)	34
Exploring the role of Islamic Fintech in combating the aftershocks of covid-19: The open social innovation of the Islamic financial system	Rabbani, Bashar, Nawaz, Rahiman & Alam (2021)	19
How does Islamic Fintech promote the SDGs? Qualitative evidence from Indonesia	Hudaefi (2020)	19
The response of Islamic financial service to the covid-19 pandemic: The open social innovation of the financial system	Rabbani, Ali, Rahiman, Zulfikar & Naseem (2021)	17
Intellectual capital efficiency and bank's performance: A comparative study after the global financial crisis	Buallay, Cummings & Hamdan (2019)	16
Does Big Data Analytics Enhance Sustainability and Financial Performance? The Case of ASEAN Banks	Ali, Salman & Abdullah (2020)	15
The role of banking regulation in the development of Islamic banking financing in Indonesia	Nastiti & Kasri (2019)	10
Developing Islamic crowdfunding website platform for startup companies in Indonesia	Hendratmi, Ryandono & Sukmaningrum (2020)	

Table 5. Theories Used in the SLR articles

Articles	Number of Studies
Technological Acceptance Model (TAM)	3
Resource-Based View (RBV)	2
Resource-Based Theory (RBT)	2
Innovation Theories	1
Modified Value-Added Intellectual Coefficient (MVAIC) Model	1
Theory of Dynamic Capability	1
Financial Management Theory	1
Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)	1
Systems Theory	1
The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing	1
The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT)	1
Transaction Cost Innovation Theory	1

reduces the gap of assumptions and prediction of actions within a context.

The review analysis resulted in various theory used in the literature that suits their objective and analysis which are the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM), Resource-Based View (RBV), Resource-Based Theory (RBT) and etc. The Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) has become dominant within the field of Islamic finance such as i-Fintech to examine the behaviour and intention of people in the use of new technology (Davis, 1989). The most significant theory that was employed by research was the Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) as shown in Table 5. However, half of the articles reviewed did not mention on underpinning theory that has been used.

Analysis of i-Fintech Sustainable Entrepreneurship. As the Atlas.ti version 9.0 software suggests, the researchers set to use the occurrence of keywords and it was set in the analysis. Notably, there are several interesting results emerged from keywords associated with financial, social, economic, and environmental. Several keyword occurrence analyses detail the term “social” as being repeated 10 times, while “economic” was repeated 10 times; and “environmental” was repeated 6 times. This analysis was gathered in the word cloud as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Word Cloud Analysis

Based on content analysis, this paper categorizes the results that emerged from the review into three themes; 35 economic (including the financial), 17 social, and 4 environmental. Those themes have been recognized as the major independent variables that contributed to the rapid and stable growth of Islamic Fintech. According to Dana (2021), sustainable development exists in order to maintain intragenerational equity while also developing intergenerational equity and recognizing the interdependence of the environment and social, and economic performance. Some of the fostering factors of i-Fintech and its associations with sustainable entrepreneurship are summarized in Table 6.

Economic. There appear to be significant and positive implications associated with Islamic Finance and the application of financial technology services in recent empirical research. According to Glavina, Aidrus and Trusova (2021), Fintech could combat the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is further supported by Rabbani, Bashar, Nawaz, Rahiman, and Alam (2021), who claimed that Fintech could reach out and respond to market needs with its capacity in speed, timely, reliability, and sustainable solutions. The digital financial inclusion that i-Fintech has brought aims to encourage inclusive economic growth that can keep the financial sector sustainable (Banna, Hassan, Ahmad & Alam, 2022). While Wang, Sadiq, Khan, and Wang (2021) argued that there appears to be some potential income being generated from the revenue, which also affects the cost of the operation site. The scholars also claimed that there is an increasing number of investments being made to ensure infrastructure is physically and technologically viable. Moreover, i-Fintech engages in genuine sales and investments, away from the standard 'hiyal', which are backdoors to money creation (Altwijry, Mohammed, Hassan & Selim, 2021).

According to Rabbani, Ali, Rahiman, Zulfikar and Naseem (2021), there are elements of social values where some social enterprises portray their wealth creation as a business that is doing good and well at the same time. At this juncture, Rabbani, et al., (2021) argued that inclusion value defines the stability and sustainable pursuit of Islamic finance social enterprises. For example, zakat collection and disbursement using financial technology can be treated as a mechanism of trust and transparency and in line with the work of Mohd Nor, Abdul-Majid, and Esrati (2021), where i-Fintech such as blockchain through zakat management provides an efficient service. It may not only improve the social enterprise offerings themselves but support the trust and social capital between the authorities and the citizens who live in marginalized communities. Interestingly, the concept of Mudarabah, or a term that is associated with a partnership where the partnership is established between entrepreneur and investor, and the concept of Murabahah, which transacts activities based on cost-plus and contracted venture are examples of the common types of Sukuk that appear to be increasingly popular service offerings in Islamic Fintech.

Selim (2020) believed that Fintech assists several Islamic banks in penetrating the market share. Ultimately, the services offered by Islamic bank is shifted towards automation. Islamic bank has become automated, forward-thinking planning for their local and global financial offerings, and innovation-led expertise are employed to assist the strategy for market performance. This perspective was in line with the study of Buallay, Cummings, and Hamdan (2019), who claimed that

Table 6. Fostering Factors of i-Fintech Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Economic	Social	Environmental
Glavina, Aidrus & Trusova (2021)	Aderemi & Ishak (2022)	Malik (2018)
Al Shehab & Hamdan (2021)	Rabbani et al. (2020)	Khattak et al. (2021)
Rabbani, Bashar, Nawaz, Rahiman & Alam (2021a)	Hassan et al. (2020)	Ali et al. (2020)
Banna, Hassan, Ahmad & Alam (2022)	Mohd Nor et al. (2021)	Reza-Gharehbagh, Arisian, Hafezalkotob & Makui (2022)
Wang, Sadiq, Khan & Wang (2021)	Glavina et al. (2021)	
Altwijry, Mohammed, Hassan & Selim (2021)	Nor & Hashim (2020)	
Rabbani, Ali, Rahiman, Zulfikar & Naseem (2021b)	Rabbani et al. (2021)	
Selim (2020)	Selim (2020)	
Buallay, Cummings & Hamdan (2019)	Syed, Khan, Rabbani & Thalassinos (2020)	
Nastiti & Kasri (2019)	Ascarya (2022)	
Sa'ad, Ahmad & Saleh (2019)	Dahdal et al. (2022)	
Aderemi & Ishak (2022)	Rohman, Fianto, Ali Shah, Suprayogi & Supriani (2021)	
Dahdal, Truby & Ismailo (2022)	Al Shehab & Hamdan (2021)	
Baber (2020a, 2020b)	Ascarya & Sakti (2022)	
Rabbani & Khan (2020)	Hudaefi (2020)	
Rabbani et al. (2020)	Abdullahi & Othman (2021)	
Hassan, Rabbani, and Mohd Ali (2020)	Sa'ad et al. (2019)	
Mohd Nor, Abdul-Majid & Esrati (2021)		
Hendratmi, Ryandono & Sukmaningrum (2020)		
Razak, Dali, Dhillon, & Manaf (2020)		
Oseni, Adewale & Omoola (2018)		
Siswanti & Sukoharsono (2019)		
Alaeddin, Dakash & Azrak (2021)		
Shaikh (2020)		
Chong (2021)		
Othman, Alhabshi, Kassim & Sharofiddin (2020)		
Bulatova, Potapova, and Yandiev (2019)		
Abdullahi & Othman (2021)		
Ali, Salman & Abdullah (2020)		
Nor & Hashim (2020)		
Ascarya (2022)		
Hudaefi (2020)		
Abdullahi & Othman (2021)		
Malik (2018)		
Khattak, Anwar & Clauss (2021)		

Islamic banks aimed for growth in their financial (ROE) and market performance (TQ) outcomes. Nevertheless, the aim of setting this goal could not be delivered in a period of short time (Nastiti & Kasri, 2019). Economically, Sa'ad, Ahmad and Saleh (2019) found that i-Fintech is also concerned about investing in technology and has put several efforts into reducing costs, transactional risks and lowering overheads, restoring resources, minimizing time and effort. Sa'ad, et al., (2019) argued that Islamic banks strive for a competitive advantage over their larger conventional counterparts

Based on Aderemi and Ishak (2022), Fintech mechanisms such as blockchain technology could employ data in an innovative way. The process of exploiting the data offer some potential elements to transform the way due diligence will be viewed, along with the way how the project will be monitored. As a moral agent, the use of blockchain technology can shape particular economic sectors such as financing the less-fortunate and poor communities. With the growth of the cloud, blockchain technology may assist the process of financing micro and small enterprises and spotting important trends, and predicting their financial needs.

Similarly, blockchain technology may offer the potential to improve the economic processes and upholds the values of trust, honesty, and transparency in specific economic issues such as alleviating poverty program monitoring for the 'asnaf' communities and the less-fortunate segment of societies. One of the components in the system will identify levels of traceability and enable trust in impersonal economic transactions across this nature of socio-economic societies.

Dahdal, Truby, and Ismailo (2022) were also on the same view as the work of Aderemi and Ishak (2022), where Fintech has the potential to offer both enrich and improve economic processes and management systems as compared to conventional offerings. Issues in transacting specific Shariah-compliant based offerings as in the processing of fara'id, administering of waqf, and collecting and disbursing of zakat can be overcome. Shariah compliance and its assessment process will become much leaner and less cumbersome. Blockchain technology capabilities are able to verify and identify associated issuing partners or stakeholders in the transaction processes.

According to Al Shehab and Hamdan (2021), the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in i-Fintech promotes greater security and privacy in addressing the administration processes of its service offerings. In the work of Baber (2020a, 2020b), it was confirmed that payments, advisory, and compliance services of the i-Fintech have an impact on the retention of customers. Chong (2021) confirmed that it also provides an optimal customer experience, cost cutting, operational efficiency, transparency, consistency, fairness, and equitable service across various customer groups. Further, Rabbani and Khan (2020) reviewed that Fintech is a sustainable (agile, competitive, and flexible) catalyst that must be adopted by Islamic finance services such as banks.

An i-Fintech is able to create a cashless post for the benefit of the COVID-19 society, as coined by Rabbani et al., (2020), which supports social distancing the most. According to Hassan, Rabbani, and Mohd Ali (2020), i-Fintech provides a short-term advantage in terms of emergency support, which includes financial inclusion and poverty alleviation, as well as a long-term advantage in terms of recovery and resilience, which would expand the market and help corporates, farmers, and SMEs overcome COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Hendratmi, Ryandono, and Sukmaningrum (2020) proposed Islamic crowdfunding as one of the innovative solutions for small and medium-sized enterprises and startup companies. Financial assistance can be secured where business capital is raised through crowdfunding. Small and medium-sized enterprises and startup companies are allowed to repay with a certain amount of pre-agreed return on capital for a given tenure.

Besides that, shariah-compliant regulation of Fintech adoption could increase the rate of financial inclusion (Razak, Dali, Dhillon, & Manaf, 2020). This regulation also increases confidence among stakeholders to use online dispute resolution (ODR) as the preferred mechanism for dispute resolution in small-scale disputes in retail banking in Malaysia that will contribute to sustainable banking businesses in major Islamic finance jurisdictions which not only ensures proper customer relationship management but also promotes consumer protection (Oseni, Adewale & Omoola, 2018).

Finally, strengthening Islamic intellectual capital and improved performance can enhance business sustainability (Siswanti & Sukoharsono, 2019). In addition, blockchain technology can be considered a crucial solvency in this new era of applying technology to work efficiently and be a survivor player in the highly competitive financial system (Alaeddin, Dakash & Azrak, 2021).

The empirical work of Othman, Alhabshi, and Sharofiddin (2019) found that Fintech such as cryptocurrency is a future survival that operates outside the realm of the banking system which may impact the performance of banks and their deposit variability. The positive impact of cryptocurrency is driven by the nature of low-cost and relatively secure virtual transactions offered by the payment method (Othman et al., 2019). For example, banks in the GCC region are encouraged to either consider cryptocurrencies as an alternative investment asset for their portfolio investment diversification strategy or adopt blockchain technology in their operating systems to facilitate their customers with low transaction costs, high levels of security, and ease of use, and real-time solutions. Fintech could also scaling-up microfinance (Shaikh, 2020).

According to Bulatova, Potapova, and Yandiev (2019), the effectiveness of digital tools in the Fintech industry is an important factor in stimulating economic growth in all countries, not just Islamic countries. In comparison to Western countries, structural-dynamic analysis shows a more sustainable growth of Islamic finance. Based on Abdullahi and Othman (2021), there are several important determinants to explain the sustainability of microfinance institutions. Some of the examples involved capital structure, asset size, financial innovation, good risk management, and corporate governance frameworks. It was further argued that Islamic microfinance institutions are encouraged to use technology-based services and emphasize the principle of profit and loss sharing in their operations. Ali, Salman, Yaacob, Zaini, and Abdullah (2020) stated that big data analysis strategies among banking institutions are offering some impactful outcomes in the aspect of managing its internal processes, sustainability, and performance. A bank that is committed to proper data monitoring for its customers will achieve operational efficiency and sustainability goals.

The rise of Sharia Fintech increases financial inclusion. In the analysis of Glavina et al., (2021), it was claimed that Shariah Fintech promotes financial inclusion to facilitate the less-fortunate communities through its financing offerings. The interesting dimension that helps to make readers understand further Shariah Fintech was the way investments were done ethically. Areas of economy, society, and governance as coined as ESG, offers a wider opportunity to a poor segment of society where these markets are in dire need of financial inclusion and equality. This was previously evidenced in the work of Othman, 2015 in Nor and Hashim (2020) where equality is made possible with financial inclusion that aims to bring inclusivity and access to finance opportunities for all. Accordingly, it is also a social initiative that contributes to community development, entrepreneurship, and education. For example, it supports the Sharing economy where communities can share their goods or services for community needs (Nor & Hashim, 2020). The economic factors and their associations with sustainable entrepreneurship are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Economic Factors and Its Associations with Sustainable

Economic Factors	Ante-cedents	Out-comes	Empirical Evidence
Speedy, timely, reliable and sustainable		x	No
Transfer, store and record non-fungible bits of information (data authenticity recorded)		x	No
Operational efficiency and sustainability goals		x	Yes
Efficiency of transactions		x	No
Work efficient		x	Yes
Single digital market		x	No
Cost cutting, operational efficiency, transparency, consistency, fairness and equitable service across various customer groups while maintaining interoperability		x	No
Low transaction costs, high levels of security, ease of use and real-time solutions.		x	Yes
Financial inclusion		x	Yes
Increase revenue		x	Yes
Decrease operational cost		x	Yes
Maximize benefits and minimize costs		x	No
Reduce costs, reduce transactional risks, lower overheads, restore resources, minimise time and efforts		x	No
Lowering the administrative and other cost of the Islamic banks and providing them an equal opportunity		x	No
Strengthening Islamic intellectual capital and improved performance		x	Yes
Continuous investment		x	Yes
Widens opportunities for ethical investments (including ESG-rich opportunities)		x	Yes
Increase market share (i.e. increase the number of customers and number of branches, increase the inflow of funds and volumes of transactions, especially in international trade, global financial transactions and cross-border shopping).		x	No
Increase confidence among stakeholders to use online dispute resolution (ODR)		x	Yes
Sales and investment		x	Yes
Away from the common ‘hiyal’,		x	Yes
Inclusion (i.e. zakat and sadaqa might support economically marginalized communities by generating a flow of money to encourage consumption and efficient service)		x	Yes
Mudaraba and *Murabaha* (encourage start-ups and SMEs to either regain their job or initiate business)		x	No
ROE and market performance (TQ)		x	Yes
Long-term goal		x	Yes
Macroprudential/monetary policy	x		Yes

Economic Factors	Ante-cedents	Out-comes	Empirical Evidence
Long-term advantage in terms of recovery and resilience, which would expand the market and help corporates, farmers, and SMEs overcome COVID-19			No
Carry out due diligence, monitor the project and ensure the repayment in instalment		x	Yes
Financing micro enterprises		x	Yes
Obtain capital funds (financial assistance)		x	Yes
Customer experience and satisfaction		x	No
Customer experience		x	No
Customer relationship management and consumer protection		x	Yes
Customers retention		x	Yes
Short-term (emergency support i.e., financial inclusion and poverty alleviation)		x	No
Scaling-up Islamic microfinance		x	Yes
Banks performance and their deposit variability		x	Yes
Internal processes, sustainable and financial performance of banks		x	Yes
Accelerate MSMEs developmental by providing financial and digital marketing assistance.		x	No
Financial performance		x	Yes
Technology infrastructure	x		Yes
Resource intangibility	x		Yes
Intellectual capital and			
competitive advantage	x		Yes
Intellectual capital	x		Yes
Security and ease of use	x		Yes
Effectiveness of digital / Fintech tools	x		Yes
Economic growth / Islamic finance sustainable growth		x	Yes
Innovation	x		No
Capital structure, asset size, financial innovation, good risk management and corporate governance frameworks	x		No
Technology-based services and emphasize the principle of profit and loss sharing	x		No
Big data analysis strategies	x		Yes
Proper customers data monitoring	x		Yes

Social. Rabbani et al., (2021) also stated that Islamic finance helps people affected by COVID-19 at various levels, such as by improving individual morals and generating jobs that lead to increased consumption. Selim (2020) added that the increase in Islamic market share would have a positive effect on equilibrium output, employment, and prosperity. Syed, Khan, Rabbani and Thalassinos (2020) reported that the Zakat and Qardh-Al-Hasan provided by the Islamic Fintech is an effective way to support poor individuals and SMEs during the period during and after the pandemic of COVID 19. Sa'ad, Ahmad and Saleh (2019) clarify that the neutrality of Islamic Fintech has its own attractive side to prove that Sharia law is practical and feasible at various levels. By integrating with the economic, Ascarya (2022) studied that the adoption of Fintech can combat any crisis, alleviate poverty and improve equitable well-being. For example, zakat-infaq-waqf could create a social safety net by saving lives, assisting with medical needs, and accelerating MSMEs' development by providing financial and digital marketing assistance.

Dahdal, Truby and Ismailo (2022) reported that i-Fintech builds confidence and could overcome inefficiencies in Islamic finance. Rohman, Fianto, Ali Shah, Suprayogi and Supriani (2021) review that Islamic microfinance would alleviate poverty through waqf based on sustainability and outreach. According to Al Shehab and Hamdan (2021), a number of financing institutions apply Fintech intending to offer equal services regardless of gender type and improve women's empowerment.

According to Ascarya and Sakti (2022), the micro-Fintech model could be used to optimize the collections of zakat, infaq, and waqf, meaning BMT could provide more social programs for those in need. An empirical study by Hudaefi (2020) found out that Fintech firms have been promoting the idea of financial inclusion, for example, financing underdeveloped sectors such as agriculture and small and micro enterprises (SMEs). Furthermore, companies have been discovered to initiate charitable programs for the underprivileged community, such as collecting and distributing Islamic social funds, including infaq (charity spending), waqf (endowment), and sadaqah (voluntary charity). To some extent, it is synonymous with the promotion of the SDGs to eradicate poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG2) and reduce inequality (SDD 10). This is in line with Sahabuddin et al., (2019) in Glavina, et al. Aidrus and Trusova (2021), that studied that i-Fintech encourages sustainable development and fights poverty and hunger.

i-Fintech contributes to the fight against poverty and unemployment by broadening the boundaries of financial inclusion among the poor and underprivileged by providing them access to credit and other financial services (Abdullahi & Othman, 2021). Risk-sharing and wealth redistribution could be practical tools for eradicating poverty and income inequality. In other words, it promotes social justice, mobilizes resources for the poor, and improves society's overall productive capacity (Abdullahi & Othman, 2021). It also provides a foundation for shared prosperity and promotes social finance (Abdullahi & Othman, 2021).

Despite its efficiency, i-Fintech does maintain the Islamic teachings and its stipulated principles in Islam (Sa'ad et al., 2019). i-Fintech, such as Shari'ah crowdfunding, increases to fulfill the Muslims' developmental needs in providing for projects that are compliant according to Shari'ah (Nor & Hashim, 2020). Social factors and their associations with sustainable entrepreneurship are summarized in Table 8.

Environment. Malik (2018) states that science and technology can solve environmental problems and

Table 8. Social Factors and Its Associations with Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Social Factors	Ante-cedents	Out-comes	Empirical Evidence
Alleviate poverty/poverty reductions-SDG 1		x	Yes
Hunger (SDG2)		x	Yes
Fights poverty and hunger			Yes
Unemployment		x	No
Social justice, mobilises resources for the poor, and improves society's overall productive capacity		x	No
Shared prosperity and promotes social finance		x	No
Cooperation and collaboration	x		Yes
Risk-sharing and wealth redistribution	x		No
Social distancing / contactless approach		x	Yes
Gender equality / reduce inequality (SDD 10)		x	Yes
Income inequality		x	No
Women empowerment		x	No
Women empowerment		x	No
Community development, entrepreneurship and education		x	No
Improving individual morals and generating jobs		x	No
Equilibrium output, employment and prosperity		x	No
Zakat and Qardh-Al-Hasan (support poor individuals and SMEs)		x	No
Improve equitable well-being (i.e., zakat-infaq-waqf could create a social safety net by saving lives, assist in medical needs		x	No
Builds confidence and could overcome inefficiencies in Islamic finance		x	No
Optimise the collections of zakat, infaq and waqf		x	Yes
Collecting and distributing infaq (charity spending), waqf (endowment), and sadaqah (voluntary charity)		x	Yes
Islamic teachings and its stipulated principles in Islam		x	No
Fulfil the Muslims developmental		x	No

address sustainability issues. For example, new technologies can be managed to perform a proper cost or benefit analysis to maximize benefits, minimize costs and minimize environmental damage from human activities (i.e. climate change and ecological degradation) by conducting environmental assessments, etc. Thus, the economic system plays an important role in creating a balance of nature. Khattak, Anwar, and Clauss (2021) confirmed that there is a direct relationship between entrepreneurial finance and financial performance, while indirectly contributing to environmental and innovative performance.

Ali, Salman, and Abdullah (2020) emphasized that sustainable capabilities such as big data integration, and green innovation strategies have a positive impact on banks' environmental and economic performance. Finally, according to Reza-Gharehbagh, Arisian, Hafezalkotob, and Makui (2022), the study proves that a multi-sided Fintech platform is a path to green entrepreneurship. this will happen if the risk is neutral and achieves the right balance between equity financing, and debt financing. The environmental factors and their associations with sustainable entrepreneurship among i-Fintech are elaborated in Table 9.

4 Limitations and Recommendations

This paper analyzed the i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship literature and identified some primary thematic patterns. The paper focuses on a systematic literature review to examine and create systematic searching, as well as identify general patterns in i-Fintech articles over the last few years in two major sources, which are WoS and Scopus. However, this review has several limits due to the concept and definition of i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship that was the center of inquiry. Therefore, sustainable entrepreneurship includes in the review covers i-Fintech agility, and sustainable, short-term, and long-run performance. Furthermore, there might be some additional challenges that influence i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship, particularly opportunities that need to be examined further.

Future research should focus on identifying and validating the internal and external factors that correspond to i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship, as well as exploring other areas of i-Fintech external support and social capital, and identifying theories to better explain sustainable entrepreneurship. Due to a lack of well-defined and researched capabilities, future i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship empirical studies could also employ techniques that better incorporated variables capturing the dynamic nature of managerial competency as the sustainable approach, particularly when studying i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship through economic impact or crisis.

In terms of objective and generality, the ability to generalize data from the survey group to the broader population across the i-Fintech business model and using quantitative study designs especially survey methods

Table 9. Environmental Factors and Sustainable Entrepreneurship

Environmental Factors	Ante-cedents	Out-comes	Empirical Evidence
Economic system	x		No
Balance of nature		x	No
New technologies	x		No
Minimize environmental damage from human activities (i.e.climate change and ecological degradation)		x	No
Entrepreneurial finance	x		Yes
Environmental and innovative performance		x	Yes
Big data integration and green innovation strategies	x		Yes
Banks' environmental and economic performance		x	Yes
Reduction of environmental impact	x		Yes
Increased financial performance		x	Yes
Multi-sided Fintech platform (MSP)	x		Yes
Mediate - risk neutral and achieves the right balance between equity financing (EF) and debt financing (DF)	x		Yes
Green entrepreneurship		x	Yes
Legislative power, prioritise green entrepreneurship and social welfare over financial maximizing agenda	x		Yes
Sustainable supply chain finance (SSCF)		x	Yes

to gain meaningful results (Jones et al., 2013). Despite the fact that quantitative research also could generalize the result. However, future scholars could conduct a qualitative study on the matter by incorporating more theoretical elements and in-depth discussion within this phenomenon. Future studies also should conduct a potential mediating or moderator effect of i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship and other relevant sustainable entrepreneurship factor such as competitiveness during the post-COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, how technology in Islamic finance is used to address sustainability issues in a satisfactory way (Malik, 2018).

5 Conclusions

This paper systematically reviews the existing literature on the outcome of i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship by examining a few years of articles published in two databases, which are WoS and Scopus. From the 39 articles analyzed, this paper offers scholars and policymakers perspectives to better form policy, and regulation an incentive to develop and facilitate i-Fintech offerings along with sustainable entrepreneurship business model, especially during the post-COVID-19 crisis. The outcomes demonstrate that there is a lack of number articles discussing i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship, yet somehow, the trend of i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship is getting more momentum and academic attention. The analysis offers three primary themes on the i-Fintech sustainable entrepreneurship model that are mainly focused on economic, social, and environmental aspects. However, these findings should be geared towards resources and capabilities as well as incorporate more indicators for financial inclusion.

6 Recommendations

As the business model will be based on offerings of i-Fintech solutions, the post-COVID-19 crisis witnessed MSMEs placing equal importance on offering technology solutions and systems which allow a differentiated business model. Incorporating Islamic Finance would offer Shariah perspectives on investment and financial solutions and supports to cater to MSMEs' business needs. As such, it is recommended that future studies include mediating or moderating factors such as competitiveness and technology adoption in the relationship between i-Fintech performance and sustainable entrepreneurship. These factors may have a beneficial impact on the i-Fintech performance and sustainable competitive advantage over time. A vast literature has claimed the strength of the Technological Acceptance Model on sustainable entrepreneurship. However, in explaining the association of technology adoption with sustainability entrepreneurship among i-Fintech entrepreneurs, there are limited studies that guide the literature on the affairs and the development of excellent and ethical resources and capabilities based on the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore, it is recommended that future research may explore a unique element of the Quran and Sunnah Islamic leadership that will explain i-Fintech with sustainable entrepreneurship.

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Southern People and Culture in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's Short Story

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ABSTRACT

Oriental literature in general, Vietnamese literature in particular, has many types of values, perspectives, new identities and unique similarities. With the desire to contribute to understanding and introducing more literary quintessence and for meeting the increasing demand for human culture in the integration period, we would like to introduce the research 'Southern people and culture in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short story' based on a famous female writer of modern Vietnamese literature who has many books published and reprinted in her name.

In order to conduct the research in a scientific manner, we combined the use of primary research methodologies such as classification statistics, meta-analysis and interdisciplinary studies (literature, culture, anthropology and history). 'Southern people and culture in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short story' was drafted after proper research and survey of the writer's published collections of short stories published from 2000 to 2020 focusing on the personality of people from the South and their relationship with culture.

Keywords: Southern people and culture, short story Nguyen Ngoc Tu, Vietnamese literature

1. Research Issues

Nguyen Ngoc Tu holds a meaningful and significant place in the literary lineage of the South, serving as a bridge between the previous and the current generations following the '**Đổi** *mới*' (renovation) period in 1986. From the pioneers who launched the literary line of '*văn dĩ tải* **đạo**' (literature must educate people the proper behaviour towards integrity, compassion and excellence), such as Nguyen Dinh Chieu, to subsequent writers, such as Ho Bieu Chanh, Son Nam, Binh Nguyen Loc and Trang The Hy, a face of Southern literature abundant in patriotism and morality has been created. Nguyen Ngoc Tu's inheritance and innovation in the Southern literary flow, particularly her short stories, have reflected more richly and multi-dimensionally the Southern literary circuit, from one period to another, to new people and new cultures in a flexible and ceaseless manner.

In order to conduct the research in a scientific manner, we combined the use of primary research methodologies such as classification statistics, meta-analysis and interdisciplinary studies (literature, culture, anthropology and history). Within the scope of the article, 'Nguyen Ngoc Tu's published short stories' were researched and analysed between 2000 and 2020, focusing on the following fundamental issues: the personality of the people from the South and their relationship with cultural values.

2. Southerners in the Perspective of Nguyen Ngoc Tu

2.1 Southerners' Personality in the Short Stories of Nguyen Ngoc Tu

The South is one of the three territories of Vietnam (including the North, the Central and the South). In the

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living conditions of the environment with many rivers and canals, the personality of the people of the South is also different from other regions in Vietnam. From there, formed Southern lifestyles, manners, and living features. Southern personality is an entirely different behavioural culture that bears a clear mark on human cultural life. In Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short stories, the relationship amongst the people and between people and nature is very strong, creating unique characteristics and leaving its mark in the works of the people of South. Her work is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. It shows multiple personalities of a human: one that can be a liberal and filial person, a peaceful and good-willed person, a person rich in gratitude and open-minded.

In the short story of Nguyen Ngoc Tu, the human personality of the South is expressed through the relationship amongst the people and between the people and nature. With realistic details, Nguyen Ngoc Tu makes the reader visualise the Southern people clearly on each page:

Talking about human relations with people, with the homeland and the filiation, in 'The Gourd' in front of the alley, the father character said: 'As a human, don't think narrowly, don't think where you were born, where there are graves. Forefathers are the homeland, everywhere in this country is home' (Tu, 2015, p. 35).

The harmony between people and nature in a simple and open way is also a type of personality that makes it very easy to fall in love with people. That's when the sky is gorgeous:

Sometimes, when I look at Phien sleeping, the chicks also circle on his stomach, I wonder what is more beautiful than that. There is nothing as beautiful as a child, a chick, like a sprout just sprouting, the grass has just crossed the ground. (Tu, 2010, p. 159)

Southern people love and care for others as they do for themselves, and so, looking at other people, the people of this land are sad in spite of having a generous and benevolent look: 'It's not fun at all. It's not fun to see people being poor' (Tu, 2008, p. 90). Tran Thi Anh Nguyet in the article 'Nature in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's Short Stories from the Standpoint of Ecological Criticism 'has pitted humans against animals, making Nguyen Ngoc Tu's works 'touch the deep pain of modern humanity when men leave nature, it means that men have abandoned their good primordial nature' (Nguyet, 2014, p. 46).

Unlike the tough reality of life seen these days, praying for people and being responsible towards relatives and family are of utmost importance for the Southern people who are loving, hardworking and full of filial piety:

Brother Hai said to my mother, I go to earn money to redeem the fields and gardens, so that when my mother is ready to close her eyes, she can lie on her land, so that my brother can have money to ask Nhien to marry him and help him raise Duong. (Tu, 2004, p. 15).

Even in the story 'Endless Field', when the father's pain had not yet subsided, the son voluntarily shared his physical pain, hoping that the father would calm down: 'Let his father beat him so that he will feel less pain'—an act of kindness that is hard to believe in today's life. And even so, Cai Oi, the Southern character, is still very tolerant and generous: 'I heard, that day, many people shed tears, so the buffalo theft was not on TV, living in the middle of a cheap life. this benevolent land is sometimes a bit annoying' (Tu, 2005b, pp. 16, 183).

But after all the pain as if, the father's heart is always towards his children, about the good things and the admonition that 'people with bad mouths should try to live by their children' (Tu, 2005a, p. 123).

In the vast sea of people, each person in the South has his/her own desire. That is the dream of singing and being free: 'Now I can't give it up, because I can live freely and comfortably, I can sing to comfort my heart, not necessarily because of a couple of thirty thousand per night' (Tu, 2005a, p. 147). An extroverted personality that a few people in the North, Central Vietnam dare to think and do.

Family morals and traditions such as "the lamps that don't go out" are what Tuoi feels it is her duty and that she 'remember[s] what her grandfather said' (Tu, 2000, p. 8). Is this also the root from the land, the moral that reminds people who go against the husband-and-wife morals, the man's responsibility for the family:

Husband is passionate about women. In the morning, [he will] comb his hair with coconut oil sleekly, wear white silk clothes, hug a chicken, and wander at the market. Sometimes go[es] and don't come back, when he comes back, see if the rice bowl is full, calculate the way to sell them to continue playing. (Tu, 2016, p. 144)

In the midst of the chaos of life, nature and the people of the South are always closely and mutually interdependent. It is a profound dialectical relationship in the cultural space of the South, a very separate and very different cultural space. Those are river bathing sessions:

In the afternoons when I go to the fields to run around and fly kites, it's hot and sweaty. I carry a bucket outside and bath at the bridge and pond, but I don't feel cool at all. I then jump into the river, striding with arms and legs to make people happy. (Tu, 2015, p. 3)

This is when in the 'Anxious look', the thoughts of animals have the same love as children.

Coc didn't answer, he raised his head, what he meant was that duck was cold, why didn't he ask, honestly. Coc calmly returned to the batch of rice; he ate slowly. What do you mean, I feel sorry for you two? People are too much, being a human is so miserable, being a duck is even better. (Tu, 2003, p. 31)

Difficult life makes people sometimes forget the stops so that when nature gets angry, exhausted and screams, newly awakened people fixed clouds, realizing that the destruction of nature leads to serious consequences for their own lives: 'From the mudflats, sand avalanches, clams disappear, tourists no longer exist. appeared at the marina, violent waves lapped the steep east coast. The coastal people left one by one. As a way of survival' (Tu, 2018, p. 57).

People suddenly realize, when living in the middle of an 'island', that nature has healed the wounds of the heart and nurtured the lives of the wrong people.

The constancy of the sea is an illusion that quickly cools the wound [and] [i]t is said on the Silver Crane Island. There is a wanted thief base, everyone knows they are there, but they don't want to catch them. Between the sky and the water, listening to the waves lapping is also worn. Seeing the scene where they dig for fresh water, reclaim and plant fruit trees, and raise chickens and chickens, the authorities also let it pass. (Tu, 2014, pp. 34, 37)

Because nature also has its rights: 'The beauty of the forest canopy is always ready to break out from the machine, demanding life, demanding breath, demanding fresh air…' (Tu, 2010, p. 148). It is also a warning to the trade-offs of nature and people in the short story 'Sorrow on Puvan Peak': 'Some people are a little sad but wish for a long sun, no matter where the goats die in the burning grasslands' (Tu, 2008, p. 53).

To explain how the Southerners in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short stories inherited and instilled the national tradition in their personalities, Duong Hoang Loc in the article 'Some Thoughts on Tolerance in Southern Culture' looks at Southern people in terms of the tolerant character of the Vietnamese people. That is 'the attitude of mutual cooperation, love, and compassion, filled with 4000 years of national culture's extreme human tolerance' (Loc, 2005, p. 69).

Thus, we can see, in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short story, that the human personality of the South is formed from the relationship amongst people and between people and nature, which is very multidimensional and dialectical. Those are Southern people who are rich in filial piety, generosity and tolerant, and love nature. Besides, there are people with extroverted and free-thinking, people of the reality of fierce and resigned living.

In the article 'Prose in the Mekong Delta: An Area of Prose with Many Characteristics', Chiem Thanh also mentioned: 'The human personality of the South in modern times is multi-faceted and very complex, not simple; it is liberal, chivalrous, rich in gratitude, like some people's unchanging vision' (Thanh, 2004, p. 53).

These are key aesthetic value systems in Southern people's thinking and interactions, creating cultural values from generation to generation. Nguyen Ngoc Tu's artistic conception of a man is a lengthy journey of contemplation, philosophy, living capital and accompaniment of the written words. Occasionally, when she is weary of life, she also has certain reservations because 'being overly cordial will elicit inquisitive inquiries'. For her, 'the gap between fantasy and reality has never been easy to grasp', because of the freedom of thought by the individual with multiple personalities 'who does not nurture in themselves a few other strangers'. However, we cannot avoid the 'default' when 'we think we are powerful enough to control life at will, but we are merely animals grazed by fate alone. Existence, reproduction, rest, and weeping are all determined by fate'. She does not forget to affirm that 'regret is certainly one of the important human rights'. And what binds the relationships of the people of the South are their cultural values of life and people.

2.2 The Relationship of Southerners with Cultural Values

Nguyen Ngoc Tu is a cross-cultural writer of two generations and new ones. Therefore, she has different points of view, compared to her predecessors such as Son Nam, Binh Nguyen Loc and Trang The Hy. Thai Phan Vang Anh in the article 'Narrative Language in Contemporary Vietnamese Short Stories' commented on the local accent and the formation of a line of regional literature: ‘can only be an array of Southern short stories, in which, Nguyen Ngoc Tu is regarded as a typical author with several excellent works‘, for example: *The Endless Field, Memory Lane, A Vast Sea of Men, Grievance when Crossing Bridge, Breezy North Wind*… Through Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s short story, the land of the South emerges from the edges of the water hyacinth, the brocade brood, the pomelo, the fruit of the water lily, the means to call the character’s name (*anh Hai Nhớ, dì út Thu Lý, dì Tư, út Thà, Sáu Tâm…*) or everyday talk (trời đất, đúng chóc hà, nói gì lãng xẹt vậy ta, nói chơi hoài, như vầy, chút đỉnh…) evokes the shape of nature and people of the South (Anh, 2008).

Those are the cultural features of life taking place in Grandpa’s house, which Nguyen Ngoc Tu carved into her writing page: ‘Dung addicted to the dark incense he lit on the grandmother’s altar‘. But the civilized features of modern life are always new to him when:

The two of them rolled in eggs and kneaded dough. His hand was gentle, stroking eighteen rose buds on the cake, which Dung craved for forever. The birthday party was very lively, Dung and they danced together, and grandfather also danced, he wore a beautiful blue shirt with a flower bow. When he held her hand, the Tango prelude ‘Far Away‘ and Grandma wanted ‘every year to celebrate New Year’s Eve with you and listen to you sing. (Tu, 2015, pp. 29,30, 31,33).

The truss in front of the alley is always the village culture and origin; it is the homeland and the heart of people, because everyone who comes to the house compliments, you have a really beautiful gourd... Foreign guests also put their left cheek on the fluffy green gourd to take pictures. Students riding bicycles across the street stopped to look at each other in pain and then shouted, ‘I miss home, guys!’ ...My father said: ‘You can rip people out of their homeland, but they cannot separate their homeland from their hearts’. (Tu, 2015, pp. 27, 29)

It’s not only Southern culture but also Vietnamese culture in Tet for her, because ‘normally, I miss my hometown a lot, let alone Tet, the time my grandmother used to say: it’s family reunion time, having fun together after a year of hard work, away from home‘ (Tu, 2015, p. 57). On the moment of New Year’s Eve:

Mr Nine burned six incense sticks, divided half of it between Dat, and said, ‘I’ll give you a New Year’s Eve offering. Praying for good health, happiness, and wealth next year. ‘...‘At the market, people who wanted to go home before New Year’s Eve sold out quickly to return, the rest of them also tried to clean up how to be present on the first day of the new year at home and make teapot to worship the ancestors. (Tu, 2003, p. 97)

Southern people in Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s short story preserve cultural traditions like One Love‘:‘ I don’t know if my father and son can still keep the elaborately carved statues, the paintings of the countryside and the sky, earth, cattle, peaceful and idyllic children, wallpaper on the walls depicting the stories of Betel and Areca, Tam Cam, and the bed, the room, the threshold. (Tu, 2003, p. 164)

Because Trinh Dang Nguyen Huong in the *Journal of Literature*, October 2015 issue, with the article ‘Nguyen Ngoc Tu, Author of Damaged Souls‘ deeply analysed and explained the artistic intentions: ‘the name of the land as well as human life are closely linked, the land of sorrow can only produce sad stories‘ (Huong, 2015).

Spirituality and culture have always been closely related in human life. Tomb of the wind is a tomb set up to commemorate the missing person who has not been found. However, the strong faith from the waiting hearts always urges people to stay, even though: ‘Until my mother believed in the picture of me when I was 10 years old, I put it on the altar, standing with some old and worn-out grandparents‘ (Tu, 2010, p. 68).

People always look to their roots, and national culture has always been a part of the flesh and blood of the people of Vietnam in general and the South in particular, from the flag-coloured bird tracks: ‘Every National Day, every festival, he voluntarily raised the flag, what movement did the ward launch, my family always led by example‘ (Tu, 2008, p. 15).

Preserving culture and collecting culture is a work that requires perseverance and courage, because the things belonging to the lost day are not easy to find again: ‘You follow me to do more folk music collection and research projects in a year‘; ‘walk a few times through the dying fields to reach a small hamlet in the middle of the open sea, where some old woman is keeping in memory a song and melody that we do not know, I thought that day would never go away”; because culture is the flow: “The boat took us from one song to another‘ (Tu, 2008, pp. 93, 96-97, 100).

Especially Ethical Culture, an important foundation to keep like the old houses ‘that must be kept, determined to keep the house. Love and pain made the cousins work hard together, but the old house with sweet memories of their childhood held them back‘ (Tu, 2010, p. 63). It is a tradition of loving hospitality in Thuong Trau laksa:

The children carried a naked boy, blasphemously saying that Ut Chot’s bird was shackled, it was swollen, doctor, Van mam. Laughing so hard, asked why it was so bad, Ut Chot straightened his hands to cover the pain, and said with tears in his eyes, ‘Because Tu said everyone has to go to the doctor to see the happy doctor, he didn’t leave the city. I’m not sick, I’m going to catch the cuffs and play ... Van can only cry two voices, oh my god. And he understood why the old man cared about him. Every afternoon, he went to Van’s place, inviting whispers. He knew that at that time, Midwife Nam, the second employee of the clinic, had come home, maybe Van felt lonely’. (Tu, 2005b, p. 21)

There are strange and beautiful river weddings, the bride of the South in Remembering the River is different from the brides of the North and Central:

when along the riverbanks, on the bunches of frames, the groves... to a tube yellow colour, and then dotted with white baby flowers like grains. A few friends’ boats were turned into rafts and parked outside the dam. The women and girls carried the cooking pots on the shore... The next morning, Giang dressed in ao dai from the boat and stepped up, the photographer took a beautiful photo, the most beautiful was around Giang. The falling gold is like a hundred bells. (Tu, 2005a, pp. 133–134).

When life’s roundabouts take place, people face the reality of making a living, but cultural values are always preserved and nurtured, because village culture is not lived by just acting but by tradition.

True tradition:

The little boy was annoyed, because his father performed the game of taking hooves in the river, because Aunt The sang for the dolls lying in hammocks throughout the afternoon, and it was also a show to make tourists feel moved to come back and play in the old village. It’s boring to watch the villagers all day indifferently, let customers pass by in front of their silk shop, if they don’t wave their fan; it’s like a stone statue. Even those of her age like Huong, tie the fourteen-year-old to the mat weaving looms, making no mistake. (Tu, 2016, p. 83).

The simple dreams of the family life of the people of the South are also the dreams of the Vietnamese people’s family culture, about a passing country with a ‘future fragrant with the scent of cinnamon leaves in the dew, the smell of pumpkin sap that has just been cut, the melons that are out of season are melting into the ground‘ (Tu, 2018, p. 29) and the ashes are brilliant in happiness: ‘the house has a voice of people. like a true family: the sound of women babbling, men spitting and children laughing, she tells stories again, hoping to fill the silence‘ (Tu, 2014, pp. 142-143)

It can be said that the relationship of Southern people in Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s short story with cultural values is very diverse and rich in many aspects. It is the relationship of community culture, ethnicity, village culture, family culture, spiritual culture, festival culture... All in all, creating a value system imbued with Southern culture unique set, very personal and unique. Besides, there are many other cultural value systems that in the limited scope of the article have not had the conditions to mention such as: food culture, dress culture.

Talking about the Southern quality in the short story Nguyen Ngoc Tu, writer Nguyen Ngoc has an interesting comment, he compares: ‘She is like a natural tree that grows in the middle of the Melaleuca or mangrove forest in the South, fresh and strange. Often, it gives literature a cool, subtle but sincere breeze, especially in the South‘ (Ngoc, 1991).

3. Conclusion

The messages that Nguyen Ngoc Tu conveys in his short stories such as people and relationships with people, with nature, with cultural values are the concerns of today’s young modern generation. Blending into the general flow of Vietnamese literature, writing about the people and culture of the South, Nguyen Ngoc Tu has created a unique mark and unique attraction. The author’s perspective has also changed: reality is exploited deeper, is more realistic and more multi-dimensional. According to Professor Tran Dinh Su: ‘The cultural value of literature has a relationship between national cultural values and international cultural values... in which value is close to the need to liberate humanity, and human senses and human ideals are more likely to be recognized by the world‘ (Su, 2017). Therefore, the messages conveyed by Nguyen Ngoc Tu’s short stories deal with fundamentally cultural-human issues in human life.

In the process of exchanging and acclimatizing, the currents of thought in literature-culture, the requirements set forth from the expectations of both the author and the reader in the general modern social trend of the region and the world is an inevitable trend.

On *Ton Vinh Van Hoa Doc*, regarding contemporary short stories, in Nguyen Ngoc Tu's short stories, the simple lives or the small joys of the people of the South, those poor, outspoken and hard-working people are hidden inside the 'soul that is both benevolent and delicate in the way people treat people... all expressed in a language that is innocent, crude, and characterized by Southern dialects' (Ton Vinh Van Hoa Doc, n.d.). It is the preservation and continuation of the Southern literary circuit of the predecessor writers such as Binh Nguyen Loc, Son Nam, Trang The Hy, Nguyen Quang Sang... Nguyen Ngoc Tu. As a person with a distinct voice, hard to be confused in the flow of modern and contemporary Vietnamese literature, Nguyen Ngoc Tu has created for herself a world of its own, boldly Southern. It is hoped that, with the appreciation of the literary and cultural quintessence of Vietnam, researchers, readers, organizations, communities, etc. will join hands to contribute to promoting cultural relations. The ideology between Vietnam and other countries in the region is becoming more and more profound.

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Cosmology in Science and *Nanakian* Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Since time immemorial, humans have wondered about the Universe, where it came from, and how it got to be the way it is today. The science of cosmology is advancing every day. Although some Sikh scientists and theologians have tried to represent cosmology in Sikhism, their interpretation of Bani (Words) from the Aad Guru Granth Sahib is based on creation by God. This article discusses cosmology in today's science compared with that found in the Nanakian Philosophy of the 15th century. Copernicus, a contemporary of Nanak, and Galileo were working on Astronomy through observations of Nature, the use of Mathematics, and the newly invented telescope in 1609 in Europe, while Nanak was studying Cosmology in South Asia just by observation of Nature and phenomena in the Universe happening under specific laws. Nanakian philosophy briefly provides the key similarities with today's Cosmology.

Keywords: Astrology, Science of Cosmology, Sikhism, *Nanakian* Philosophy, Religion and Science, Vedic

INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, humans have wondered what the Universe is, where it came from, and how it got to be the way it is today. The other question is whether the relationship between 'Religion and Science' is characterized by *conflict* or *concord.* The *theistic* religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and theistic varieties of Hinduism and Buddhism, believe that there is an all-powerful, all-knowing, perfectly good immaterial person who has created the world, has created human beings '*in His own image*,' and to whom we owe worship, obedience, and allegiance. On the other hand, Science deals with reasoning and experimentation to find the truth. The controversy between Religion and Science started when some religious concepts are found contrary to scientific facts during the period of the Renaissance (14th to 17th Century).

Most of the time, discussion on 'Religion and Science' is confined to Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and theistic varieties of Hinduism and Buddhism, but Sikhism is rarely included in such discussions. It is so because Sikh scientists, theologians, and scholars have failed to portray 'Sikhi' as a distinct and independent philosophy from Hinduism or any other religion. Moreover, they have been unable to represent the originality and uniqueness of Nanakian Philosophy to the world's philosophers, scientists, and theologians.

The logical and scientific study of Bani in the AGGS (*Aad Guru Granth Sahib*, 1983) is becoming very popular with some Sikh scientists, theologians, and writers. For example, (Chahal, 1992, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013, 2014), a Microbiologist, D. P. Singh (2018), and Virk (2012), Physicists, have covered cosmology during the last two to three decades. Now some theologians, without having any background in any Science, are also writing about Cosmology and Science. Many theologians consider Nanak as a mystic, spiritual, religious Guru, reformer, revolutionist, or socialist but never as a philosopher or a scientist. Then who is Nanak? That is

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why I am not using any adjective before Nanak since he deserves all epithets.

On the other hand, many theologians doubt if there can be any science or scientific fact in the Bani in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) since there was no science at the time of Nanak (1469-1539). They are right to a great extent since what we call 'Science' today was studied as a 'Natural Philosophy' during the Renaissance (14th to 16th centuries) in Europe. Therefore, before the beginning of science and during the Renaissance, some scholars were prophesying their philosophy based on their keen observations of Nature and the Universal phenomena occurring in an orderly form. This philosophy is called **Natural Philosophy** which is defined as follows:

The study of nature and the physical universe before the advent of modern science. (*Natural Philosophy*, n.d.)

Nanak is at the top of the list of Natural Philosophers. who promulgated his philosophy based on his keen observation of Nature and the Universal phenomena occurring in orderly form and his keen observations of the behavior of humans without involving God. (Chahal, 2020)

This review discusses Cosmology in the Bani of Nanak, which is comparable to today's Cosmology.

METHODOLOGY

The latest scientific information about Cosmology was collected and compared with Nanakian Philosophy. The word 'Bani' is used for all phrases and stanzas of Nanak. 'Bani' has been used in singular and plural forms in the whole text.

There are many different meanings of each word of the AGGS in *Mahan Kosh* (K. Singh, 1981) and *the Punjabi-English Dictionary* (Joshi, S.S. and Gill, n.d.). Therefore, the most suitable meaning conveying the central theme of the phrase or stanza was used to interpret the Bani. Moreover, logic and scientific information were also applied while interpreting Bani. That is why my interpretation differs from the traditional interpretation of the *Farid Kot Vala Teeka* published in 1883. (Thind, n.d.)

Terms Defined

Cosmology

Cosmology is the scientific study of understanding the origin, evolution, and fate of the entire Universe (Cosmos). It involves the formation of theories or hypotheses about the Universe that make specific predictions for phenomena that can be tested with observations. Depending on the outcome of the observations, theories will need to be abandoned, revised, or extended to accommodate the new data. The prevailing theory about the origin and evolution of our Universe is based on the so-called "Big Bang Theory." (*Cosmology*, n.d.)

Astronomy and Astrology

Astronomy studies the Sun, Moon, stars, planets, comets, galaxies, gas, dust, and other non-Earthly bodies and phenomena. Astronomy and astrology were historically associated, but astrology is not a science and is no longer recognized as having anything to do with astronomy. (Redd, 2012)

Nevertheless, many people believe that **Vedic Astrology** is accurate Science for telling people's destiny. (*Vedic Astrology*, n.d.) Thus, astrology in India and now in foreign countries is becoming important in the lives of the public. Many Indian TV channels carry some shows and ads about Vedic Astrology. Some newspapers in India and Western countries have daily Horoscopes. Many astrologers are exploiting Vedic Astrology by deceiving people for a living. (*Vedic Astrology*, n.d.) However, Nanak is against dependence upon Vedic Astrology for determining destiny.

Nanakian Philosophy

I have coined an academic term, "**Nanakian Philosophy,**" for the philosophy of Nanak after his name as follows:

"***A philosophy promulgated by Nanak embodied in his bani which has been incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib***."

Modified from the Chapter, *Nanakian Philosophy- Defined* in the Ref. # (Chahal, 2008)

DISCUSSION

THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

Although there are many theories about the Universe's origin (Cosmos), it was Georges Lemaître (1894-1966), a Belgian Cosmologist and Catholic priest, who boldly proposed that the Universe must have originated at a finite point in time. If the universe is expanding, he reasoned, it was smaller in the past when all the matter in the universe was packed together in a highly dense state. Appealing to the new quantum theory of matter, Lemaître argued that the physical universe was initially a single particle—the "primeval atom," which disintegrated in an explosion, giving rise to space and time and the expansion of the universe that continues to this day. This idea marked the birth of Big Bang cosmology. He is known as the Father of the Big Bang Theory. (*Georges Lemaître, Father of the Big Bang*, 2022)

According to the Big Bang Theory, widely accepted by many scientists, our Universe sprang from a **single point** (called the "primeval atom" by Lemaître) around 13.77 billion years ago. What is this point, and where does it come from? This point is called **Singularity** in Physical sciences. It is defined as the center of a black hole at which matter is crushed to an infinite density, the pull of gravity is infinitely strong, and the space-time curvature becomes infinitely large. (KRUESI, 2012) (*Big Bang Theory - The Premise*, n.d.) (Fig. 1)

Ethan Siegel says science has finally settled many of the puzzles about the Big Bang Theory in the 20th century, with the cosmic microwave background providing the critical evidence. It's true: the cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation, which we've concluded is the leftover glow from the Big Bang itself, is key evidence. Here's why it confirms the Big Bang and disfavors all other possible interpretations. (Siegel, n.d.)

Timeline of the Universe

Based on scientific studies it is reported that the Universe is composed of protons, neutrons, electrons, and neutrinos. Protons and neutrons are bound together into nuclei, surrounded by a full complement of electrons. For example, Hydrogen is composed of one proton and one electron. Helium is composed of

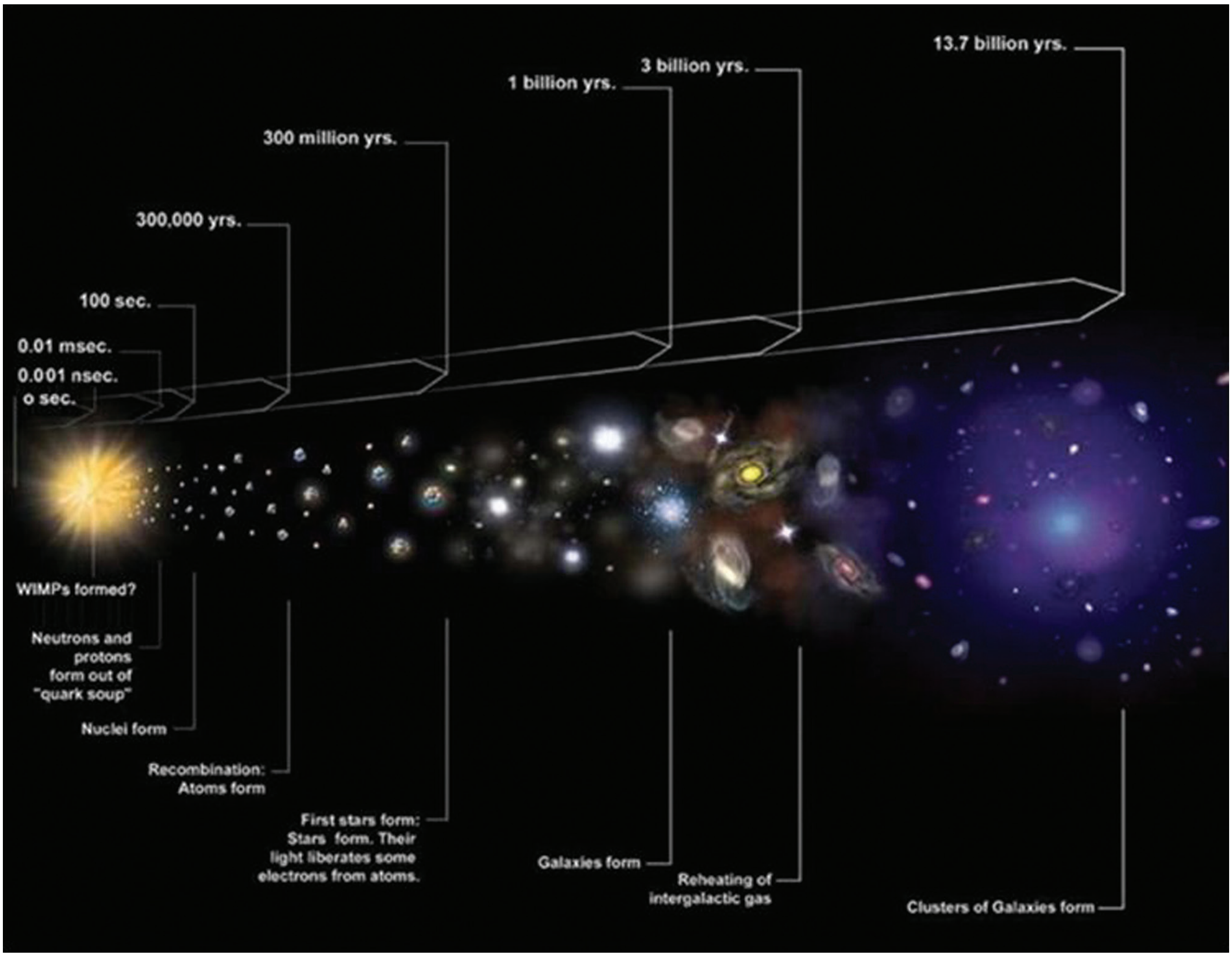

Figure 1. A visual history of the expanding Universe includes the hot, dense state known as the Big Bang and the subsequent growth and formation of structure.
(Credit: NASA/CXC/M. Weiss)

two protons, two neutrons, and two electrons. (Fig. 2) Carbon comprises six protons, six neutrons, and six electrons. Heavier elements, such as iron, lead, and uranium, contain even large numbers of protons, neutrons, and electrons.

All material made up of protons, neutrons, and electrons is called “baryonic matter.” About thirty years ago, the Universe was composed of only “baryonic matter.” Some evidence suggests that there is something in the Universe that we can not see by current means. (*What Is the Universe Made Of*, n.d.)

The Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) measures the relative density of baryonic and non-baryonic matter to an accuracy more significant than a few percent of the overall density. It is also able to determine some of the properties of non-baryonic matter. The breakdown of the total density of the universe is as follows: (fig. 3)

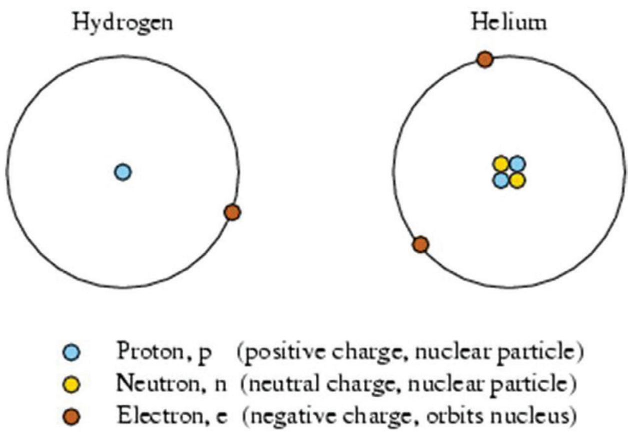

Figure 2. Formation of atoms: Hydrogen with one proton and one electron.
Helium with two protons, two Neutrons in the nucleus, and two electrons surround the nucleus.

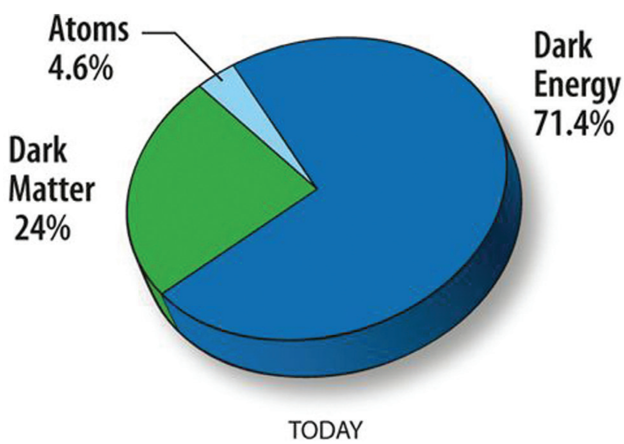

Figure 3. Composition of the Universe.
Credit: https://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/universe/uni_matter.html

- **4.6% Atoms**. Our Universe.
- **24% Cold Dark Matter**. Dark matter is likely composed of one or more species of sub-atomic particles that interact very weakly with ordinary matter.
- **71.4% Dark Energy.**
- Fast-moving **neutrinos** do not play a significant role in the evolution of structure in the Universe. (*What Is the Universe Made Of*, n.d.)

Cosmology, According to Nanakian Philosophy

According to Big Bang Theory, our Universe sprang into existence from a single point, Singularity, around 13.77 billion years ago. Nanak has represented this Singularity as ONE (੧) in a logo, ੴ. This logo stands for the Eternal Entity (commonly called God).

Understanding of logo, ੴ, the Eternal Entity

The Logo, ੴ, has been dissembled as follows:

ੴ

੧ + ਓ + ⌒

੧ = (One). It is from Numerals but in science, it is a Physical ONE like the SINGULARITY. Some scientists consider SINGULARITY as NOTHINGNESS. But for Nanak Nothingness is ਸੁੰਨ (*sunn*) or ਨਿਰਗੁਣ (*nigun*) state.

ਓ = (open *Oora*). It is from Gurmukhi Alphabet, but here it is an abbreviation of ਓਹ (*Oh* – That).

⌒ = The extended end of ਓ (open *Oora*) is from geometry representing INFINITE (amount of Energy).

ਓ = (open *Oora*) and its extended end (⌒) are qualifiers words for ੧ (One) in ੴ, indicating That the One is Infinite (amount of energy).

Einstein quotes about ‘Energy’ as follows:

“*Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be changed from one form to another.*”

It means the ‘Energy’ existed forever.

Therefore, ੴ can be pronounced as ਇਕੁ ਓ ਬੇਅੰਤ (*Ek Oh Beant*) in Punjabi and as ‘That the One and Only is Infinite’ in English. It means ‘One’ in ੴ is infinite amount of energy.

Note: Geometry is the branch of mathematics that deals measurement and relationships of points, lines, angles, and figures. During Nanak's time, there was no sign of 'infinity.' John Wallis developed the infinity sign (∞) **in 1655 more than 100 years after Nanak (1469-1539). Therefore, Nanak can only use the extended end of open *Oora* (ੳ) to represent 'Infinity.'**

The cosmology of Nanakian Philosophy starts with the **One** (੧) in **ੴ, which** represents an infinite amount of energy.

Therefore**,** the **One** (੧) in **ੴ** is similar to Singularity or Nothingness in Physical Sciences. The 'Nothingness' is called **ਸੁੰਨ** (*Sunn*) or **ਨਿਰਗੁਨ** (*Nirgun*) state by Nanak. The **One** (੧) in **ੴ** is also called *'Jyot'* (energy) by Nanak. (Chahal, 2011, 2021)

Is It Big Bang

Nanak explains the origin of the Universe as follows:

> **ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ[1] ਏਕੋ[2] ਕਵਾਉ[3] ॥**
> Kīṯā pasā▫o eko kavā▫o.
> **ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਲਖ[4] ਦਰੀਆਉ[5] ॥**
> Ŧis ṯe ho▫e lakẖ ḏarī▫ā▫o.
> **ਅਗਗਸ**, **ਜਪੁ** 16, **ਪੰਨਾ** 3.
> Most writers translate it as follows: (Thind, n.d.)
> *You created the vast expanse of the Universe with One Word.*
> *Hundreds of thousands of rivers began to flow.*
> AGGS, Jap 16, p 3.

Using present-day science and the methodology of Nanak (Chahal, 2003), remembering that he would express his philosophy allegorically, metaphorically, and symbolically, therefore, my interpretation will be quite different from that of all other writers:

The Universe exploded from One[2] source of energy (Singularity)[3] and started to expand[1]; after that, many[4] things[5] appeared.

The above phrase of Nanak indicates the One (Singularity, Nothingness- **ਸੁੰਨ**-*Sunn,* the **ਨਿਰਗੁਨ** -*Nirgun* state) has given rise to everything means **ਸਰਗੁਨ** (*Sargun*) state, the Nature/Universe. This explanation is similar to the second part of the famous quote of Einstein: "*Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be changed from one form to another.*"

Note:
ਪਸਾਉ[1] *(pasao)* means to expand.
ਕਵਾਉ[2] (*kavao)* does not mean sound, word, or note, as many Sikh scientists and theologians consider. It means 'energy' as explained by Guru Arjun as follows:

The word, **ਦਰੀਆਉ**[3]' (*dariao*), in the above phrase of Guru Nanak, has been explained with a new word, **ਸਭਿ** (*sabh* - everything), and **ਕਵਾਉ** (*kavao*) with another term, **ਕਵਾਵੈ** (*kavavai* - energy) by Guru Arjun:

> **ਏਕ[1] ਕਵਾਵੈ[2] ਤੇ ਸਭਿ[3] ਹੋਆ[4] ॥੧॥**
> Ėk kavāvai ṯe sabẖ ho▫ā. ||1||
> *From One[1] source of energy[2] (Singularity) everything[3] was created[4].*
> AGGS, M 5, p 1003.

Note: '**ਏਕ**[1] **ਕਵਾਵੈ**[2] *(ek kavavai)* in the above phrase is the same as **ਏਕੋ ਕਵਾਉ**[2] '(*eko kavao*) used by Nanak in his previous phrase.
ਕਵਾਵੈ[2] *(kavavai)* is from **ਕਵਾ** (*kava),* which means 'energy' according to *Mahan Kosh.* (K. Singh, 1981)
ਦਰੀਆਉ[3] (*daryao)* has been interpreted as rivers by many scholars. Keeping in view the methodology used by Nanak, '**ਦਰੀਆਉ**[3]' (*daryao)* has been used as a metaphor for the word, things. What are those things?

The word, '**ਲਖ ਦਰੀਆਉ**' (*lakh dariao*), has been used to represent 'many things. It means that when there is a river, there are many things in it and around it. Nanak expresses the above phenomenon in simple language of 550 years ago as follows:

> **ਏਕ[1] ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ[2] ਸਰਬ[2] ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ[3] ਏਹ ਸਤਿ[4] ਗੁਰਿ[5] ਦੇਖਿ[6] ਦਿਖਾਈ[7] ॥੫॥**
> Ėk mėh sarab sarab mėh ekā eh saṯgur ḏekẖ ḏikẖā▫ī. ||5||
> *The True[4] Enlightenment[5] has given[7] (to me) the vision[6] that* ***everything[2] is in One[1] and***
> ***One[3] is in everything[2].***
> AGGS, M 1, p 907.
> It is worth noticing that Baruch Spinoza, 2020 quoted about God as follows:
> ***"God is everything, and everything is God."***
> That is very much comparable to the above phrase of Nanak.

Nature – God

Nanak further explains that the **ਸਰਗੁਨ** (*Sargun*) state of ੴ is Nature/Universe in the following phrase:

> **ਨਾਨਕ[1] ਸਚੁ[2] ਦਾਤਾਰੁ[3] ਸਿਨਾਖਤੁ[4] ਕੁਦਰਤੀ[5] ॥੮॥**
> Nānak sacẖ ḏāṯār sinākẖaṯ kuḏraṯī. ||8||
> Guru Nanaksays[1]:
> *The Ever-existing[2] Bountious[3] (Eternal Entity - ੴ) is recognized[4] as Nature[5] (the Universe).*

AGGS, M 1, p 141.
Here Nanak is equating God with Nature (Universe). That means "God is Nature."

Note: Nature: 1. Physical World - all natural phenomena and living things.
2. The forces and processes collectively that control the phenomena of the physical world independently of human volition or intervention.

According to German philosopher Karl Jaspers, when Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) wrote "*Deus sive Natura*" (**"*God or Nature*"**), Spinoza meant God was *Natura naturans,* not *Natura naturata*, that is, "a dynamic nature in action, growing and changing, not a passive or static thing." (*Spinozium*, n.d.) In 1929 Rabbi Herbert Goldstein sent a telegram to Albert Einstein (Livio, 2018) asking, "*Do you believe in God*?". In response, Einstein wrote that he admired the Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza and stated: ***"I believe in Spinoza's god,** who reveals Himself in the lawful harmony of the world, not in a god who concerns himself with the fate and the doings of mankind.*"

Is it not strange that the Natural Philosophy of Nanak, GOD IS NATURE, is similar to that of Spinoza and Einstein?

It is evident from the above discussion that the Eternal Entity (God), conceptualized by Nanak as a logo, ੧ੳ, has become Nature/Universe after ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ[1] ਏਕੋ[2] ਕਵਾਉ[3] ll *Kīṯā pasā▫o eko kavā▫o* in a simple language is similar to that of Big Bang theory.

The infiniteness of the Universe

According to present-day scientific knowledge, the Universe continues expanding after the Big Bang. Nanak explains the infiniteness of the Universe as follows:

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ[1] ਪਾਤਾਲ[1] ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ[2] ਆਗਾਸ[2] ॥
Pāṯālā pāṯāl lakẖ āgāsā āgās.
ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥
Oṛak oṛak bẖāl thake veḏ kahan ik vāṯ.
ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ[3] ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ[4] ॥
Sahas aṯẖārah kahan kaṯebā asulū ik ḏẖāṯ.
ਲੇਖਾ[5] ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥
Lekẖā ho▫e ṯa likī▫ai lekẖai ho▫e viṇās.
ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ[6] ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥
Nānak vadā ākẖī▫ai āpe jāṇai āp. ||22||
There are hundreds of thousands of nether worlds[1] and hundreds of thousands of skies[2].
After significant research, the Vedas have said it is definitely as above.
The Semitic books say that there are eighteen thousand[3] worlds, which is the fact[4].

However, Nanak says:

It cannot be possible to count[5] (the number of the celestial bodies in the Universe) because the accounting person may reach the end of his life during counting, and it will still be incomplete.

Guru Nanak further says:

That Eternal Entity (God)[6] is great. Who knows the account (of the celestial bodies in the Universe).22.
AGGS, Jap 22, p 5.

In the first two lines of this stanza, Guru Nanak refers to what the Vedas say: there are hundreds of thousands of *Patal* (nether worlds) and hundreds of thousands of skies; on the other hand, the Semitic books say that there are 18,000 worlds in the following third line. This is the information from the Vedas and the Semitic texts but not the views of Nanak. However, some theologians and preachers erroneously interpret that it is Nanak saying that there are *lacs* (hundreds of thousands) of *patal* (nether worlds) and *lacs* of skies. They also claim that Nanak was a great scientist to say so. They ignore that this is the information in Vedas and Semitic books.

Scientifically there is no *patal* (nether world) in this Universe; it is an ancient myth. Similarly, there is no sky. The color of the sky on a clear cloudless daytime is because blue light is scattered in all directions by the tiny molecules of air in Earth's atmosphere. It is the color due to the depth of the air around the Earth through which the sunlight passes before coming to us; in fact, it is a void or space.

After quoting the available information or the accepted concept of that time, Nanak gives his observations in the last two lines. He says the Cosmos (Universe) contains countless celestial bodies; the actual number would be known only to the Eternal Entity (God). (Fig. 4).

According to scientific information, there are billions of galaxies, and each galaxy is composed of billions of stars and their planets and moons. Our Sun, having eight planets revolving around it, is one of the billions of stars of our galaxy, the Milky Way. (Fig. 5)

Time of the Origin of the Universe

When did the Universe come into existence? As already discussed, now we know the Universe's origin was

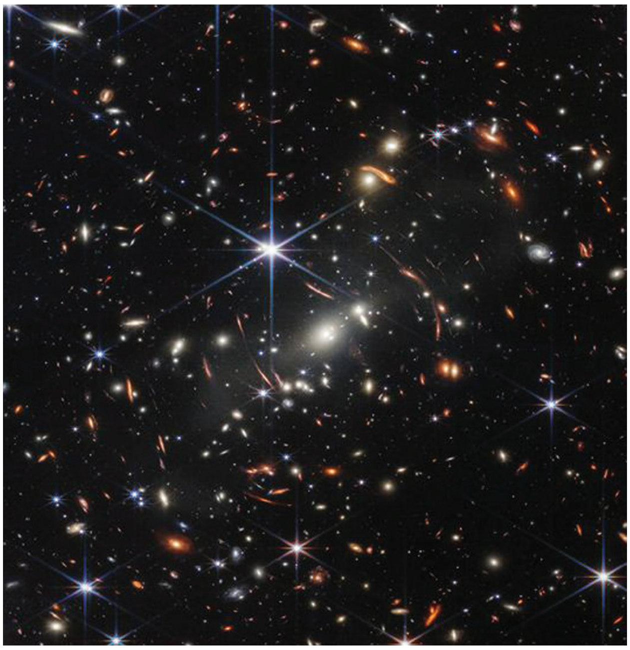

Figure 4. Webb's image covers a patch of sky approximately the size of a grain of sand held at arm's length by someone on the ground – and reveals thousands of galaxies in a tiny sliver of the vast universe.
Credit: Image credit - NASA, ESA, CSA, and STScI - main_image_deep_field_smacs0723-5mb (1).jp

approximately 13.77 billion years ago. However, about 550 years ago, Nanak said that it was difficult to estimate the time of the origin of the Universe in the following stanza:

> **ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ[1] ਵਖਤੁ[2] ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣ ਥਿਤਿ[3] ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ[4] ॥**
> Kavaṇ so velā vakẖaṯ kavaṇ kavaṇ thiṯ kavaṇ vār.
> **ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ[5] ਮਾਹੁ[6] ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ[7] ॥**
> Kavaṇ sė ruṯī māhu kavaṇ jiṯ ho▫ā ākār.
> Nanak first poses a question:
> *What was that time[1], and what was that time/ moment[2]?*
> *What was that month[3], and what was that day[4]?*
> *What was that season[5], and what was that month[6]: when the Universe was created[7]?*
> AGGS, Jap 21, p 4.

Then he answers as follows:

> **ਵੇਲ[1] ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥**
> vel na pā▫ī▫ā pandṯī jė hovai lekẖ purāṇ.
> **ਵਖਤੁ[2] ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥**
> vakẖaṯ na pā▫i▫o kāḏī▫ā jė likẖan lekẖ kurāṇ.
> **ਥਿਤਿ[3] ਵਾਰੁ[4] ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ[5] ਮਾਹੁ[6] ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥**
> Thiṯ vār nā jogī jāṇai ruṯ māhu nā ko▫ī.
> *The pundits could not find that time[1], whether it was written in the Puranas.*
> *That time/moment[2] is not known to the Qazis if it were written in the Koran.*
> *Nor the month[3] nor the day[4] nor the season[5] nor the month[6] is known to the yogis.*
> AGGS, Jap 21, p 4.

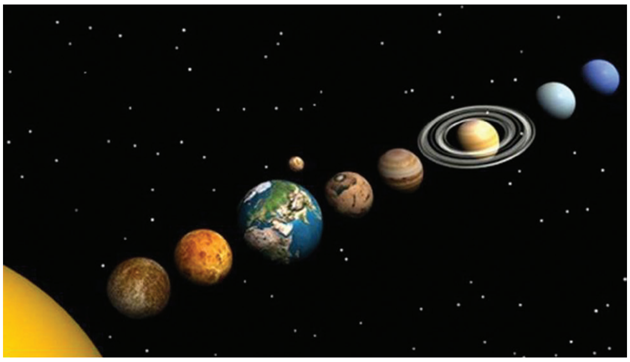

Figure 5. Sun and its planets. The Earth, with its Moon is third from the Sun.
Credit: https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/goddard/2022/nasa-s-webb-delivers-deepest-infrared-image-of-universe-yet

Note: ਥਿਤਿ (*tith*) means month according to the lunar calendar. **ਮਾਹੁ** (*mah*) means month according to the solar calendar.

Then who knows the answer?

Nanak answers it as follows:

> **ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ[1] ਸਿਰਠੀ[2] ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ[3] ਆਪੇ[4] ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥**
> Jā karṯā sirṯẖī ka▫o sāje āpe jāṇai so▫ī.
> *Only the Creator[1,4], Who created[3] the Universe[2], knows it (the time of creation).*
> AGGS, Jap 21, p 4.

Here Nanak falls back to the ancient philosophy of Creation theory that the creator (God) knows the time of creation. On the other hand, Nanak has explained the expansion of the Universe (many things) from One source of energy, where there is no involvement of God – the Creator.

Origin of Our Solar System

It has been discussed earlier that the origin of the Universe was not known to the pundits, Q*azis,* and *Yogis*. However, in the following verse, Nanak explains the formation of our solar system, and its formation dates back more than a billion years (today, it is known as 4.6 billion years ago). He describes the primordial state of our solar system as a mass of gases in our galaxy:

> **ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ[1] ਧੁੰਧੂਕਾਰਾ[2] ॥**
> Arbaḏ narbaḏ ḏẖunḏẖūkārā.
> **ਧਰਣਿ[3] ਨ ਗਗਨਾ[4] ਹੁਕਮੁ[5] ਅਪਾਰਾ[6] ॥**
> Ḏẖaraṇ na gagnā hukam apārā.
> **ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ[7] ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨੁ[8] ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥੧॥**
> Nā ḏin rain na cẖanḏ na sūraj sunn samāḏẖ lagā▫iḏā. ||1||
> .....

ਜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਣਾ[9] ਤਾ ਜਗਤੁ[10] ਉਪਾਇਆ[11] ॥
Jā ṯis bẖāṇā ṯā jagaṯ upā▫i▫ā.
More than a billion years ago[1]*,*
There was only a mass of gases[2]*.*
There was no Earth[3] *or sky*[4]*, but only the Laws*[5] *of Nature/ Universe, which is Infinite*[6]*.*
There was no day, no night[7]*, no Moon, no Sun, but Nothingness*[8] *was by itself.1…*
After a lengthy description what was not happening on the Earth and about the living of people, Nanak says:
According to the Laws of Nature/Universe[9,] *the mass of gases formed*[11] *the world*[10] *(Solar System with eight planets including our Earth as our world.)14.*
AGGS, M 1, p 1035.

Here, Nanak explains the primordial state of our Solar System as a mass of gases. Still, it is erroneously interpreted by some theologians to describe the primordial state of the Universe. The Universe originated with the Big Bang from the '੧' (*Ek* – One) in ੧ੳ as Singularity or from ਸੁੰਨ (*sunn*) (Nothingness) about 13.77 billion years ago. On the other hand, our Solar System originated about 4.6 billion years ago from a mass of gasses already existing in our galaxy, the Milky Way.

Note ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ[1] (*arbad narbad)*: *arbad* (a colloquial word for *arb*) means one billion, and *narbad* means that which cannot be counted in *arb; therefore*, *arbad narbad* means more than one billion, maybe a period of tens of billions of years.
3. ਹੁਕਮੁ (*hukm*): Nanak calls the Laws of Nature/Universe the Laws of the Eternal Entity (God) - (*hukm*).

The evolution of our solar system is explained as follows:

Heliocentric Solar System of Nicolaus Copernicus

Nanak (1469-1539) in South Asia and Copernicus (1473-1543) in Europe were contemporaries of the Period of Renaissance (14th to 17th centuries). Both lived for 70 years. Guru Nanak contributed a lot to understanding Cosmology by keen observations of Nature and its Laws, while Copernicus did a lot on astronomy through observations and experimentations. Nevertheless, neither of them was in favor of Astrology having any influence on the destiny of humans.

Heliocentric Solar System

Scholars believe that by around 1508, Copernicus developed a celestial model – a heliocentric planetary system. Heliocentric means having or representing the Sun as a center. However, during the second century CE, Ptolemy invented a geometric planetary model with eccentric circular motions and epicycles. This differed from Aristotle's idea that celestial bodies moved in a fixed circular motion around the Earth. Copernicus's heliocentric solar system named the Sun, rather than the Earth, as the center of the solar system. Before Copernicus, as early as the third century BCE, the ancient Greek astronomer Aristarchus of Samos had identified the Sun as a central unit orbited by a revolving Earth. However, his heliocentric theory was dismissed because Ptolemy's ideas were far more accepted by the influential Roman Catholic Church, which adamantly supported the Earth-based solar system theory.

Around 1514, Copernicus completed, *Commentariolus* (Latin for «Small Commentary»), a 40-page manuscript summarizing his heliocentric planetary system. In addition, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* («On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres») was published right before his death. Copernicus›s theories incensed the Roman Catholic Church, which was considered heretical. When *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* was published in 1543, religious leader Martin Luther opposed the heliocentric solar system model. His underling, Lutheran

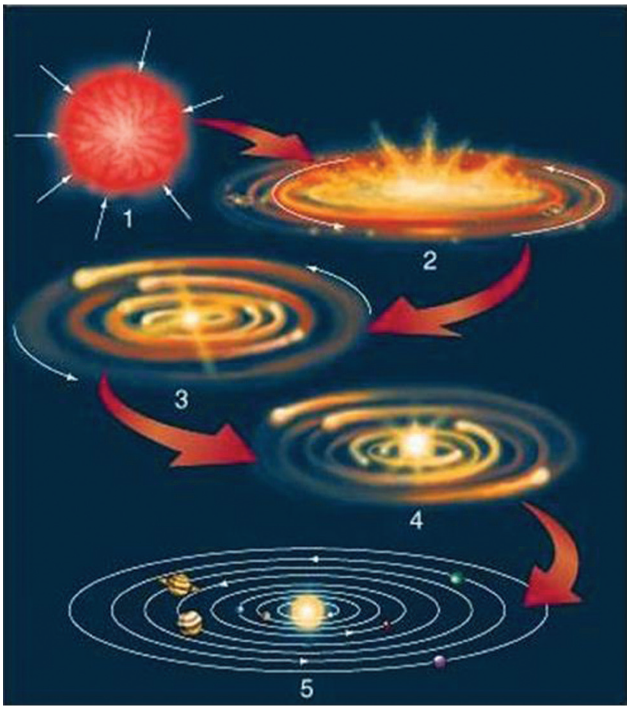

Figure 6. Formation Solar System: 1st stage indicates the Big Bang explosion, 2nd stage shows Dhundu Kara (mass of gasses/atoms) in our galaxy, the Milky Way, 3rd & 4th stages show the atoms are concentrating on forming various planets and portion of Hydrogen and Helium is gathering in the center to form the Sun, and the 5th stage is showing clearly the Sun in the center and its planets including the Earth encircling the Sun.
Credit: https://www.phy.olemiss.edu/~luca/astr/Topics-Solar/Formation-N.html

minister Andreas Osiander quickly followed suit, saying of Copernicus, “this fool wants to turn the whole art of astronomy upside down.” Osiander even went so far as to write a disclaimer stating that the heliocentric system was an abstract hypothesis that need not be seen as truth.

Ironically, Copernicus had dedicated *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* to Pope Paul III. If his tribute to the religious leader was an attempt to cull the Catholic Church›s softer reception, it was useless. The church ultimately banned *De Revolutionibus* in 1616, though the book was eventually removed from the list of forbidden reading material. (*Nicolaus Copernicus Biography*, n.d.)

After Copernicus, in July 1609, Galileo (1564-1642) developed a telescope and soon began mounting a body of evidence that supported Copernican theory and contradicted Aristotle and Church doctrine. (*Galileo Biography: Astronomer, Scientist (1564–1642)*, n.d.) About 70 years after Copernicus in 1613, Galileo published his sunspots observations, refuting the Aristotelian doctrine that the Sun was perfect. That same year, Galileo wrote a letter to a student to explain how Copernican theory did not contradict Biblical passages, stating that scripture was written from an earthly perspective and implying that science provided a different, more accurate view. The letter was made public, and Church Inquisition consultants pronounced Copernican theory heretical. In 1616, Galileo was ordered not to “hold, teach, or defend in any manner” the Copernican theory regarding the motion of the Earth.

In 1623, a friend of Galileo, Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, was selected as Pope Urban VIII. He allowed Galileo to pursue his work on astronomy and even encouraged him to publish it, on condition that it be objective and not advocate Copernican theory. In 1632, Galileo published the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*.

Church’s reaction against the book was swift, and Galileo was summoned to Rome. The Inquisition proceedings lasted from September 1632 to July 1633. He was convicted of heresy and was kept under house arrest for the rest of his life. Though ordered not to have any visitors or his works printed outside of Italy, he ignored both. In 1634, a French translation of his study of forces and their effects on the matter was published, and a year later, copies of the *Dialogue* were published in Holland. While under house arrest, Galileo wrote *Two New Sciences*, a summary of his life’s work on the science of motion and the strength of materials. It was printed in Holland in 1638. By this time, he had become blind and in ill health.

However, in time, the Church could not deny the truth in science. In 1758, it lifted the ban on most works supporting Copernican theory and, by 1835 dropped its opposition to heliocentrism altogether. In 1992, Pope John Paul II expressed regret about how the Galileo affair was handled. His contributions were recognized as a scientific revolution and earned the moniker ***“The Father of Modern Science.***” (*Galileo Biography: Astronomer, Scientist (1564–1642)*, n.d.)

Let us return to the discovery of Copernicus that the Earth revolves around the Sun, which challenged the concept in the Bible that the Sun revolves around the Earth. On the other hand, Guru Nanak has a great vision to observe that our Sun and Moon are moving (revolving) around the center of our galaxy, the Milky Way, at a speed of hundreds of millions of miles in his simple language of that time as follows:

> **ਭੈ**[1] **ਵਿਚਿ ਸੂਰਜੁ**[2] **ਭੈ**[1] **ਵਿਚਿ ਚੰਦੁ**[3] ॥
> Bẖai vicẖ sūraj bẖai vicẖ cẖanḏ.
> **ਕੋਹ**[4] **ਕਰੋੜੀ**[5] **ਚਲਤ**[6] **ਨ ਅੰਤੁ**[7] ॥
> Koh karoṛī cẖalaṯ na anṯ.
> **ਅਗਗਸ**, **ਮ**: 1, **ਪੰਨਾ** 151.
> *The Sun*[2] *and the *Moon*[3] *are travelling*[6] *(around the center of Milky Way galaxy) about tens of millions*[5] *of** miles*[4] *under the Laws of Nature/Universe*[1] *and still traveling without any limit*[7]*.*
> AGGS, M 1, p 151.

Note: *The Moon has been considered a planet of the Sun by Nanak, although it is a satellite of the Earth.
Bhai (ਭੈ): The word Bhai (ਭੈ), in general, is interpreted as “fear” by almost all theologians. But in the above phrase Bhai (ਭੈ) appears to mean under specific laws now known as the “Laws of Nature/Universe.

Our Sun lies near a small, partial arm called the Orion Arm, or Orion Spur, located between the Sagittarius and Perseus arms. (Fig. 7) The Sun, with its planets, travels at an average speed of 720,000 km/h (*In Depth| Sun – NASA Solar System Exploration*, n.d.) It would take about 230 million years to travel around the Milky Way even at this rapid speed. Our Sun (with its Earth and other planets) is about 23,483 to 28,700 light years away from the center of our Galaxy, the Milky Way (Williams, 2017)

The Earth revolves once every 23 hours, 56 minutes, and 4.09053 seconds, called the sidereal period, and its circumference is roughly 40,075 kilometers. Thus, the surface of the Earth at the equator moves at a speed of

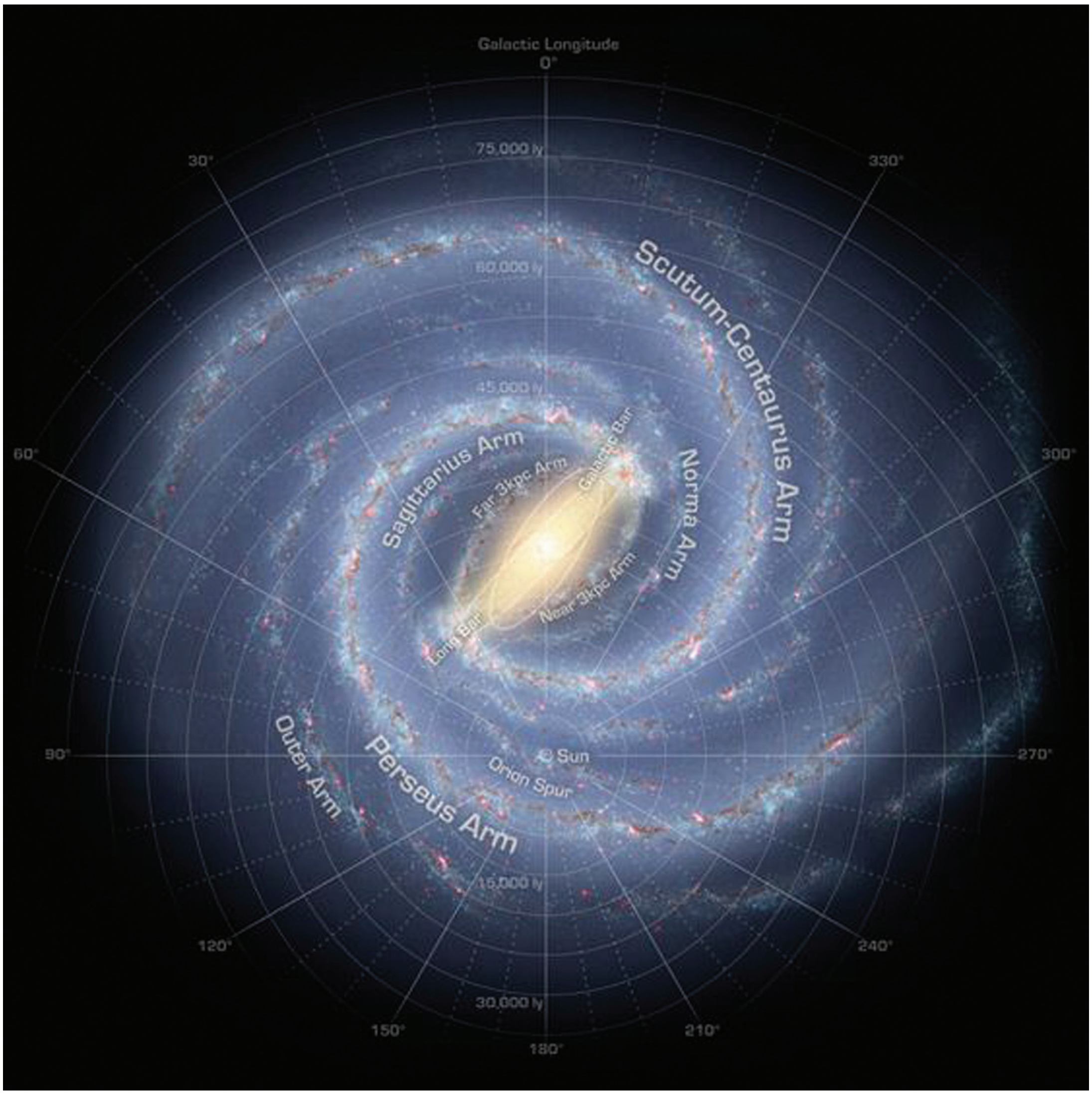

Figure 7. The location of our Sun is in our Milky Way.
Milky Way Courtesy NASA JPL-Caltech. ssc2008-10b1

460 meters per second--or **approximately 1,000 miles per hour.** (*How Fast Is the Earth Moving?* n.d.)

How the Earth is Staying in Its Orbit.

In ancient philosophy there was a concept that a white bull is carrying the Earth on his horns. Nanak challenged this concept with logic and in simple language as follows:

ਧੌਲੁ[1] ਧਰਮੁ[2] ਦਇਆ[3] ਕਾ ਪੂਤੁ[4] ॥
ਸੰਤੋਖੁ[5] ਥਾਪਿ[6] ਰਖਿਆ[7] ਜਿਨਿ ਸੂਤਿ[8] ॥
ਜੇ ਕੋ[9] ਬੁਝੈ[10] ਹੋਵੈ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ[11] ॥
ਧਵਲੈ[12] ਉਪਰਿ[13] ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ[14] ॥
ਧਰਤੀ[15] ਹੋਰੁ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰੁ ਹੋਰੁ[16] ॥
ਤਿਸ[17] ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ[18] ॥…
Ḏẖoul ḏẖaram ḏa▫i▫ā kā pūṯ.
Sanṯokẖ thāp rakẖi▫ā jin sūṯ.
Je ko bujẖai hovai sacẖiār.
Ḏẖavlai upar keṯā bẖār.
Ḏẖarṯī hor parai hor hor.
Ŧis ṯe bẖār ṯalai kavaṇ jor…
ਅਗਗਸ, **ਜਪੁ** # 16, **ਪੰਨਾ** 3.
The mythical white bull[1] that supports the Earth is, in fact, the mutual gravitational attraction[3],[4] between the Sun and the Earth under the Laws of the Universe[2]).
This gravitational attraction[5] holds[6,7] the Earth in place[8].
The one[9] who discovers[10] this order (Laws of the Universe) becomes enlightened[11] and understands that a mythical white bull[12] carries so much[13] load[14] of the Earth.
This bull will need another Earth[15] to stand on, and another bull must carry that Earth, and so on[16].
AGGS Jap # 16, p 3.

Note: In ancient philosophy, there was a concept that a white bull was carrying the Earth on its horns. Nanak challenged this concept with logic, as explained in the above phrases.
ਸੰਤੋਖੁ (*santokh*): Santokh is usually interpreted as contentment or satisfaction; the one who is content and satisfied settles

down in tranquility. Contentment (*santokh*) for the Earth signifies the mystic power with which the Earth stays in orbit. According to present-day science, this magical power has been interpreted as gravitational attraction, which keeps the Earth in orbit around the Sun.

It may be difficult for many scholars and theologians to accept the above interpretation. However, Principal T. Singh has interpreted above stanza almost in the same sense as of the author as follows:

> **“ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਮੰਨਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕੇ ਧਰਤੈ ਨੂੰ ਏਕ ਬਲਦ ਚੁਕੈ ਖੜੋਤਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਬਲਦ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਦਾ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਦੇ (ਸਿਸਟਮ) ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਅਰਥਾਤ, ਇਸ ਸਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਜੋ ਇਕ ਬੱਧੀ ਹੋਈ ਮਿਰਆਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਲ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਚੀਜ ਕਿਉਂ ਸਰਬ ਸ਼ਾਂਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ?... ਇਸ ਲਈ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਦਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਰੱਬ ਦੀ ਦਇਆ ਦਾ ਨਮੂਨਾ ਹੈ ।”**

English:

“The people have accepted that a bull has lifted the Earth; in fact, that bull is the law of the blessing of God, the system with which the whole Universe works under *santokh* (contentment or satisfaction). This means the evolution of the Universe is bound to work under those rules. Why does everything work perfectly and peacefully in this? If it is not under specific laws, there will be chaos everywhere. That is why the Law of Nature/Universe is the compassion of God.”

Principal T. Singh’s interpretation also leads us towards understanding that **ਸੰਤੋਖੁ** (*santokh*) means ‘gravitational pull.’

Nanak further writes about the Earth and its environment as follows:

> **ਪਵਣੁ**[1] **ਗੁਰੂ**[2] **ਪਾਣੀ**[3] **ਪਿਤਾ**[4] **ਮਾਤਾ**[5] **ਧਰਤਿ**[6] **ਮਹਤੁ**[7] ॥
> **ਦਿਵਸੁ**[8] **ਰਾਤਿ**[9] **ਦੁਇ**[10] **ਦਾਈ**[11] **ਦਾਇਆ**[12] **ਖੇਲੈ**[13] **ਸਗਲ**[14] **ਜਗਤੁ**[15] ॥
> Pavaṇ gurū pāṇī piṯā māṯā ḏẖaraṯ mahaṯ.
> Ḏivas rāṯ ḏu▫e ḏā▫ī ḏā▫i▫ā kẖelai sagal jagaṯ
> **ਅਗਗਸ**, **ਜਪੁ ਸਲੋਕ** # 2, **ਪੰਨਾ** 8.
> *Air*[1] *is like a Guru*[2]*, water*[3] *is like a father*[4] *(both represent the environment),*
> *And Earth*[6] *is like the great*[7] *mother*[5]*.*
> (Which provides all types of resources and food).
> *Both*[10] *day*[8] *and night*[9] *are like a female nurse*[11] *and a male nurse*[1]*, respectively,*
> *And the whole*[14] *humanity*[15] *plays*[13] *in their laps.*
> AGGS, Jap Sloka # 2, p 8.

This means humanity enjoys the natural environment and resources the Eternal Entity (God) provides. Therefore, humans must use their resources carefully without any waste and preserve them for the next generations.

Nanak continues to describe the Earth as follows:

> **ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ**[1] ॥
> **ਪਵਣ**[2] **ਪਾਣੀ**[3] **ਅਗਨੀ**[4] **ਪਾਤਾਲ**[5] ॥
> **ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ**[6] **ਥਾਪਿ**[7] **ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ**[8] ॥
> **ਅਗਗਸ**, **ਜਪੁ** 34, **ਪੰਨਾ** 7.
> Rāṯī ruṯī thiṯī vār.
> Pavaṇ pāṇī agnī pāṯāl.
> Ŧis vicẖ ḏẖarṯī thāp rakẖī ḏẖaram sāl.
> *Earth*[6] *having hot (molten lava)*[4] *in its center*[5,] *is a place*[7]*, among air*[2] *and water*[3] *around it with day, night, and different seasons*[1]*, for humanity to practice righteousness*[8]*.*
> AGGS, JAP 34, p 7.

And

> **ਧਰਤੀ**[1] **ਦੇਗ**[2] **ਮਲੈ ਇਕ**[3] **ਵੇਰਾ ਭਾਗੁ**[4] **ਤੇਰਾ**[5] **ਭੰਡਾਰੀ**[6] ॥੨॥
> Ḏẖarṯī ḏeg milai ik verā bẖāg ṯerā bẖandārī. ||2||
> **ਅਗਗਸ**, **ਮ**:1, **ਪੰਨਾ** 1190.
> *The Earth*[1] *is great potential*[6] *for the production of food*[2,] *and storage*[6] *of various matters have been produced only once*[3] *for your*[5] *(humanity) use*[4]*.*
> AGGS, M 1, p 1190.

Sunn (ਸੁੰਨੁ) – Is It Nothingness?

The “Nothingness” has been described by Kaup C., 2007 as Follows:

> *“Nothingness Theory defines nonexistence as the absence of existence, the absence of nothingness, and absence. It is what is not being referred to under any circumstances. Nonexistence, by definition, cannot be referred to, named, or defined. So, referring – to it in any way violates its strict definition. But this fundamental paradox is at the basis of Nothingness Theory and must be referred to anyway. Despite its not being, absolute nonexistence exerts a detectable force. We have proven through simple logic that the Universe has and always will exist. Therefore, the Universe must have existed before the “Big Bang” and will exist forever. This also means that the state of nothingness from which the Universe bursts into existence must have existed relative to absolute nonexistence, given that absolute nonexistence is not achievable. So, space/time – matter/energy can attain relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, a uniform state of static equilibrium. Examples of this state of relative nonexistence can be seen throughout the Universe as ‘black holes.’”*

A black hole is created when matter and space become concentrated, so they are not differentiated. One must embrace the whole paradox embodied in a black hole to apprehend the full meaning of existence, nonexistence, energy, matter, and force. The essence of a black hole is that it isn't there, but it has a location relative to existing systems upon which it exerts the most powerful cosmic force. It is an area of nonexistence that has no place. The so-called supermassive black holes, apparently at the center of every galaxy, swallow up entire solar systems and yet contain nothing inside them because they have nothing inside to fill up. (KRUESI, 2012)

Nothingness does not mean without anything. The thing is there, but it is in such a small volume that it appears to be nothingness. vis actually the pinnacle of perfectly symmetrical uniformity of matter, energy, space, and time. According to the Big Bang Theory, the point was in such a small volume that it has been termed Nothingness by some and Singularity by others. This Nothingness was termed **ਸੁੰਨ** (*sunn*) and **ਨਿਰਗੁਣ** (*nirgun*) state by Nanak during the 15th century. He also called it *jyot* (highly condensed energy). The following discussion will further strengthen it.

WAHT IS ਸੁੰਨੁ (SUNN)?

The **੧** (One) in **੧ਓ** represents Singularity as discussed earlier, and it is also called **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn*) by Nanak, as is apparent from the following stanza:

The first three phrases are in the form of questions. Here **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn*) has been interpreted as Nothingness:

ਸੁੰਨੋ[1] **ਸੁੰਨੁ ਕਹੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋਈ ॥**
ਅਨਹਤ[2] **ਸੁੰਨ**[3] **ਕਹਾ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ**[4] ॥
ਅਨਹਤ[5] **ਸੁੰਨਿ**[6] **ਰਤੇ**[7] **ਸੇ ਕੈਸੇ**[8] ॥
Sunno sunn kahai sabẖ ko▫ī.
Anhaṯ sunn kahā ṯe ho▫ī.
Anhaṯ sunn raṯe se kaise.
Everyone speaks about Nothingness[1].
How did the Infinite[2] *Nothingness*[3] *originate*[4]*?*
How[8] *can one understand*[7] *the Infinite*[5] *Nothingness*[6]*?*

Then Nanak answers it as follows:

ਜਸਿ[9] **ਤੇ ਉਪਜੇ**[10] **ਤਿਸ**[11] **ਹੀ ਜੈਸੇ**[12] ॥
Jis ṯe upje ṯis hī jaise.
That (Nothingness)[9] *originated*[10] *from the Universe*[11]*; therefore, it is the same since it has everything of that Universe*[12] *(energy-matter and space-time but appears as nothingness), and it will become the same as the Universe again.*
AGGS, M 1, p 943.

In other words, **ਸੁੰਨੁ** *(sunn)* Nothingness) became the Universe after the Big Bang. This is the same phenomenon already discussed where the 'One' in **੧ਓ** became the Universe. After that, this Universe will go back to **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn)* (Nothingness) or Singularity again through the Big Crunch, and the cycle will go on. If it is so, then all theories trying to disprove Big Bang will fall apart, and the Singularity to Universe to Singularity cycle will continue, as mentioned by Guru Arjun:

ਕਈ[1] **ਬਾਰ**[2] **ਪਸਰਿਓ**[3] **ਪਾਸਾਰ**[4] **॥**
Ka▫ī bār pasri▫o pāsār.
ਸਦਾ[5] **ਸਦਾ**[5] **ਇਕੁ**[6] **ਏਕੰਕਾਰ**[7] **॥**
Saḏā saḏā ik ekankār.
The Universe[4] *came into existence*[3] *many*[1] *times*[2]*.*
Nevertheless, the One[6] *(Singularity or Sunn/Nothingness) will remain One and Only*[7] *all the time*[5]*.*
AGGS, M 5, p 276.

The above two stanzas support the idea that the **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn*) (Nothingness/Singularity) is that Entity which has been represented as **੧ਓ** by Nanak. Moreover, Nanak also says that the **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn*) gave rise to the Universe (stars, planets, living, and non-living) very similar to that of the Big Bang Theory:

ਸੁੰਨਹੁ[1] **ਚੰਦੁ**[2] **ਸੂਰਜੁ**[3] **ਗੈਣਾਰੇ**[4] **॥**
Sunnahu cẖanḏ sūraj gaiṇāre.
ਤਿਸ[5] **ਕੀ ਜੋਤਿ**[6] **ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ**[7] **ਸਾਰੇ ॥**
Ŧis kī joṯ ṯaribẖavaṇ sāre.
ਸੁੰਨੇ[8] **ਅਲਖ**[9] **ਅਪਾਰ**[10] **ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ**[11] **ਸੁੰਨੇ**[12] **ਤਾੜੀ**[13] **ਲਾਇਦਾ ॥੫॥**
Sunne alakẖ apār nirālam sunne ṯāṛī lā▫iḏā. ||5||
.
Moons[2] *and Suns*[3] *appeared*[4] *from sunn*[1] *(Nothingness), and Its*[5] *energy*[6] *pervades the whole Universe*[7] *(mythical three worlds).*
The Ineffable[9]*, Infinite*[10]*, without any flaw*[11] *(the Universe), originated from the sunn (Nothingness)*[8] *and is imbibed*[13] *in the same sunn (Nothingness)*[12]*.* 5.
AGGS, M 1, p 1037.

Nanak has also explained that the first elements were formed from the elementary particles from this *sunn* (Nothingness or Singularity) which gave rise to stars (like our Sun) and planets and galaxies in this Universe:

ਪੰਚ[1] **ਤਤੁ**[2] **ਸੁੰਨਹੁ**[3] **ਪਰਗਾਸਾ**[4] **॥**
Pancẖ ṯaṯ sunnahu pargāsā... 14
The five[1] *elements*[2] *have originated*[3] *from Nothingness*[4] *(sunn)…14.*
AGGS, M 1, p 1037-1038.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the **ਸੁੰਨੁ** (*sunn*) of Nanak is similar to Nothingness or Singularity as described by scientists in which space-time, matter-energy has attained relative nonexistence by collapsing into infinite density, which is a uniform state of static equilibrium. It is also called ਨਿਰਗੁਣ (*nirgun*) state of that Eternal Entity (God). This ਸੁੰਨੁ (*sunn*) (Nothingness or Singularity) after the Big Bang gave rise to elementary particles, then to protons, neutrons, electrons, neutrinos, and anti-matter. The combination of one proton and one electron formed the first element, hydrogen**.** The addition of one neutron with a proton in the nucleus, one more electron around it gave rise to the second element, Helium. Therefore, with each proton, neutron, and electron addition, more elements were formed, as already explained. These elements gave rise to the whole Universe. This Universe is the ਸਰਗੁਣੁ (*sargun*) state of that Eternal Entity (God).

The *panj tatt* (five elements) considered in ancient and Vedantic philosophies are earth, water, air, fire, aether, or sky. However, these are not elements but compounds (water), mixtures (Earth and air), voids. These cannot form the Universe since they are part of this Universe. These so-called elements are only the parts of our Earth, not the part of the whole Universe. For example, Stars (Suns) in this Universe are made of only Hydrogen and Helium.

I compare the *paj tatt* as Hydrogen, Carbon, Oxygen, Nitrogen, and Phosphorus, which gave rise to the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) molecule called 'Thread of Life.' There is no life without DNA on this Earth. In addition, these five elements are the bases for forming inorganic and organic matter.

The above discussion of ੧ (One) by Nanak in ੧ਓ represents Singularity or Nothingness in science and is called ਸੁੰਨੁ (*sunn*) and ਨਿਰਗੁਨ (*nirgun*) state by Nanak where energy-matter and space-time collapsing into infinite density.

CONCLUSIONS

Since time immemorial, humans have wondered what the Universe is, where it came from, and how it got to be the way it is today. This mystery was resolved when it was discovered that the Universe burst from a single point called **Singularity**. Although there are many theories about the origin of the Universe, the Big Bang Theory still holds strong. According to the Big Bang Theory, our Universe sprang from a single point (**Singularity)** around 13.77 billion years ago.

This **Singularity** is comparable to the **੧ (*Eko* - One) in** **੧ਓ** of Nanak. Some scientists consider SINGULARITY as NOTHINGNESS. But for Nanak Nothingness is ਸੁੰਨ (*sunn*) or ਨਿਰਗੁਣ (*nigun*) state. The ੧ (*Eko* - One) in ੧ਓ exploded and many things appeared as described by Nanak, **ਕੀਤਾ ਪਸਾਉ[1] ਏਕੋ[2] ਕਵਾਉ[3] ॥** (Kīṯā pasā▫o eko kavā▫o.). This explanation of the Universe is similar to that of the Big Bang Theory.

Nanak and Copernicus were contemporaries during the Period of the Renaissance, and both were 70 years old. Copernicus, in Europe was working on Astronomy through observations of Nature and declared that 'the Sun is the center, and the Earth revolves around it – A heliocentric system'. This challenged the concept of the Church that 'the Earth is the center, and the Sun revolves around it.'

On the other hand, Nanak in India, studying Nature and its laws observed that the Sun and its Moon have been moving for a long and still moving at an incredible speed around the center of our Galaxy, The Milky Way.

Galileo confirmed the discovery (The Sun is in the center, and the Earth revolves around the Sun) of Copernicus using Mathematics and the newly invented telescope in 1609. The discovery of Copernicus and its confirmation by Galileo shocked the concept of the Bible that the Earth is the center, and the Sun revolves around the Earth. The Church condemned both and their publications were banned, declared heretics, and punished. Galileo was kept under house arrest for life.

This observation of Nanak is comparable to today's Big Bang Theory. The observations about the origin of elements, celestial bodies, like Suns, Planets, etc., from ਸੁੰਨੁ (*sunn*), called Nothingness in Science and ਨਿਰਗੁਣ (*nirgun*) state by Nanak, are also comparable to the Big Bang Theory. Cosmology in Nanakian Philosophy of the 15th century briefly provides critical similarities with today's Cosmology.

Therefore, the present in-depth study of '***Cosmology in Science and Nanakian Philosophy'*** is an excellent addition to understanding the originality and uniqueness of Nanakian Philosophy of the 15th century, comparable to the Cosmology of today.

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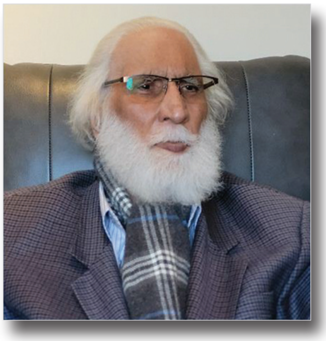

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Patiala's Legacy in Popular Culture: *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti and Salwar*

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims at bringing to the fore front Patiala's (a city in south east of Punjab, of north western India, the fourth largest city in the state). Legacy in popular culture through highlighting things which has made Patiala famous all over the world but has not found much space in the arena of cultural history. Patiala has a rich history, from the early history of Punjab to the formation of *Subah* (Mughal province) and then finally to the glorious and one of the richest kingdoms which is known for its cultural heritage around the world. In pre – partition days it became the cultural window to Punjab and remains so in all times that followed. Patiala became famous for Patiala *Salwar* (a type of female trousers, which has roots in the city of Patiala). Patiala *Shahi* (royal) *Jutti (*a type of footwear, originated in Patiala). Patiala *Shahi Pagh (*a type of turban, for kings of Patiala). & Patiala *Shahi Paranda*s (a traditional hair accessory for braids), that all originated here and carry forward the rich heritage of the kingdom of Patiala. This research will make a probe into Patiala *Salwars*, Patiala *Shahi Jutti*, Patiala *Shahi Paghs* and Patiala *Shahi Paranda*s which through its unique identity have become popular globally beyond the boundaries of Punjab and are the symbols of festivity, colors and ethnicity.

Keywords: Patiala*, Salwars, Jutti, Pagh* (Turban), *Paranda,* Culture, Heritage

INTRODUCTION

After the downfall of 300 years long rule of the Mughals in several parts of India and then finally Marathas, North – West frontier saw new powerful and glorious Sikh rule where Maharaja Ranjit Singh consolidated small *Subas* together, and; a new mighty Sikh Empire was born. After his death, his empire collapsed due to the struggle for the throne among his sons. However, many Sikh *Misldars* established their own small empires in different parts of the Punjab. *Misldars* or *Misls* were the heads of twelve sovereign states of the Sikh confederacy, which rose during the 18th century in the Punjab region. One such kingdom was by Baba Ala Singh who reorganized the small areas of East Punjab in Malwa region, who was a statesman of a very high caliber and ruler of exceptional ability. (S. Singh & Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 1953).

Patiala, later became one of the Princely States under the Britishers in the 18th century. Ala Singh was the son of rulers of Phulkian dynasty. Phulkian dynasty is a dynasty of local Sidhu Jat rulers, who shared the common ancestor Chaudhary Phul Singh. They were once baptized by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Patiala was a state which was made by consolidating nearly 30 villages, which expanded into a larger state. Maharaja Ala Singh established the famous Fort of Quila Mubarak in 1763, which is one of the most famous monuments of Patiala. After that it became a royal house and the kingdom of Patiala was established in which kings like Maharaja Rajinder Singh, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh were born. (Government of Punjab, n.d.).

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It was these three Maharajas who made Patiala, famous all over the world and got kingdom the of Patiala the most prominent place in British India. It is because of their royal state, today Patiala is known for its culture and rich tradition along with its famous *Shahi* (Royal) Patiala *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti a*nd *Salwar*.

Moreover, the *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti*, and *Salwar* have been an integral part of Patialavi culture, serving as symbols of ethnicity and heritage. They not only bind people together in pride for their cultural roots, but also those associated with this culture have helped spread its popularity beyond Patiala, even in the modern fashion market. However, the onslaught of modernity has often eroded traditional values and culture, with the youth abandoning this beautiful heritage. The onslaught of modernity, with its changing lifestyles and values, has had a detrimental impact on the preservation of these traditions. The younger generation, in the face of modernity, is increasingly disconnected from their cultural heritage, opting for more contemporary and globalized styles.

METHODOLOGY

This research article discusses the Patiala's Legacy in Popular Culture: Pagh, Paranda, Jutti and Salwar and it attempts to defines the culture of Patiala all together through a qualitative Historical approach. This paper has provided all the important aspects of *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti* and *Salwar,* from its making to its use, which relies on various types of data and documents. In this paper various details studying past events, documents, books, articles etc. have been used to reach the conclusion and to get the factual information. One of the goals of this method is to remember all those things that had happened in the past and events that are still making Patiala's culture vibrant.

RESULTS

This research highlights the most famous aspects of culture of Patiala, which are popular but have not been researched upon. Through this study, detailed history of all the important aspects of Patiala and its history have been highlighted and based upon that, newer facts and histories have been divulged. It has been observed that *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti* and *Salwar* had undergone many changes and trends which not only had stayed in the State of Patiala but also has been travelling to many other parts of the world and moreover, it has also impacted different cultures out there.

DISCUSSION

The data suggests that the legacy of Patiala's Popular culture lies in its, history which has been highlighted through facts, various trends and changes in culture of Patiala i.e., *Pagh, Paranda, Jutti* and *Salwar*. Furthermore, the results might suggest that the Kingdom of Patiala and the Mughal Empire have impacted these aspects of Patiala's culture in many ways, by somehow, making new additions to their original forms and also changing it according to their personal tastes. Based on the literature review and, the data, they contribute a clear understanding of the parts of Patiala's Popular culture which can be useful to the students of Ethnography and Culture. Moreover, the reliability of this study is impacted by limited access to information due to the lack of previous studies in the area.

PATIALA *SHAHI JUTTI*

Jutti, first originated in Rajasthan. It was a rich footwear which nobles and members of royal families of Rajasthan used to wear with a name "*Nagra*" (a footwear patronized by Mughals, made in Rajasthan). Punjab and Rajasthan share their borders and this rich style of shoes travelled to Punjab and got its new name as '*Jutti'*. *Jutti* is an Urdu word which has a closed upper part with a sole. In, fact there are other similar versions of shoe in different regions, according to availability of materials and sometimes according to the requirement of the environment too. *Jutti* originated in Rajasthan as part of Rajasthani attire but eventually it got extremely popular among the Mughals and Punjab became the center of its production. Punjab added its own taste to it with a lot of experiments.

From there, *Jutti* has become a part of Punjabi traditional attire and a common style of footwear in North India, which was originally made of local leather without any design or additions. These designs and decorations were added later as the popularity arose. In Punjab, initially *Juttis* were only made from of pure leather with common intricate designs, like *Nagra* of Rajasthan. (S., 2018) Before partition Patiala was one of the richest Princely States in Punjab, who brought their own royal taste to traditional leather *Jutti* which came to known as "*Tilla Jutti*", it gained popularity when intricate designs with golden and silver wire were added to it to make it look heavy and luxurious. (Puri, 2019) Maharajas of Patiala the first ones who adopted this style of luxurious foot wear, not only golden silver embroidery but sea shells, beads, mirrors, all added to its royal charm, to make it look like royal which were worn by royal family members and kings and queens of Patiala in pre partition days. (Kaur & Bahadur, 2017).

In the last 300 years this type of *Tilla Jutti* has been made by the 'Chamar community' who assemble it, 'Rangars' who give colors to it and 'Mochi community' who give it a final shape; all these communities who are not only handling the whole process but also exporting these intricate style *Juttis* to different parts of the world. (S., 2018). People almost never return empty handed without buying a pair of *Jutti* from Punjab. This *Tilla Jutti* has become Patiala *Shahi Jutti* over a course of time because of royal house of Patiala and its royal outlook for which it is famous. There are other types of *Juttis* which are made in different parts of Punjab like from Mukstar, known as, Muktsari *Jutti*, Salim *Shahi Jutti* which got famous due to the Mughals, Amritsari *Jutti* and many more, but Patiala *Shahi Jutti* has its own charm and popularity.

The main body of Patiala *Shahi Jutti* always remains of leather but upper part is always differently designed according to the taste of different classes but now due to the unavailability of leather in Patiala different other materials are also used such as velvet Japani, crepe and soft foam, hand tools are also replaced by machines now. (Kour, n.d.)

Popular folk song by Punjabi folk artist Surinder Kaur *"Jutti kasuri, paeri na poori, Haaye rabba ve sanu turna peya, haaye"* is not only famous in India but in Pakistan too. Other Punjabi songs on which every single person, no matter whether they understand the language or not, still remain grooving on it, is by Kaur B., *"Jutti Patiale di aa, Lahore diyan valiyan".* Other than this Patiala *Shahi Jutti* has become a stapple part of Indian attire which is worn by women and men equally along with traditional *Kurta Pajama* (a traditional two-piece garment, worn by Indian men.) and *Pathani* suits and sometimes even with the western attire. Women with different styles of suits and sarees adore them. During weddings the groom's attire is incomplete without a special heavily decorated Patiala *Shahi Jutti*. It is also a perfect souvenir for travellers or people travelling to Punjab or Patiala.

The art of *Jutti* making has indeed undergone significant changes due to modern technology and the scarcity of leather. The traditional charm of *Juttis* has been impacted by various factors, including the availability of raw materials, changing fashion trends, and the shift from handmade craftsmanship to machine production. One major factor that has affected *Jutti* making is the shortage of leather. Leather, which was traditionally used as the primary material for making *Juttis*, has become a rare commodity, leading to increased costs and reduced availability. (Kaur & Joseph, 2010). As a result, *Jutti* makers have had to find alternative materials or import leather from other sources, which has changed the original materials and aesthetics of *Juttis.* In addition, modern fashion tastes and preferences have influenced the designs of *Juttis*. With changing consumer demands and evolving fashion trends, designs have also been modified to cater to the modern market. Traditional motifs and patterns have been adapted to suit contemporary styles, leading to a departure from the original regal style of *Juttis.*

Furthermore, the introduction of machines in *Jutti* making has also impacted the craftsmanship and pricing of *Juttis.* Handmade *Juttis*, which were known for their intricate craftsmanship and unique designs, have been replaced by machine-made *Juttis* that are mass-produced and more affordable. While this has made *Juttis* more accessible to a wider audience, it has also resulted in a loss of the original craftsmanship and regal style that was characteristic of handmade *Juttis.*

PATIALA *SALWAR*

Salwar is a part of women's attire which is actually a type of bottom, which again is famous by the name of Patiala *Salwar* because of its roots in Patiala city of Punjab. *Salwar* is baggy and loose fitted bottom which was worn in Persian or Arabic world (Kumar & Walia, 2016) which was brought by the Mughals in India and influenced by Indian traditions it became Indian *Salwar Kameez (*is an Arabic language word, which is used for a long tunic worn by men and women in Southeast Asia and central Asia). This common pattern of loose bottom became Patiala *Salwar* again due to the royal taste of Patiala. *Pattian Walee Salwar* due to its baggy appearance and plates narrowing down to a cuff at the ankle requires a large amount of cloth to show its *Shahi(*royal) appearance which was adopted by Maharajas of Patiala as a royal attire. They got it customized according to their taste, which became so popular that it equally became part of women attire too for summers. (Tiwari, 2015).

Patiala *Salwar* with *Kameez* actually replaced *Ghaghra Choli (*is a traditional outfit of Indian women, which includes a top, a loose skirt and a scarf known as *duppata*.) and *Sharara/ Garara (*are the two Lucknavi loose fitted bottoms, worn by women in India.) in the 1960's and today it is not only famous in Punjab but regardless of region it has become a common attire for women in India and in Pakistan. Due to different fashion trends and cultural changes in the society Patiala *Salwar* comes in many designs today. However, it has become a popular dress due to its comfort level also.

In popular culture, Bollywood has added to its popularity, by promoting it in films like '*Jab We Met'* (2007), in '*Bunty and Babli*' (2005), Rani Mukherjee and Kareena Kapoor, two well-known Bollywood actresses wore Patiala *Salwar* suits and aced it beautifully. This eventually took Indian fashion market to storm. Even in *Pollywood* (Punjabi cinema.) and Bollywood songs, Patiala *Shahi* Suit, has become a common word.

PATIALA *SHAHI PAGH* (TURBAN)

The Kingdom of Patiala has brought their own *Shahi* tradition nearly into everything they owned, and apart from other things Patiala *Shahi Pagh* is one of the most famous traditions set by Maharajas of Patiala. *Pagh* is an integral part of Sikhism which originated when Guru Nanank Dev in 15th century founded Sikh faith and kept his *kesh* (Hair) to show respect towards God and natur, then the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh made it an identity and symbol of bravery, equality and sacrifice. On the foundation of Khalsa *Panth* (cult), *Pagh* became a mandate for the Sikhs. (K. Singh, 2018) There are many ways of wearing a turban in different parts of Punjab but Patiala *Shahi Pagh* the turban with a royal touch, the turban of kings of Patiala converted the ordinary way of wearing a turban, into a royal one, which can be clearly seen in the royal portraits of Maharajas of Patiala such as of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh and Maharaja Yadavindra Singh.

This type of turban was started by Maharaja Rajindra Singh and after that every member of the royal family of Patiala carried forward its *Shahi* tradition. Many times, people say that Maharaja Rajinder Singh used to wear a turban according to festivals like green for *Muharram (it is one of the four sacred months in the Islamic Calendar)* and *Basanti (*orange) for *Baisakhi* (harvest festival in Punjab) and red like watermelon during Dussehra (a Hindu festival). It has clear layers on both the sides, Maharaja Rajinder Singh even gave it fixed colors on daily basis like lemon and light pink, once considered as state colors of Patiala. This Shahi *Pagh* looks neat and flat and gives perfect triangular effect in center when worn and with time, it was made available in all colors to match the outfit of Maharaja, and then further beautified by *Sarpech.* The *Sarpech (*also known as an aigrette) is a turban ornament that was worn by significant members of the Punjabi Community . It is made of finest and most expensive jewels.

Even today, the present generation of Patiala kingdom, son of Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, ex – chief minister of Punjab Cap. Amarinder Singh, carries this *Shahi* tradition by wearing this style of *Pagh*. In Popular Bollywood movie, "Singh is King" (2008) Akshay Kumar tied Patiala *Shahi Pagh,* which got famous not only in nooks and corners of India but even in foreign countries, where ever the Sikhs reside. Many Punjabi songs use the word Patiala *Shahi Pagh* representing the popularity of this style of turban. However, for Sikh community it is their pride and they proudly say *"Aeae Pagg nal uchi sadi shaan jag te", Kita Pagg ne hi ucha sada maan jag teae"* (*Pagh* has made our pride high in the world, *Pagh* has given us high respect in the world. ("Apna Patiala, the Punjabi Pagh and Evolution of Patiala Shahi Pagh," n.d.)

The tradition of exchanging turbans as a mark of close friendship in Sikh culture is indeed a beautiful practice that has been passed down through generations which is popularly known as *Pagh Vatauni.* It symbolizes a bond of brotherhood, solidarity, and mutual respect among individuals and families. However, the art of tying the Patiala *Shahi Pagh* in its original colors and finest way, which marked respect and honour in Sikhism, is now fading away, with only a few families left who possess this knowledge. In recent times, there has been a trend of some Sikh youths giving up the turban for various reasons, which has led to concerns about the loss of representation and symbolism associated with this cultural practice. Losing this tradition not only erodes the cultural significance but also disconnects the present generation from their historical roots and heritage.

PATIALA *SHAHI PARANDA*

Paranda is a tasseled tag type thing which is used for braiding the hair, it is a hair accessory which is made of silk threads in different colors and decorated with beads and mirrors. It is an important part of Punjabi traditional clothing. Moreover, women often wear it in the same color as their dress on special occasions, like while performing visual arts or usual black one on a daily basis in Punjab. It is also a folk art in Punjab, which is usually made by women in their own houses, apart from this, now these *Parandas* are available in the market in different colors and designs. ("*Parandis*," n.d.). *Paranda* is also considered very auspicious in Punjab, and is given as a part of dowry to the daughter along with *Phulkari Chunni (it* is a traditional scarf for women of Punjab made with Punjab's traditional embroidery style.) and *Tikka (a* piece of women jewelry worn on forehead). It is also a symbol of love for Punjabi women, when they get it from their husbands. ("*Parandi* or *Paranda*," n.d.). Patiala is one of the oldest places where these *Parandi* making started and that's why it is called as Patiala *Shahi Parandi,* and it was customized for royal women by adding golden *Zari (*is an even thread made of fine gold or silver) tassels, ribbons and pearls to it, for the Shahi touch. It's a work of creativity which has two parts, the lower and upper; in the upper part three strands are attached together and, in the lower part a flower is made, to make it look beautiful.

"*Jali Wali Parandi* is the oldest kind of *Parandi* in which strands are woven together to make it look like a *Jali* (net) , which was inspired by the Quila Mubarak fort of Patiala. People say that these *Parandis* were approximately 12 inches long and used to be very heavy due to so many jewels and precious materials attached to it, which was specially made for the *Maharanis* (queens) of Patiala. Another *Shahi Paranda* was "*Moti Paranda*" which looked like *Moti*s (pearls). These *Parandas* got their popularity among the common masses too and now it is available, everywhere including in the market. (M. Singh, 2010).

There is a famous Punjabi folk song *"Kali Teri Gut Te, Paranda Tera Laal Ni"* by Surinder Kaur and Asa Singh Mastana, which is so popular, that it has been recreated by many Bollywood singers and Punjabi singers, due to which *Paranda* today is not just popular among Punjabi women but women from all over the world love it.

Although, today it is famous all over the world as a popular hair accessory among the women, especially during occasions like marriages or festivals like *Lohri*, but has lost its original charm in the wake of changing fashion trends. Efforts can be made to raise awareness about the cultural and traditional importance of *Paranda* to encourage younger generations to embrace and preserve this tradition in its original form too. This can be done through education, community initiatives, and fostering a sense of pride and understanding the difference between personal choices and cultural preservation.

CONCLUSION

Patiala, was one of the richest kingdoms. It was larger than life. Patiala had its own royal and luxurious taste. Patiala's Shahi tradition which was initiated by Patiala's Maharajas and Maharanis, was just a part of the kingdom of Patiala and now it is famous all over the world as 'Patialvi culture'. From India to other parts of the world wherever Punjabis and Sikhs live, they are contributing in popularizing these customs and traditions among other masses at an international level. Patiala *Shahi Paranda* is not just a traditional accessory of Punjabi women but now is famous as a decorated hair extension for the western women too, and Patiala suits and *Salwars* are not only just an ordinary style of trousers, but it has been adopted by world's best-known fashion designers as part of their fashion couture. Patiala *Shahi Pagh* is not something which is just only important to the Sikhs but it has become a fashion is a popular identity, where-as, Patiala *Shahi Jutti* has become women's favorite pair of footwear and the most loved part in ethnic clothing.

Patiala is still one of the richest regions in Punjab and its rich cultural heritage is cherished all over the world. It is evident and clear now, how the house of Patiala or kingdom of Patiala has contributed to evolution and popularity of Patiala *Shahi* tradition or 'Patialvi culture' to be followed throughout the world.

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OPINION

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The Types, Functions, and Significances of *Mulao's* Folk Song of China

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ABSTRACT

Mulao is an ethnic minority living only in Guangxi and their folk songs have many types and functions. The basic song types include ancient bars, freely answer, and breeze. Those songs have many functions, such as cultivating and strengthening people's national identity, spreading interpersonal communication, expressing experience and emotion, making intelligent games, relaxing, and entertaining. Mulao's folk song also has three levels of contemporary significance: comprehensively representing their national life, enhancing national cohesion, and embodying ethnic communication and unity. In addition, sharing those folk songs with other ethnicities shows that the elements of the Chinese nation are in harmony since ancient times.

Keywords: Mulao's folk song, types, functions, culture, regional style, inherit

Introduction

Mulao folk songs are the true portrayal of Mulao national culture and the folk culture text created and inherited by Mulao people in the long historical process. For a nation without a written language, the folk songs that are sung orally almost bear the whole of the national culture and spiritual life, and their importance is self-evident for the nation. However, due to the small population and cultural output of the Mulao nationality, the folk songs of the Mulao nationality have never been known by the public, and academic circles have rarely studied them. Therefore, this paper makes some investigations on the types of Mulao folk songs, analyses the performance purposes and functions of different types of Mulao folk songs, and explores the social significance of various types of Mulao folk songs.

The Classification of Mulao Folk Songs: Based on the Previous Research and National Custom

Although there are few achievements in the study of Mulao folk songs, the academic circles paid early attention to Mulao folk songs. In the 1980s, Mulao folk songs were recorded in some national literature studies. At the same time, some scholars have collected and sorted out Mulao folk songs, and these works are related to the classification of Mulao folk songs.

Chinese National Folk Literature, published in 1987, is the earliest work on Mulao folk songs. In this book, Baoyutang and Wushengzhi wrote a chapter on 'Mulao folk literature', which divides Mulao folk songs into four categories: 'ancient songs', 'casual answers', 'oral style', and 'new Folk Songs'.

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In the same year, Longdianbao edited the Luocheng ballad collection, which is divided into nine kinds of Mulao songs: 'labour song', 'current politics song', 'ritual song', 'love song', 'life song', 'oral style song', 'historical legend song', 'children's song', and 'other Ballads', including birds, animals, insects and fish songs, riddles, etc. In 1992, the Guangxi volume of the collection of Chinese ballads, still written by Bao Yutang and others, was divided into eight categories: ancient songs, labour songs, current politics songs, ritual songs, love songs, life songs, history/legend/story songs, and children's songs. In 1993, Long Dianbao, Wushengzhi, and Guo Wei co-wrote the history of Mulao literature, which includes the classification of Mulao ballads in the second to fifth parts. The second part of 'Medieval Literature' divides the ballads into 'folk songs', 'bitter songs, material songs, children's songs', and 'narrative songs'. The ballads of Part III 'modern and ancient literature' include 'farming songs', 'bitter songs', 'children's songs', 'custom songs', 'love songs', and 'narrative songs'. Modern literature is divided into 'farming songs, custom songs', 'children's songs, bitter songs, love songs', and 'historical songs and current political songs'; 'contemporary literature' only lists 'new folk songs'.

After entering the new century, the greatest achievement in the study of Mulao folk songs is the publication of Mulao ancient songs. The song set is divided into eight categories: 'Kaitan song', 'gutiao song', 'walking slope song', 'oral style song', 'etiquette and customs song', 'Mulao language ancient song', 'Zhuang language love song', and 'other songs' (Jiang, 2019).

In addition, there is a method of dividing by sentence pattern and word number. According to Mr. Long Dianbao's description, the so-called sentence-style song is divided into 'two-sentence song', 'three-sentence song', 'fourteen sentences song', and so on according to the sentence number of each song. Word count songs are not only named by the number of words in each sentence but also by the number of words in the whole song. Sentence-style songs and word count songs can be crossed. Each sentence-style and word count song rhymes differently. Even the same 'six sentence 31-word song' has three rhyme formats. According to the collected ballads, according to the sentence pattern and word number, there are 44 kinds of songs and 90 forms (sentence pattern) of Mulao ancient songs. It can be described as complicated.

As discussed above, it can be seen that the researchers have not formed a unified opinion on the types of Mulao folk songs, and even a single researcher has different classifications on different occasions. In fact, it is impossible to achieve perfect harmony in the classification of Mulao folk songs. How is the song 'coming to the slope on August 15' categorized, 'Life song', 'love song', or 'slope song'? Is a 'meet song' classified as a 'love song', or is it specifically put into the category of 'Zhuang love song' (because this song is sung in Zhuang)? Such situations can be found everywhere in Mulao songs. It can also be said that overlapping is unavoidable.

So, how to determine the name and classification of Mulao songs? It is convenient for us to understand and grasp the whole situation. The classification should be concise and general. Starting from this requirement, it is not suitable to divide the types of Mulao songs by sentence patterns or word numbers. Of course, the Mulao people also speak of 'Sentence song' and 'Word song', but they only refer to a song in this way on specific and accidental occasions. Moreover, the original folk things are characterized by frankness and freedom. How a singer sings a sentence or a song depending largely on his/her convenience. In this way, logically speaking, it is difficult to differentiate Mulao songs from sentence patterns and word numbers. Mr. Guo Wei mentioned that 42 song names and 78 sentence patterns were recorded in the history of Mulao literature, while 44 song names and 90 sentence patterns were recorded in the ancient song of Mulao. This situation means that sentence pattern and word number are not appropriate as the division criteria.

In addition, the authors investigated and examined the Mulao songs for different purposes, and determined some type names with strong epochal and ideological characteristics, such as 'current politics song', 'labour song', 'life song', and other titles, as well as 'love song' and 'children's song', which also have a modern sense. This seems to be worth discussing (Su, 2014).

Just as the commentators pointed out, in ethnological research, there is no strict academic standard for the naming of traditional cultures. However, in this case, there is another basic principle that is used, that is, 'to be established by convention'. This principle is also applicable here. That is to say, our classification and naming of Mulao song types should conform to the cognitive habits of the people of this nation, and we should use the appellation of Mulao people as much as possible. In fact, the above preliminary research also follows this principle to a certain extent.

Then, on the premise of respecting national traditions and on the basis of previous studies, we believe that Mulao folk songs can be simply classified into three categories: 'Ancient rules', 'Casual answers', and 'Oral style'.

In fact, this is basically a return to the practices of Baoyutang and Wushengzhi, but the 'New Folk Songs' they set up are deleted. Since 'New Folk Songs' are classified according to different times, and in terms of content and function, each new folk song can still be classified into the above-mentioned three categories, so it does not need to be listed separately. Second, every author and his works, whether or not they take 'gutiao', 'casual answer', or 'oral style' as first-class type names, cannot but use a lot of words to introduce and describe them. In fact, these three types of names can actually merge and integrate almost all Mulao songs, for example, Chinese National Folk Literature includes 'bitter songs', 'love songs' (including 'walking slope songs' and all other marriage customs songs), 'production and labour songs', 'custom songs', 'winding songs', and riddle songs' and other subcategories in the 'casual answer'. Third, it is true that the Mulao people refer to their own national songs and the most commonly use the following three expressions: 'Ancient rules', 'Casual answers', and 'Oral style'.

The Basic Functions of Mulao Folk Songs

Malinowski once pointed out that 'an object becomes a part of the culture, only where it is used in human activities, only where it can meet human needs'. According to this view, the reason why Mulao folk songs are popular among Mulao people is that they can meet their needs in some aspects, that is, Mulao songs have their specific functions (Fan, 1985).

First, let us consider the 'Ancient rules'. In our view, the main function of the ancient Tiao song is to implement traditional education, cultivate, and form ethnic identity. The so-called 'ancient articles', in which 'ancient' is connected with 'reason', is to sing the heroic deeds, folk stories, legends, etc. of historical figures. Each 'article' (each story) is very long, ranging from a dozen to hundreds of sentences. Myths, historical stories, legends, heroic deeds, etc. are mixed in many nationalities, that is, they are commonly referred to as 'myth historization' or 'historical mythologization', which is the case for the Chinese nation, and the 'gutiao' in Mulao folk songs is also a product of this kind.

There are several points to pay attention to about the gutiao song. First, each capital of the ancient song has relatively fixed lyrics, which cannot be fabricated casually. Lyrics content is about the origin and changes of the nation and the history of the nation. For example, the ancient and modern duet says about the history of the whole (Chinese) nation from 'who cast the placenta of the ancient family' to 'because of the revolutionary party, the feudal dynasty went to the west'. Second, the ancient song is conducted in the form of a question-and-answer duet competition. If one party is not right, it will be a loss. Otherwise, the whole ancient song must be recorded clearly; the gutiao song is generally very long. This means that people should be very familiar with the history of the whole nation. Third, gutiao songs are usually sung when relatives and friends get together at a wedding, birthday, when moving to a new house, or on other festive days, and the singing world (song hall) opens at night. At this time, other affairs are put aside. Men and women, old and young, sing to each other. On the one hand, it is fun, and on the other hand, it also has the intention of spreading the national historical story in the ancient article to as many people in the family as possible.

The ancient songs let people know that they all belong to one ancestor, have the same past memory, and have the tradition of common worship. In other words, these things are the symbols they share, including the values contained therein. These things are commonly referred to as 'culture'. As a nation, it is 'manifested in the common culture', so these things make them form a consensus: they are of the same origin, are a family, and are one. They share weal and woe with destiny and must survive and continue together. The ancient Tiao songs played a role in making the Mulao people recognize and maintain them as a bond of a specific nation (Li, 1997).

Of course, morality and ethics, customs, or some common sense in daily life, as well as some characteristics of lifestyle, also have the function of connecting and condensing groups. The folk songs in the ancient articles also convey a lot of content that the Mulao people are different from other ethnic groups. These contents have accumulated the wisdom and talents of the Mulao people, with their way of thinking and emotional attitude, which also make them different from other tribes or ethnic groups.

The second category is 'Casual answers'. Casually, it is sung on weekdays when driving along the polder, going uphill, visiting relatives and looking for friends, or working in production. It can also be sung on auspicious days such as marriage. 'Answer casually' literally means to answer by singing. Therefore, this kind of song has no fixed lyrics and libretto, but is improvised and sung on site. It is a form of performance that tests people's adaptability and talent and wisdom.

If the ancient article focuses on talking about the ancient, then the casual answer is mainly about the present. It is the product of the daily life of the Mulao people and also serves their current real-life practices. In order to complete the marriage event in life, young men and women naturally want to talk about love, that is, the so-called 'going downhill'. When they meet each other for the first time, if they are interested in each other, they can sing the song of blocking the way or the song of walking slope to invite the other to sing to test. Both sides are optimistic, so they sing 'ask for things' and 'calculate the day', the second time they meet, they sing shoudeng song, jieshuang song, and tongnian song. When saying goodbye, they sing 'temporary separation' or 'I was flustered when I went the same year' to show reluctance. To express the feeling of missing, cacia song, Miss Li Tao, etc. are sung. The whole process of the wedding ceremony is accompanied by singing. Before the bride goes out, she sings 'the cry song of the bride' and 'the cry song of the bride's dress'. Bridesmaids also have 'bridesmaids accompany sigh song'. When they come to the door, a group of young men in the village sing the song of the new man entering the house to congratulate the new man and his host. During the worship, everyone sings 'worship song' and 'wedding song'. During the banquet, 'song of thanks' is sung, and after the banquet, 'wedding song' is sung in front of the song hall after marriage. When a child is born, songs at the full moon banquet, such as 'ginger wine song' and 'He Sheng Prince's wedding song' are sung. Mulao people used to call these songs 'ginger wine song' and 'he Jiang wine song'. Similarly, during ceremonies of birthday and house building, 'birthday song' and 'house rising song' are sung accordingly. (Note: The names of the songs quoted in this paragraph are all from the ancient song of Mulao nationality by long Dianbao.)

In addition to festivals and celebrations, Mulao people also record their observations and experiences in their daily life. When they work, they sing 'farming song' and 'season duet', which tell about their production practices and living customs throughout the year. At the same time, they also record labour knowledge and seasonal knowledge. In their spare time, they use ballads to tell stories about people around them or folk rumours from other places, such as 'ten regrets of long-term workers' and 'Li Qing kills children'. They sometimes sing 'the song of pregnancy in October' and 'the bitter song of daughter-in-law', lamenting the hardships of upbringing and the difficulty of life. Sometimes they sing songs such as 'little cat's eye is green', 'moon light', or some riddles to teach children to play. (Note: The song titles quoted in this paragraph are all from the Luocheng ballads collection by long Dianbao.)

As discussed above, the main function of the 'casual answer' is to carry out interpersonal communication, participate in group activities, transfer practical experience, and express life emotions (Wu, 2020).

Finally, the 'Oral style'. There are two kinds of oral styles: the 'positive' and the 'bad'. The one that persuades people to be kind, with mild and elegant lyrics is positive, for example, the song 'I advise you not to smoke today. Smoking is neither fragrant nor sweet; smoking can't fill your stomach. How much money is wasted in a year!'. It criticizes social evils, mocks the evil deeds of the wicked, and the lyrics are vulgar. The tone is sharp. For example, 'don't shout about the rich, you are a tiger, I have a knife; one day, things will change, cut your skull to make drums'. There are no fixed lyrics in the tone, and they are usually edited and sung on the spot when the singing world is set up. In order to win, both sides improvize, fabricate at will, suppress, and belittle each other, and even sarcastic words come into play. Sometimes singing in competition may looks like everyone is scolding. Of course, it is collective entertainment. After all, it is just verbal bravado. We are not as vulgar and vicious as scolding our enemies. The purpose of sarcasm and derogation is to make the other party admit defeat because they cannot open their mouths.

We have discussed above the functions of various types of Mulao songs, which need to be explained. Just as Mulao songs are mixed in types, their functions are also intertwined. According to the view of the functional school, culture exists to meet various needs.

It is not simple or single. We generally say that folklore has four functions. We talk about folklore as a whole rather than one-to-one correspondence. Therefore, we say that different Mulao songs have their own functions, which are only relative, and refer to their main aspects (Zeng, 1998).

The Significance of Multitype Mulao Folk Songs

'The important work of anthropology is to study the function of culture'. Malinowski's view is enlightening, but not enough. We have discussed the types and functions of Mulao folk songs. But, why did Mulao folk songs form such forms and play these functions? What value and significance do the various types of Mulao songs and their functions contain? As Croce said, all history is contemporary history. The purpose of studying history is to serve the present. As a folk custom and tradition, the Mulao song is a part of history. Therefore, for the purpose of grasping the present and building a new contemporary culture, we also need to think about the contemporary significance of Mulao songs. In our opinion, the meaning of Mulao folk songs includes the following three levels:

First, the Mulao songs reflect and show the life of the Mulao people in a three-dimensional and comprehensive way, and strengthen the national centripetal force and cohesion of the Mulao people.

When discussing the types of Mulao songs, we observe that there are many subtypes of Mulao songs under the 'Ancient rules', 'Casual answers', and 'Oral style'.

The contents of these sub-types of ballads include national history and current real life. Some are used to teach about tradition and ethics and some are used for playing and entertainment. Mulao people like singing. They not only sing at New Year's festivals, weddings, funeral celebrations, and other ritual activities but also use ballads to engrave life and years on ordinary days. They use the way of antithesis to complete the major missions and affairs in life, such as love and marriage and building houses. They also use singing to sigh about their personal misfortune and the difficulties of life. A song 'sigh for loneliness' or 'four years without rice to eat the south wind' attracted each other's tears and infinite sympathy. In the Mulao songs, we can hear the heroic deeds, folk stories, and legends of historical figures. We can also appreciate the Mulao people singing production, life, love, and scenery. We can also see their dues and compete bravely in entertainment competitions. In short, a picture of Mulao people's life is displayed through ballads.

Folk culture records life and folk custom is also an integral part of people's real life. The Mulao song is the product of the spiritual and cultural activities of the Mulao people, and it is an important part of their daily life. The material level and spiritual level of Mulao people's life are coordinated, occurring and developing at the same time.

Life is accompanied by songs, which makes Mulao people find their spiritual home and feel a sense of belonging. This group, which had no national identity for a long time, was officially named 'Mulao Nationality' with the approval of the State Ethnic Affairs Committee in 1956 and became one of the members of the big family of the Chinese nation. Now, although the national assimilation (Sinicization) is becoming more and more profound, a Mulao compatriot will be in high spirits as long as he talks about 'Yifan Festival'. When I heard the Mulao song, I was elated and deeply moved by a sense of closeness and national pride that arise spontaneously, which shows the great significance of Mulao songs in national cohesion.

Secondly, Mulao songs embody the exchange and unity among all ethnic groups.

Mulao people live in Luocheng, Hechi, and Guangxi. Guangxi is a multiethnic area, and many ethnic groups such as Han, Zhuang, Yao, Dong, and Miao still live in and around Luocheng. People of all ethnic groups live next to each other, and there is no boundary or estrangement between them. Although they often talk about 'Han', 'Mulao', and 'Yao', they know that they have some special customs and habits, and it seems that they have a strong sense of nationality. But in fact, when people of different nationalities are together, on the one hand, they respect each other's customs, and on the other hand, they are always very friendly and unrestrained. People of all ethnic groups work and live together, communicate and cooperate with each other, share the same feelings, and are close to each other, which is fully shown in their folk customs, stories, and ballads, that is, their culture.

Mulao people have no written language—words. Mulao songs used to be passed down by word of mouth and continued from generation to generation. But at the same time, such long articles as gutiao, such as the ancient and modern duet, which is 152-sentence long (each four sentences is called 'Tiao', that is, 'gutiao'), are written on paper, and use Chinese characters. Secondly, in Mulao songs, those stories and characters not only belong to their own nation (such as 'Jia', 'Po Wang', etc.) but also belong to other nations. For example, 'Zhao Jinlong of bazhai village' is about the deeds of Dao Guang, Ren Chen, Nian Gui, and Zhao Jinlong who fought against the Qing Dynasty and finally failed. Zhao Jinlong's brother and sister are actually Yao people in Southern Hunan. The lyrics 'Jin Long was originally in Yongzhou Prefecture and lived in Jianghua county', and the Qing court 'sent troops to guard everywhere and killed thousands of Yao soldiers' can be proved. The lyrics also say that in front of strong enemies, 'brothers work together', 'everyone is brave', and resist tenaciously. This song confirms that Mulao, Yao, and other people of all ethnic groups have a long history of solidarity in their daily lives.

In addition, we should also note that Mulao songs are not necessarily sung in the Mulao language, but mostly in the 'Tuguai dialect' of the local Han nationality. At the same time, among the 'love songs' of the Mulao nationality, there are some songs that are sung in the Zhuang language. For example, 'now that you have told your sister, don't talk to others if you have anything...'. The 'Lian love song' that this group of men confided to the women, expressed their sincere love and longed for eternal unity in this life and the afterlife. The original oral text was in the Zhuang language, and the Chinese language we see now was translated by researchers from the singer's manuscript or live singing. This situation shows that Mulao and the Han and Zhuang people live in harmony for a long time, with common customs and close cultural exchanges.

Third, Mulao folk songs show that all ethnic groups share the same root and the Chinese nation has been a harmonious family since ancient times.

At the ceremony of the Mulao Yifan Festival (approved by the State Council and listed in the first batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list in 2006), Shigong wore a Nuo mask which says 'King Pan, which is also called 'panlonggu' or 'Pangu'. Yao people are also called 'King Pan'. In fact, they are all 'Pangu' in the myth of the founding of the world in the Han nationality. At the Yifan Festival, Shigong also sang 'the song of the old woman king' ('drowning the Tianmen gate'), saying that 'there is no place to drown the Tianmen gate, and tens of thousands of people have been drowned; all the people in the world have died, except Fuxi brothers and sisters. Fuxi brothers and sisters refer to Fuxi and Nuwa, which are the characters in the myth of the Han nationality and are the ancestors of the nation. According to the myth of Han nationality, Nuwa kneaded earth to make people. According to the story of Powang of Mulao nationality, all the people in the world drowned. Only one or two children of Powang, Fuxi, and Nuwa, survived. Their brothers and sisters married and gave birth to a fetus like a wax gourd. They cut the wax gourd into 360 pieces, which became 240 men and 120 women. Then they got married and had children, and then they had 'mothers, children, and grandchildren' from all over the world. In fact, many of the same information and symbols still exist in the variation of the story.

In fact, there are many symbols, events, or factors of Han and other ethnic cultures in Mulao folk songs. Only in the ancient and modern duet, there are mythical figures such as Pangu, Fuxi Nuwa, Shennong, Han Xiangzi, and Yang Jian, as well as famous figures from all dynasties in history such as Liu Bang, Xiang Yu, Li Shimin, Cheng Yaojin, Xue Rengui, Fan Lihua, general Mu Guiying of the Yang family, and Song Jiangli. Some songs refer to historical figures alone and are usually well known to people of all ethnic groups, such as Meng Jiangnu, liangshanbo and Zhu Yingtai, Zhu Maichen, and so on. Liangzhu story, although it was first seen in the ancient books of the Han nationality (Tang Liang Zai Yan 'ten Daos and four Fanzhi'), all ethnic groups such as Zhuang, Miao, and Mulao have oral traditions, which are more complex, especially Mulao. In the four ancient songs, Liang Zhu and his wife not only died of love but also went to heaven: Bao Gong judged the case and Huanyang became a loving couple. Later, Yingtai was ordered to go to Liaoyang to rescue Shan Bo, the husband and wife of the number one scholar, 'save the country, save the husband and protect the emperor', and build a meritorious career. The same is true of the Guangxi celebrity 'Liusanjie', who has been famous for thousands of years. It is found in the folk customs of Han, Zhuang, Yao, and Mulao. Is the third sister a strong woman born in Yizhou? Or is she longer than Mulao sister in Luocheng Lantian village? In fact, this is not important. What is important is that this image is loved by all and this folk culture is shared by people of all ethnic groups (Wang, 2016).

British anthropologist Raymond Firth said, 'a nation is a group of people with the same social characteristics'. The so-called same social characteristics of the folk culture refer to the tradition, that is, the signs, symbols, schemas, events, etc. in the folk culture. We often say that 56 nationalities are one family. This is by no means an analogy! Because as the Mulao song shows, our Chinese nation shares the same cultural tradition, and we are of the same origin! Mulao folk songs give us the greatest enlightenment, and its most far-reaching significance lies in this.

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Pandemic Paradox: Unveiling the Gendered Impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the gendered impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh. The study is qualitative, and both primary and secondary sources of data are explored to meet the purpose. Respondents to this study were selected using the purposive sampling method. Online, one-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with participating women and their husbands via WhatsApp, Skype, and Viber between February and August 2020. Focusing on Bangladesh, the article highlights that women endure huge work burdens associated with productive, reproductive, and community work, which has put them under increased pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings suggest that women's unpaid reproductive work burden has been perpetuated, reinforced, and increased during COVID-19. The article also reveals that women's vulnerability in terms of unpaid work, domestic violence, life responsibilities, frontline community activities, and insecure informal paid work has been boosted in the context of COVID-19. The article concludes that although women are disproportionately affected by the pandemic in many ways, policymakers are yet to acknowledge the gendered impact of COVID-19, let alone make necessary recovery policies. It is hoped that this new research will fill the knowledge gap and could also be beneficial for academics and researchers who are keen to further explore the field of women's vulnerability in the context of disease outbreaks.

Keywords: COVID-19, disease outbreak, deadly disease, domestic violence, women's work burden, Women's triple role

Introduction

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a specific type of newly discovered virus named coronavirus (CARE, 2020). The outbreak of this virus had spread to six continents, and approximately 593,192 people died after contracting the respiratory virus (WHO, 2020a). Deaths and infections are increasing over time. There have been millions of infections around the world and thousands and thousands of deaths. To effectively deal with this pandemic, it is essential to explore how it is affecting men and women differently. However, it is very difficult to depict a clear gender dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic (Alam et al., 2020). The gendered impact of COVID-19 is complex, but policymakers must understand that the impacts of COVID-19 are not the same for men and women (FAO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic is widening existing discrimination between privileged men and affected women, poor forced women, single mothers, widows, disabled women, and other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities, ethnic women, and those in extreme poverty (UNESCO, 2020).

The experience of previous pandemics also provides evidence that shows that disease outbreaks affect women and men differently. For instance, during the

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Ebola outbreak in Liberia, Africa, women experienced more joblessness and remained out of work longer than men. In Africa, women were affected disproportionately in the hardest-hit sectors (Korok-nay-Palicz, 2016). During the Ebola outbreak, women spent more time with men, which increased their chances of becoming pregnant. Evidence from Sierra Leone suggests that women spent an additional 1.3 hours per week in productive work with men than they had before. In adversely affected areas, women were twice as likely to be pregnant compared to those in less affected areas. It was found that there were more pregnant girls in the more affected areas than in the less affected areas (Bandiera et al., 2019). And when women become pregnant, it has a long-term effect on them. Working women may have physical changes after pregnancy, such as diastasis recti, weakened pelvic floor muscles, and breast alterations, which may have an impact on their ability to execute specific job duties in the long run. Due to time away from work for delivery, pregnancy, and postpartum recovery, along with the obligations of childcare, prejudice, and discrimination, women may encounter a halt in their professional advancement. Stress from juggling job and childcare commitments as well as postpartum sadness or anxiety are other mental health effects of pregnancy and childbirth. To lessen these consequences and advance gender equality at work, companies must offer assistance and accommodations to pregnant workers. In some cases, it will lead to reductions in their time available for work and possibly a permanent exit from the labor market or education. They also argued that crisis, isolation, and confinement increase the risks of domestic violence against women (Alon et al., 2020).

As it is evident from the above discussion that pandemics hit different gender groups with different intensities, it is worthwhile to explore how men can be involved in the process of disempowering women in the context of disease outbreaks by limiting their access to strategic gender needs and how the increasing burden of the triple role of women has severely affected them during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the present study attempts to explore the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on women's productive and reproductive roles, family and household responsibilities, care work, and community engagement in Bangladesh, as well as how it affects their gender needs. It further discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the vulnerability of Bangladeshi women in terms of paid and unpaid labor, which might have long-lasting negative consequences in the future.

The study contributes significantly to our understanding of how the epidemic has affected women's roles in the home, the workplace, and civil society by highlighting depressing inequities. Women had taken on a growing amount of caregiving duties as a result of schools and childcare centers closing during the pandemic, which caused them to leave the workforce and negatively impact their economic and social well-being. In addition, the pandemic has disproportionately affected industries with a larger representation of women, leading to employment losses and economic instability and demanding the adoption of policies that advance gender equality. Finally, the study focuses on the underappreciated and underpaid community organizing and care labor performed by women, emphasizing the pervasive gender disparities that call for response policies.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Model

No single framework or model provides an appropriate way to address women's work burden in all contexts. Some gender analysis models emphasize equity or equality as key outcomes but do not address gender relations to analyze gender power relations. For example, the Harvard Analytical Framework,[1] also known as the gender roles framework, is one of the earlier studies that focused on both men and women and their different positions and roles in society (Nawaz, 2019). The framework highlights both men's and women's activities, identifying them as productive or reproductive, and demonstrating that these activities reproduce access to and control over income and resources. As the approach only emphasizes gender awareness rather than gender inequality, it offers little guidance for the analysis of unequal gender power relations[2]. Consequently, this study focuses not only on gender roles but also on gender relations to understand how and to what extent a crisis, such as a pandemic outbreak, increases women's work burden. For a more critical understanding of gender roles during crises, the present study based its conceptual model on Moser's (1993) triple role theory.

Moser's triple role theory

Moser (1993) developed a framework that links the examination of women's roles to the larger development

[1] The framework was developed by a group of researchers at Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with USAID's Office of Women in Development

[2] Gender power relations refer to how men and women are unfairly distributed in terms of power, resources, and opportunities, as well as how social structures and conventions promote these disparities. It covers the ways that gender affects social status, decision-making, resource access, and control.

planning process. This framework encompasses both the technical and political aspects of gender integration into development. The first tool identified by Moser involves mapping the gender division of labor by asking who does what. In doing so, she identified three roles in most societies. The triple roles of Moser's framework are presented below:

1. ***Reproductive work:*** Involves the care and maintenance of households and their members such as bearing and caring for children, preparing food, collecting water and fuel, shopping, housekeeping, and family health care.
2. ***Productive work:*** Refers to the production of goods and services for consumption and trade either in employment or self-employment. The functions and responsibilities often differ between men and women.
3. ***Community work:*** Includes the collective organization of social services such as ceremonies and celebrations, functions to improve the community, participation in groups and activities, local political activities, and so on.

As defined by Moser, the reproductive work of poor communities is labor-intensive and time-consuming, and, in most cases, it is the responsibility of women. Moreover, women's productive contributions are less acknowledged and valued than men.

Limitations of the triple role theory of Moser

The "triple role" concept has been the focus of criticism from other scholars. For example, Kabeer (1994) argues that one weakness of the triple role concept is that it fails to distinguish logically between the three roles (who does what and how). The distinction between productive and reproductive roles is clear. One focuses on domestic work, whereas the other concentrates on the production of goods and services. Kabeer argues that it is less obvious that the community role is the third type of role (as cited in March et al., 1999, p. 65). It is important to remember that most resources can be produced in a variety of settings and through several relationships, and this notion is absent in this three-way distinction of gender roles. March et al. (1999) have identified additional weaknesses of this theory, as they have described that the triple role theory fails to integrate intersectional factors of inequality such as racial injustice and class differences, among others, in the discussion of women's triple burden. The lack of autonomy for women restricts their activities in community service and political spheres, which Moser rarely addresses. Another limitation of this theory is that change is not examined as a variable.

Conceptual model of the study

Addressing these limitations of Moser's theory of the triple role, the present study proposes a conceptual model to analyze how changes occurred in women's triple role during the time of a global pandemic in the light of gender relations, contextual and cultural factors, crisis-induced changes in gender needs, and intersectional factors of inequality. The conceptual model of this study proposes that the four factors mentioned here influence women's role in the family and society, which results in increased work burden and vulnerability for women. As shown in the model below, the gender needs of women are both influenced by and influenced by any change in the triple role. This linear model proposes that interactions between the influencing factors, and the COVID-19-induced disadvantages produce more work burden and increase vulnerability for women.

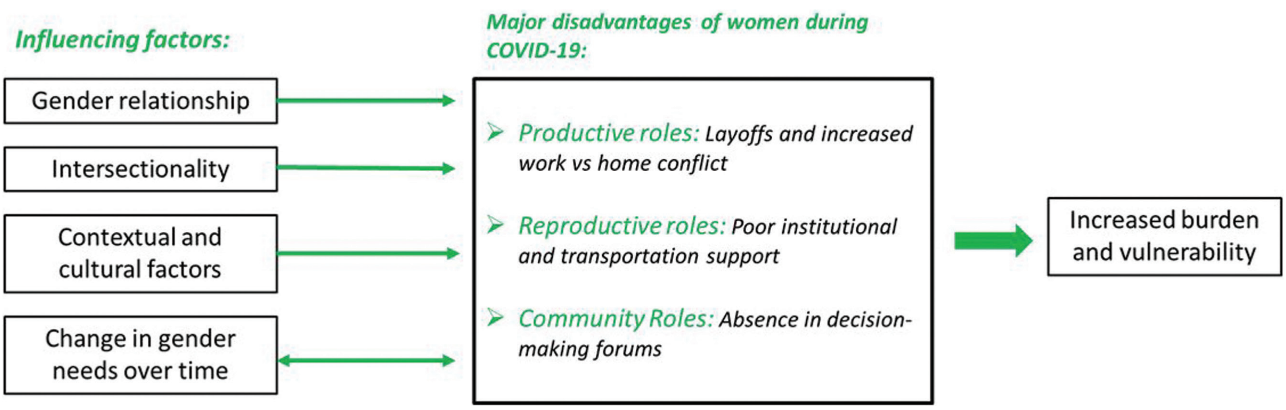

Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study
Source: The Authors

In this context, gender relationship refers to the distribution of power between men and women in both the public and private spheres. Kabeer (1999), in the context of empowerment, conceptualized power in two dimensions. In its first dimension, power refers to the ability to make strategic life choices regarding livelihood, having children, freedom of movement, choice of whom to marry, and whether to marry or not. The second dimension of power relates to the agency, which is described by Kabeer (1999) as internal power that might take the form of decision-making, negotiation, subversion, and resistance, as well as other intangible means of exercising power like the cognitive process of reflecting on and analyzing something. Power relations, thus, refer to the state and freedom of and the cognitive ability of women to make strategic decisions and life choices.

Intersectionality refers to the various interacting factors of inequality that scale up the disadvantages experienced by a particular group due to their multiple disadvantaged identity markers. One of the limitations of Moser's model of the triple role as expressed by March et al. (1999) is that although it emphasized the power differentials within different types of households, it did not take into consideration other forms of inequality such as class and race, which play an integral role in the subordinated status of women. In this model, contextual and cultural factors denote culture-specific factors that determine gender relations and women's role in the family and beyond in a specific society, as well as any environmental change that might have a big influence over the roles and responsibilities of women in general.

Gender need is a contextual factor, and it varies for different gender groups. The practical vs. strategic gender needs tool identified by Moser is very similar to the concept of practical and strategic gender interest described by Molyneux (1985, cited in March et al., 1999, p. 57). Moser (1993) distinguishes between practical needs (to address inadequate living conditions) and strategic needs (for power and control to achieve gender equality). Practical gender needs do not challenge the existing gender division of labor, whereas strategic gender needs relate to the gender division of labor, power, and control as well as issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies. Fulfilling women's strategic needs requires strategies that enable them to become more capable of achieving gender equality.

The proposed model analyzes women's triple role under the influence of the above-mentioned factors in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak and the major disadvantages they experience in performing their triple roles. Finally, the interaction between these factors and the triple role of women during the pandemic produces increased work burden and vulnerability for women. Gender relationships, intersectionality, and contextual factors have a one-way relationship with the triple role of women. That is to say, these factors influence women's work burden, but the latter does not have any effects on the influencing factors. On the contrary, changing gender needs are the only influencing factor in this model, which is both influenced by the changing work burden and realities of performing the triple role.

Meeting their practical and basic needs does not challenge women's subordinate position within and beyond the household. While volunteering or doing more work at home enables women to meet their basic needs, ironically, their worldview may still be limited due to their lack of power to meet their strategic needs. Improving strategic empowerment needs to be based on making structural and procedural changes that provide more opportunities for women. Interventions that focus on meeting practical gender needs only respond to an immediate perceived necessity in a particular context, ignoring women's subordinate position in society. This study explores the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic impacts women's subordinate positions by meeting their strategic gender needs. The paper examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's power and control, the gender division of labor, and domestic violence against women, and explores whether and if so, how women can meet their strategic gender needs in addition to their basic needs during a crisis.

Objectives and Methodologies

This study aims to explore the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's triple work burden in Bangladesh and how the pandemic has shaped the strategic gender needs of women. This broad objective can be broken down into the following specific objectives:

- To analyze the changing realities of the productive, reproductive, and community roles of women during the COVID-19 pandemic
- To find out how the increasing pressure of women's triple roles has burdened them in the pandemic
- To explore whether and if so, then how women can meet their strategic gender needs in addition to their basic needs during a crisis

Both primary and secondary sources of data are explored for this study. Data were collected through a series of in-depth interviews with 30 married working women from Bangladesh, who were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Gender, marital status, and employment conditions were taken into consideration during the selection process. In-depth interviews were conducted via Skype, WhatsApp, and Viber. Ten women's counterparts or husbands were also interviewed separately through WhatsApp. Online interviews for this study were conducted between February and August 2020. Secondary sources of the research include books, research reports, journals, theses, relevant publications, reports of NGOs, daily newspapers, and relevant websites. The collected data was analyzed thematically. An important ethical consideration was to ensure that participants were well-informed about the objectives, benefits, and potential risks of their involvement in the research project. Violating respondents' privacy may create a threat to their integrity and may cause emotional and psychological anxiety, which should be avoided by any means. The purpose of the interviews was clearly described to the respondents, who were informed that their participation would not affect them in any way and that the information would be used for academic purposes only. The participants were anonymous, and also, pseudo names of the respondents were used for all qualitative evidence that was included in the article in the Findings section. Privacy was essential to protect women, as sensitive matters such as domestic violence could lead to problems if women were overheard by others. Online, one-to-one in-depth interviews were conducted when nobody stayed at their homes. The respondents were also given full authority to withdraw from the interview at any time without effect or consequence.

Findings and Discussion

The findings and results section can be portrayed and analyzed from two perspectives: one from inside the household and another from outside the household. It is essential to explore women's unpaid domestic work burden in the context of disease outbreaks. Disease outbreaks escalate women's duties in caring for elderly and ill family members, as well as for children who are out of school. It is a fact that women are disproportionately affected by the crisis due to their position on the margins of the economy. The OECD's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI, 2019) shows that such gender gaps are particularly large in developing countries.

COVID-19 and the increased burden on women's productive and household work

Women are disempowered and remain silent mainly because there is a limited value attached to women speaking out for their unpaid domestic work burden (Altan-Olcay, 2015). Uteng (2011) argues that in the developing world, despite a rapid rise in women's labor force participation over the past 30 years, women are always discouraged from engaging in productive work. Even when women start working outside in the productive sector, family members always expect that they will do all household work in the same way as they did before their involvement in outside work. In Latin America, women perform three times more unpaid work than men, while in North Africa, women perform seven times more unpaid work than men (OECD, SIGI[3], 2019).

All the respondents from Bangladesh have reported that they have to undertake all household duties, including cooking, washing, and cleaning, as well as building and maintaining a shelter for their family members. The husbands by and large do not share any of these household duties, and the women's domestic and family work never decreases despite the women's engagement in productive work (Cerrato and Cifre, 2018). Respondents of the study asserted how societal and family expectations had aggravated their workload during the pandemic. One respondent said:

> We don't expect our husbands to do our household chores. Everybody thinks that this work must be done by a woman. I am taking care of my children and elderly and other members of the family for almost 24 hours since the pandemic started (In an online depth interview conducted on March 12, 2020, with RN)

Another interviewee of this study expressed that:

> As a female, I have to do our household chores, although I work outside. I do not expect my husband to help me with household chores. COVID-19 is increasing my workload at home and outside. Working from home has made things extremely difficult to manage, as I have had to deal with my office work and household responsibilities simultaneously, which was not the case before the disease outbreak (online in-depth interview conducted on April 10, 2020, with RP).

Another respondent has put their experience as:

> In our society, women take their husbands as their lord, as the husband takes care of her; therefore, women

[3] The Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)

> always support them, whether they are right or wrong. Being a frontline health worker, I am taking a huge risk by spending time with Corona-positive patients. Once I come back home, nobody in the family positively accepts me; rather, they want me to do all household work after taking a bath (online in-depth interview conducted on April 20, 2020, with RS).

As far as the findings of the study are concerned, domestic and care work is always considered a woman's responsibility, no matter how much women are financially contributing to their families. So, women's household work is not reduced nor negotiated with their male partners even after they have made an economic contribution to their families (Nawaz, 2013). Women's paid work through self-employment cannot challenge their conventional domestic duties, and COVID-19 is escalating their duties. Qualitative findings of this study also reveal that disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic escalate work pressure for women, especially for working women. In this study, it was found that women are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in respect of women's unpaid domestic work burden in Bangladesh. Moreover, the respondents reported that both their practical and strategic needs are negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Women are unable to meet their practical and strategic gender needs during COVID-19.

Similar results are found in other studies as they explore the burden of societal and family expectations over working women's unpaid domestic and care work. Nawaz (2019), for instance, argues that women have to fulfill their domestic and family responsibilities fully following their return from work, and they are expected to do their household work as perfectly as they did before joining the labor force. Their financial contribution to the family economy does not reduce their household and care work demands. Therefore, women's domestic and family responsibilities do not allow them to work far away from their homes. Moreover, Nawaz and McLaren (2016) argue that women's mobility based on traditional gender expectations restricts women's ventures far from the home or travels in the darkness alone to engage in productive work. McLaren et al. (2020) argue that women's domestic work burden has hugely increased after the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19's Impact on Women's Reproductive and Care Work

Throughout the world, especially in developing countries, there is a clear gender divide that limits their access to a paid labor force. On average, women spend 4.1 hours a day on unpaid domestic and care work compared with men, who spend only 1.7 hours a day (UN, 2020).

A study has been conducted by McLaren et al. (2020) in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Australia. They found only minor differences among women in all those countries, but they consistently raise concerns that women's reproductive burdens have been perpetuated, reinforced, and increased in the context of COVID-19. In many countries, women are the primary caregivers for their children. Women are also more likely to provide care for family members and adult relatives during a pandemic, even when these women are employed. Data from OECD countries shows that employed women are 50% more likely to take care of their sick and disabled adult relatives than their male counterparts (OECD, 2020). School and day-care center closures and the risks of the virus faced by elderly family members have increased the burden of care work and risks for women, especially those who were employed and were expected to work from home during the pandemic.

The findings of the study confirm existing studies, as interviews for the present study reveal that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the reproductive work burden of women in Bangladesh. When women become pregnant, a lot of issues impact their lives. In some cases, pregnancy pushes them out of the economy and education. Moreover, pregnant women have more chances of getting infected by the coronavirus than the general population because immune system changes that occur during pregnancy make women more vulnerable to the virus (Sheffield, 2022).

In this regard, one respondent of the current study has asserted:

> My delivery is in two months. But I am worried about how I will go to the hospital. I have learned from social media that doctors are mostly unavailable right now. On top of that, my husband has lost his job due to COVID-19. Because of this, I have to continue my online business in lockdown, even with the pregnancy. My husband rarely helps me with the household chores. I feel afraid and stressed worrying about me and my baby (online in-depth interview conducted on July 13, 2020, with RPF).

According to UNICEF (2020a), 2.4 million babies were born in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic, ranking the nation ninth in terms of the greatest anticipated number of births for the first nine months following the pandemic's announcement. Even before the

COVID-19 pandemic, every year in Bangladesh, about 2.8 million pregnant women and newborns died, mostly from preventable causes (UNICEF, 2020a). Roy et al. (2021) provide further evidence in this regard, as they have found that the prevalence of family planning use among currently married 15–49-year-old women has decreased by approximately 23% from before the pandemic. Results also suggest that 24.42% of the respondents were using oral contraceptive pills (OCP), which is lower than before the pandemic data (61.7%) (Roy et al., 2021). This tendency has caused a lot of women to conceive babies during the pandemic when accessing necessary transportation, pregnancy-related healthcare, and healthcare providers was extremely difficult. One respondent of the study has expressed:

> …. My husband rarely helps me with the household chores. Even during my pregnancy, I have to take care of cooking, washing, cleaning, and caring for my mother-in-law as well as my toddler. It's exhausting sometimes. But being the woman of the house, I must do it. I don't think men are fit for these jobs. (Online in-depth interview conducted on July 13, 2020, with RPF).

As the interview reveals, the pressures of productive and household work add to the reproductive burden of women during the COVID-19 outbreak, to which pregnant women are more vulnerable than any other gender group. Also, pregnant women were not spared from household chores and familial responsibilities during the pandemic. Pregnant COVID-19 patients are at increased risk for severe illness, ICU admission, and ventilator requirements compared with non-pregnant patients (Sheffield, 2022). The high pregnancy rate, which resulted from low contraceptive use during the pandemic, thus harmed women's health in Bangladesh. The reproduction burden of pregnant patients in the country is proliferated by inadequate healthcare support and pregnancy-related uncertainty and anxiety (UNICEF, 2020a, 2020b).

COVID-19 Pandemic and Domestic Violence Against Women

Another important gendered dimension of the pandemic is violence against women. It is found from research that both the severity and frequency of domestic violence have increased during the COVID-19 lockdown (Arif et al., 2020). In this study, it is found that some situations and incidents of domestic violence demonstrate the male's assertion of superiority and dominance in the household. Glati and Kelly (2020) argue that it is difficult to assess spousal violence against women at home as it is a confidential issue for them. However, an interesting finding from the in-depth interviews revealed that many respondents showed less hesitation in discussing violence issues due to their acceptance of the researcher as a trustworthy friend. An open and secure environment was offered to every participant, ensuring that each interviewee had no fear of their discussion being overheard by her husband. One of the interviewees of this study has asserted:

> My husband used to beat me occasionally whenever he got angry or I did anything wrong. But after the pandemic, as he cannot go out and spends most of his time at home, I am getting beaten more than before since the pandemic began. Battering has become his habit now. ….. As long as he provides for the family, I can accept his beatings to some extent. But getting beaten every day is just too much to take. (Online in-depth interview conducted on July 11, 2020, with RFD).

Domestic violence, however, is not limited to physical battering. Kaur and Garg (2008) defined domestic violence as both physical and verbal abuse against women in the household. The indicators for exploring violence against women include issues such as whether women are afraid of their husbands, whether they are beaten by their husbands; whether they are both afraid and beaten by their husbands (Jejeebhoy, 1997, cited in Kabeer, 1998). Domestic violence is taking place in many ways, including physical abuse, mental abuse, sexual violence, forced sex, and becoming pregnant (Staff, 2020). Respondents to this study have reported increased verbal and mental abuse during the pandemic as well. One respondent has put it as follows-

> I got married last year, and due to the pandemic, I am staying home all day alongside my husband and in-laws. My in-laws never stop criticizing anything I do. Also, they criticize my housework. Even if I don't always make mistakes, they nevertheless hold me responsible for all of their mistakes. That drains me and puts a lot of strain on my mind. I used to attend college before the COVID-19 breakout, which helped me avoid their teasing. Yet right now I feel trapped in this hostile setting. (Online in-depth interview conducted on June 3, 2020, with RNS)

> It is found in this study that there is a strong positive correlation between the COVID-19 pandemic and domestic violence against women. The UN Agency for Sexual and Reproductive Health (UNFPA) has estimated that globally there would be 31 million more cases of domestic violence if lockdowns continued for six more months (WHO, 2020b). Throughout the world, domestic violence has increased during COVID-19. The pie chart shows that, globally, domestic violence has increased throughout the world.

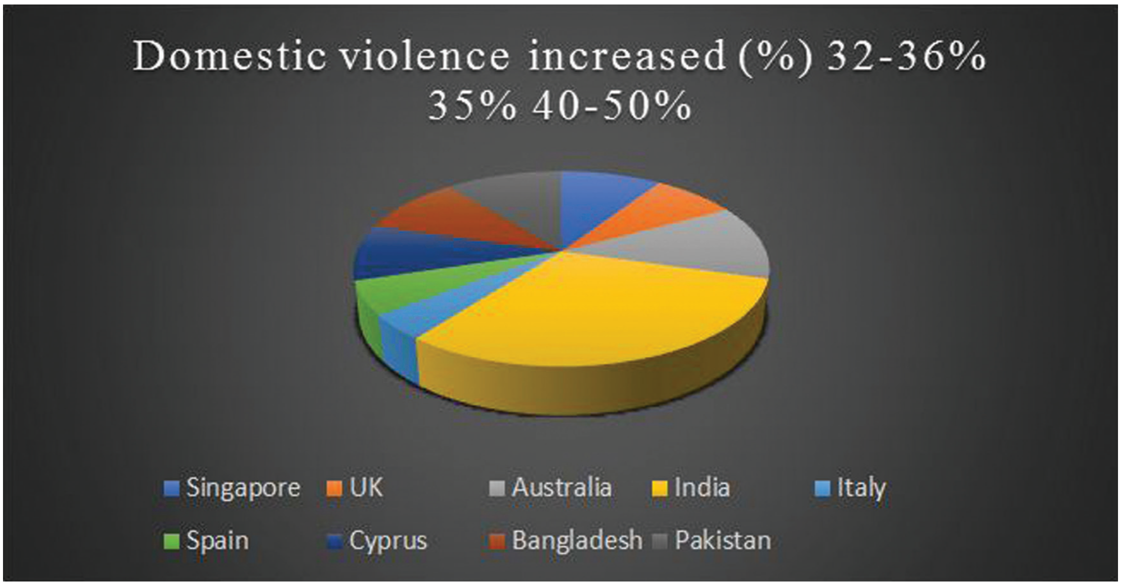

Figure 1. Domestic Violence During COVID-19
Source: UNFPA cited in WHO, 2020b

According to the UNFPA report cited in WHO, 2020b) report, domestic abuse increased by 32-36% in France, 35% in the United States, 40-50% in Brazil, 30% in Singapore, 25% in the United Kingdom, 40% in Australia, 100% in India, 13.60% in Italy, 18% in Spain, 30% in Cyprus, 31% in Bangladesh, and 35% in Pakistan. Domestic violence is one of the greatest human rights violations. Only 40% of the abused reach out, and less than 10% complain to the police. In these four countries, there is specifically no law regulating violence against women. Globally, one out of three women is abused. Since during the pandemic women are home-locked, only 40% of the abused women are receiving medical and legal support, and less than 10% are complaining to the police. Therefore, limited access to healthcare and pandemic legal support makes women more vulnerable.

Violence against women and girls has always been a social, cultural, and economic problem in Bangladesh. Nearly two-thirds of women have experienced gender-based violence during their lifetime (Nawaz, 2018). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2016), 54.2% of married women face physical and sexual intimate partner violence. Nawaz (2015) argues that although Bangladesh has enacted laws against domestic violence, their implementation is largely complex. It is found in our research that economic, physical, and mental violence has increased during COVID-19. The Manusher Jonno Foundation (2020) has reported that violence against women has increased by 31%, of which 97% demonstrates a rise in domestic violence. Jean and Miks (2020) have found that in the Rohingya camps of Cox's Bazaar, there has been a huge increase in domestic violence during COVID-19.

Economic Stress and domestic violence

COVID-19 increases economic stress on families, making women more vulnerable to domestic violence, and it also puts children at greater risk of exploitation and child labor. A recent study has been conducted by BRAC (2020, cited in TBS, 2020), where it is found that low-wage job holders are mostly affected, and they are migrating from urban to rural areas, which further leads to frustration and household tension. The present study suggests that in Bangladesh, poverty or economic stress is a root cause of gender-based violence, and the majority of the respondents identified poverty-related stress as the root cause of violence. Dalal (2011) and Kabeer (1999) identified that poverty disproportionately influenced violence against women. The women who came from the most impoverished backgrounds were more likely to experience domestic violence than more affluent women (p. 42). This research suggests there is a strong positive correlation between economic stress and domestic violence. This finding was also verified by their husbands.

The following statements are expressed by the husbands of the study respondents-

> We have five members in our family, including my parents. I am the only income earner for my family. When I lost my job after the pandemic started, I had to struggle to maintain the family. Economic tension and anxiety make me disrespectful towards her (online in-depth interview conducted on June 10, 2020, with the husband of RSU).

Another interviewee has put it as:

> When the pandemic started, I lost my job. I have spent all my savings. Now I cannot meet the needs of my children. I could not tolerate my incapability and quarreled with my wife very often (online in-depth interview conducted on June 3, 2020, with the husband of RSR).

Yet another interviewee has asserted:

> I admit that I am disrespectful to my wife when our family suffers from extreme poverty. As COVID-19 begins, family obligations take precedence, and love is cast out the window. I rebuke my wife very frequently and tell her that she is worthless (online in-depth interview conducted on June 3, 2020, with the husband of RKH).

Respondents to this study have stated that violence against women is largely correlated with their husbands' failure to support their families. They further stated that since husbands had lost their jobs after COVID-19, their inability to contribute to household income increased stress and tension in the family, which further led to domestic violence. Many women desired to contribute to their family's income prior but had no capital to do so. This situation changed when they joined part-time jobs. Consequently, they started contributing to the household income and were no longer economically dependent on their husbands. However, five women reported that since they had lost their jobs after COVID-19, they had again become dependent on their husbands. In some cases, the respondents mentioned that their dependency on their husbands reduced their bargaining power.

Women's community work in COVID-19

A collective response to the pandemic, as emphasized in global health guidelines, can only be achieved with community participation. Voluntary aid efforts and knowledge about the vulnerable people of the community are central to the pandemic management efforts (Marston, Renedo, & Miles, 2020). The community role of women is twofold. At one point, community works indicated socio-political activities and ceremonies that women arranged and participated in. Another aspect of community activity covers women's engagement in the management of community resources such as water and education (Intesar, 2021). Women are on the COVID-19 frontlines as healthcare workers at the community level. However, women's representation in formal policymaking remained minimal, especially in Asia, where only one in five parliamentary seats are held by women (UN Women, 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic has decreased face-to-face interaction between women in their community. The imposed lockdown has restricted the meetings of women with their neighbors and friends, with whom they used to interact before the disease outbreak. The virus has significantly limited the mobilization and organization of women. The lockdown in COVID-19 has encouraged the respondents to this study to continue their social and community activities online. But that too is not without limitation. Excessive use of social media has negative effects on the mental health of the respondents, as they have reported feeling restless, worried, anxious, and insomniac.

One respondent has expressed:

> I have been feeling insomniac for the last few days. I had never experienced sleeping difficulties before. But in the pandemic, I am spending most of my time on Facebook socializing with friends because I have nothing else to do right now. But gradually, I am realizing that I am getting addicted to it and cannot stop scrolling through my Facebook feed, even when I feel sleepy (online in-depth interview conducted on June 3, 2020, with RSR).

Another respondent said:

> Before the pandemic, I used to meet and interact with my friends every day. But right now, we are all afraid of the virus and avoiding meeting in person. We now connect online. I don't know what we would do in the pandemic without the internet. (Online in-depth interview conducted on June 3, 2020, with RKH)

Intesar (2021) has expressed the mental stress resulting from concerns over an unconscious community as a community burden for female health providers during COVID-19. The virtual divide caused by the pandemic is another issue she has addressed in her study that limits the social and community participation of women belonging to lower economic strata. Even though the pandemic has largely limited in-person community participation and engagement, the respondents to this study have reported positive community engagement during the pandemic in helping distressed community members. However, globally, women's organizations have reported suffering from funding cuts during the pandemic (CARE International, 2020). The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality (IANWGE) suggests that women's leadership and participation are treated as a critical cross-sector issue in ensuring the better engagement of women in the COVID-19 response (IANWGE, 2020, as cited in Aghajanian and Page, 2020).

Existing studies and data on the gender impact of the pandemic express that, globally, women are at a greater risk of poverty and vulnerability due to the pandemic than men. According to an OECD report, women make up around 70% of the global healthcare workforce; however, they are under-represented in leadership and decision-making positions in the healthcare sector (OECD, 2020). Representation of women in the decision-making process is an integral part of fulfilling strategic gender needs. Hence, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions has put them at a disadvantage in COVID-19 policymaking. On top of that, the global gender pay gap stands at 16% right now, with approximately 740 million women working in the informal economy. Due to this, women are at a greater risk of unemployment, and women belonging to the age group 25–34 are 25% more likely to live in poverty than men of that age group (UN, 2020).

COVID-19's Impact on Women's Paid Labor and Recovery Measures

Globally, women are at the forefront of the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, as they make up around 70% of the total healthcare workforce. In the USA, around 78% of health workers are women, and in China, nearly 90% of health workers are women. Since they are working at the forefront of the battle, they have more chances of getting infected. Moreover, women are more at part-time jobs. Globally, 57% of women work in informal, part-time jobs that have fewer safety nets, such as paid maternity leave and health insurance. Globally, one million women garment workers have lost their jobs, who constitute 75% of the whole garment industry.

Under the above circumstances, it is essential to take some recovery measures. Several recovery measures, such as social protection and safety net programs should be taken. Some cash transfer programs should be launched in all three countries. And it is also necessary to introduce cash transfer programs for most disadvantaged women, including widows, single mothers with children, and divorced women. Stimulus programs should be introduced for all these affected women, but especially for those who are the victims of domestic violence. The importance of reproductive healthcare for pregnant women and new mothers should be recognized by both policymakers and family members.

Policymakers should listen to those women who work at the forefront of the battle against the pandemic. Their stories and suffering should be heard by policymakers. Despite women's huge involvement in healthcare, they are always underrepresented at agenda-setting tables and in leadership positions. Policymakers must understand the different impacts of COVID-19 on men and women. Adequate occupational safety and health insurance should be provided to women because they are the core caregivers for children and the elderly in families. Some measures ought to be taken to provide care for the caregivers of the families. Some programs should be introduced to balance women paid and unpaid labor burdens.

Another important area to focus on right now is the effective implementation of policies that guarantee the fulfillment of both the practical and strategic gender needs of women. International development agendas on women's rights, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), should be put into action by the signatory parties. Bangladesh, being a signatory to CEDAW and the Beijing PFA, has adopted several women-friendly policies, but the majority of them have remained ineffective to date. One way to overcome this policy paralysis is by increasing the political literacy and participation of women, as well as mobilizing women in the political arena.

Limitations of the Study & Scope for future research

Due to the study's small sample size, its results might not be generalizable. The subjective character of the information gathered in this qualitative investigation may also be open to bias or interpretation on the part of the researcher, which could have an impact on the study's validity and reliability. Furthermore, because the study asked some sensitive questions regarding gender-based violence, many respondents were not comfortable disclosing information regarding these experiences. Some experiences were adequately represented in this study as a result of this.

Even though the study on the gender impact of COVID-19 utilizing Moser's triple role paradigm made a substantial contribution, there are still several issues that need additional study. The interaction of gender with other characteristics like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class is one such area. It is crucial to look into how the epidemic has affected women's economic stability, long-term labor market outcomes, and mental health and wellness. Lastly, more research is needed to determine how the epidemic has affected the roles played by women in civil society and how their involvement in local projects and organizations might be encouraged to advance social justice and gender equality.

Conclusion

The article argues that during the COVID-19 disease outbreak, women endured a huge work burden at home and outside in respect of paid, and unpaid work and other life duties. The article analyzes women's triple work burden in the context of disease outbreaks adopting the triple role framework of Moser. Theoretically, Moser's triple role paradigm acknowledges the interdependence of women's community, reproductive, and productive responsibilities and how these interact with one another. This framework enabled this study to gain a deeper knowledge of women's experiences and the requirement for laws that deal with gender disparities in these roles during crises. This framework emphasizes the significance of taking a gender-sensitive stance when developing policies and offers a helpful framework to this study for comprehending and overcoming gender inequities in society.

The findings of the study suggest that in Bangladesh, women's work burden escalated once the pandemic started. The evidence highlights the intersections between the pandemic and women's work burden in respect of unpaid household chores, informal paid work, front-line work, and community activities. Moreover, the study indicates a strong positive correlation between the pandemic and domestic violence against women in terms of physical, mental, and sexual violence. The article expresses that, although women are disproportionately affected by the pandemic in many ways, their voices are always unheard. Women will continue to undergo a huge work burden and gender-based violence during and post-pandemics. Policymakers should take strategic political responses that should include women in decision-making and leadership positions in controlling resources. At the same time, effective implementation of women-friendly policies should be ensured.

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The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest for the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Tackling the Case of Reading Skill in University Foundation Programs

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ABSTRACT

Reading is considered a key skill taught at the university. The dilemma lies in the challenges students face in reading classes. In view of that, this research aims to look into how best to enhance reading skill delivery techniques and find out practically feasible implications to overcome such obstacles. In order to find such techniques, the researcher seeks to investigate the lecturers' opinions and their roles in improving the teaching of this skill in the foundation program (FP) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. A total number of 10 lecturers, belonging to the FP are the participants in this research. It has been decided to apply the qualitative inductive thematic analysis by semi-structured interviews with the lecturers. Finally, the modus operandi to be acted on in classes is provided to ameliorate competent and appropriate delivery of the reading skills in a more convenient manner. The recommended strategies are categorized into three groups of pre-, while and post-reading strategies that can be used by reading teachers.

Keywords: Reading skill, Pre-Reading Strategies, While-Reading Strategies, Post-Reading Strategies, Foundation

1. Introduction

The reading skill is one of the lifelong learning skills. It is crucially associated and correlated with social success and academic achievement. Moreover, reading is linked with the enhancement and leverage of students' motivation toward learning as well as self-confidence. Despite this, recent studies reveal that educational systems at the tertiary levels have been negatively criticized due to the lack of reading culture and concepts among students (Al-Mahrooqi & Denman, 2017). Many initiatives have been created, integrated, and introduced to elevate learners' reading skills. Hence, this research seeks the upgrading of the reading classes that are conducted at the universities. The study starts by briefly addressing the impediments and hindrances that students wade through while reading in a foreign or second language. Then, the modus operandi and various strategies are presented to teachers to act on so that they may deliver engaging, interactive, and intercommunicative reading classes as is proven to be the best effective method of teaching or learning (Ebrahimi, 2019).

Researchers have agreed on the absolutely vital importance of inculcating unwaveringly deeply rooted reading skills in learners. Consecutive studies have revealed a link between competency in reading and overall scholastic achievement and academic attainment (Griffin & Mindrila, 2023). Based on these findings, teachers have a considerably crucial role to play in nurturing and cherishing a positive attitude toward learning and literacy in their entire team (Huang, 2019). Scholars agree that

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teachers must instruct learners flawlessly in proper pronunciation, enrichment of relevant vocabulary stock, and acquisition of unobstructed, lisp-free fluency and accuracy to maintain their role in the reading classes.

In the same context, Thissen et al. (2022) stressed the absolute importance of using diversified reading strategies in English classrooms. The scholar divided the reading process into three stages: pre-reading, during-reading, and after-reading phases. Examples of such strategies comprise skimming, team review, shared reading, and cooperative reading. In addition to that, he highlighted the intrinsically relevant role of graphic organizers for the purpose of facilitating and understanding the reading activities on the part of students. It is interesting that such examples were also mentioned and implemented by the participants of this study. It is also important to use the proper teaching strategies that suits the students for the betterment of their learning (Dhanapal et al., 2021). Therefore, selected strategies that are more convenient and suitable for particular classes can be chosen to be used.

1.1. Objective and research question

The purpose of this research is to introduce the most practical strategies that teachers tend to get help in their reading classes. In this regard, the researcher asked ten experienced teachers, "how to enhance reading classes by applying effective strategies?" to know which strategies are popular in practice and "how to improve teaching of reading at the university foundation level".

2. Literature Review

The Pre-reading stage focuses on the readers' schemata which are their background knowledge and experience (Yan & Kim, 2023). In this stage, teachers apply and integrate some brainstorming activities related to the topic of the reading passage for the purpose of stimulating students' background knowledge, thereby enabling them to associate the ideas in the passage with their own knowledge and understand more of the gist of the reading text. Comprehending the text is built throughout this stage. Some lead-in strategies comprise prediction of content (Olson et al., 2018), personalized questions (Olszewski & Hood, 2023), learning some vocabulary items contained in the text (Pellicer-Sánchez et al., 2021), and applying visual aids (Ebrahimi, 2014). The adaptation and integration of such activities spur students' prior knowledge and assist them in understanding the text more effectively and efficiently. Throughout this stage, students' interest, engagement, and motivation can also be built up. Therefore, the main focus of this stage is the student (Vernet et al., 2021).

In the while-reading stage, students attempt to approach the content of the passage and decode it; in the meanwhile, they may apply different strategies to understand such content (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Some of the helpful strategies include skimming and scanning (John, 2022), and teamwork (Walker et al., 2021). This stage focuses more on the text itself rather than on the student (Alfarwan, 2021).

In the post-reading stage, teachers verify students' comprehension and fathom their critical thinking skills (Kasneci et al., 2023), whereby students have an opportunity to produce, and practice, the language related to the topic by themselves. In this stage, students may review and check their own schemata and connect them with the information they have acquired while reading the passage for the purpose of making inferences (Li et al., 2022), analyses (Toyokawa et al., 2023), syntheses (Castells et al., 2023), evaluations (Li et al., 2022), discussions (Teng, 2020), and finally, grasping the meaning constructions (Wang, 2020).

The aim of the above-mentioned stages altogether is to learn how to read for the purpose of understanding the gist and how to think throughout the various reading stages (Li, 2022). In view of this, a number of scholars highlighted some relevant techniques, such as visual literacy and collaborative learning to help apply and integrate the above-stated strategies.

3. Methodology

This research is designed with the aim of exploring a number of strategies that could develop strong reading skills for students for the purpose of having a cooperative, successful, and creative reading class. Additionally, based on the interviews, most lecturers in this study deem the heavy workload, students' low language proficiency, and lack of motivation as the main challenges to enhancing their students' reading skills.

The study was conducted in a Foundation program in an English as a Foreign Language country. This program is typically conducted in non-English speaking countries where the medium of instruction in higher education is English. The program is also popular in English-speaking countries where international students pursue their higher education. Foundation usually takes one to two years. The university foundation program consists of up to four levels of English courses, including the four main skills of English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students who do not succeed in passing their English tests, such as IELTS or TOEFL, before entering the university have to go through these levels to improve their English proficiency. Students enter any of the levels based on their placement test scores. The duration of the program depends on their performance and can be shortened if students can provide the minimum band score that is the requirement to begin university studies. After passing the tests or completing the English courses successfully, students are able to join their faculty to study their major of studies. This study focuses on the effective strategies that successful, experienced university lecturers use in reading classes.

3.1. Participants

Based on stratified sampling, ten lecturers who taught English reading courses at public universities in EFL country were the participants in this study. The lecturers were among the experienced ones who could share more ideas. They also used the strategies themselves throughout years of experience and approved the usefulness through the trial and error so they could shed more light on various techniques of teaching reading. These teachers were five female and five male master's or Ph.D. holders in relevant English teaching fields, with the age range of 35 to 50 years old, and all of them were selected among CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) holders. In addition, they all had more than ten years of English teaching experience at the tertiary level worldwide. Therefore, they were all well-experienced and knowledgeable in the field of English teaching.

3.2. Instruments

This study applied a qualitative methodology, where semi-structured interviews were integrated with the lecturers. The lecturers were asked open-ended questions on how they teach reading and based on their experience which techniques they believe are more effective and which ones they implement in their own classes. The interview protocol had few stages. At the beginning of the interview session, the researcher explained totally what the aim of the research was and how the data could be valuable and analyzed. The interview was semi-structured with the main question of what the useful reading strategies could be to improve reading skill at the university level. During the whole session, the researcher tried to be quiet and just like a motivator for the participant to offer more information so that s/he was not influenced by the researcher's opinions. The whole procedure would take less than half an hour depending on the elaboration of each participant.

3.3. Procedure

As the first step, and before starting the research, approval was sought from the university ethical committee consisting of the senior professors, management, and active research boards. It is important to obtain such approval before contacting the lecturers for ethical purposes. Furthermore, giving the participants the information on the research is a key component of research ethics when it comes to involving human subjects (White et al., 2023). Accordingly, invitations were e-mailed to the lecturers. In the e-mails, the topic, venue, aim, and steps of the research project were stated. Moreover, the agenda and research objectives were explained accurately in details so the participants could think about the ideas and come prepared. An appointment was set and each participant was invited separately for an interview session. The interviews were mostly in the morning when lecturers are more energetic and not tired of classes so they can remember and share more ideas and strategies. The venue was in a convenient quiet office where there could be no disturbance. A "busy" sign was hanged at the door to prevent any interruption during the session. In addition, the mobile phones were silent and put aside. The room was a simple neat room with a comfortable seat, a pen, a paper, and a laptop connected to the internet for the participant in case s/he needed. Relevantly, in the interviews, the researcher stressed on the ethical issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Also, before the data collection process, the researcher elaborated to the participants that they would have the right to participate or withdraw, at any stage of this study with no consequences. Finally, the data were analyzed by introducing a qualitative inductive thematic analysis.

3.3.1. Data Collection

On the interview day, the lecturers were explicitly informed that the data was taken exclusively for the operation of this study and it may be suggested to the other colleagues to be implemented in practice. A separate session was conducted for each one of the participants and during the interview session as the interview question they were asked how they helped their reading class students to read and understand the reading passages more effectively. The lecturers were interviewed till it seemed that they were repeating the same strategies as the previous lecturers. Therefore, a total number of ten lecturers seemed enough and the interviewer stopped at ten lecturers as the saturation point for this study. All sessions were recorded to be transcribed after the session and the strategies that the lecturers use or recommend to be extracted. Each session was approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

3.3.2. Data Analysis

The data analysis followed a qualitative inductive thematic method. The themes were generated from the repeated strategies that lecturers mentioned during the interviews. Then, the similar concepts or themes were named as a single component. In this regard, the interviews were first transcribed and the mutual strategies were extracted to be shared as effective techniques to teach reading skill in a communicative manner. During the whole process, the researcher was totally biased-free in terms of theme selection and naming the codes. This was assured by checking the final themes by two other experts in the area of reading strategies from other higher education institutions. It was necessary to do so in order to achieve the reliability and trustworthiness of the data. The index of Cronbach's alpha of the similarity between the ideas of the researcher and the experts was significantly close (α = .98).

4. Results

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, there are three main categories that are defined for this study including pre-, while-, and post-reading strategies. In the following sections, more in-depth findings with examples of each of these broader categories will be elucidated.

4.1. The Three Main Strategies

This section reveals a report on the findings of the research question about improving reading skills in communicative language classes. The ten lecturers asserted the role of pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading strategies in motivating students in their reading classes. Some examples of these types will be elaborated in the discussion section.

4.1.1. Pre-Reading Strategies

These lecturers confirmed the vital role of pre-reading activities. Such a stage helps students to associate their background knowledge with the ideas in the passage. Thus, most of the understanding of the text was built throughout this stage. Hereunder, this research presents the different pre-reading activities that have been approached throughout our research, such as setting contexts by applying visual aids, introducing new vocabularies, and integrating simple technologies.

4.1.1.1. Setting Context

Most of the lecturers use different pre-reading techniques to set a context related to the assigned reading passage or unit. Such lecturers mentioned that setting a context provides meaning and clarity to the new information. They elaborated that setting a context could be implemented by the use of visual literacy, unit openers, or asking personalized questions to introduce the new reading topic.

Such lecturers rely on visual literacy, such as authentic images, real situation photos, and videos, to set a context. The realistic visuals are motivational tools for boosting learners' conceptual thinking levels. Implementing visuals help learners to stay connected with the materials at hand, rather than depending on textbooks. For instance, L1 (Lecturer 1) highlighted the importance of setting a context saying, "The first thing is that I make sure to set the context before I start explaining". L1 elaborated on how to set a context by relying on visual literacy by using relevant videos. Also, L1 stated that she asked the students to connect pictures pertinent to the topic to their own lives. For example, if the topic was about tourism, she would ask the students to relate their pictures to any trips they had had. In the same context, some lecturers, such as Lecturer 2, Lecturer 4, and Lecturer 7 referred to the roles of images in setting contexts. Such lecturers argued that using lots of pictures while connecting all the vocabulary items with their pictures in one story helps the students to comprehend the text profoundly. In the same respect, Lecturer 3 and Lecturer 9 use videos, such as YouTube videos, to set a context and familiarize the students with the reading topic. L3 affirmed that videos provide adequately ample background information to the students. Such videos are followed by relevant questions. Lecturer 3 added, "I give them comprehension questions in chronological order, not difficult questions, but ones to make sure they are following. That day, they asked to watch the video for a second time which I found encouraging".

4.1.1.2. Introducing New Vocabularies

Vocabulary has an effective role to play in the reading process, as it contributes greatly to readers' comprehension. However, all the lecturers agreed that vocabulary is one of the most challenging aspects of English as a Second Language (ESL). Lecturer 9 affirmed that "vocabulary is one of the most challenging tasks for students".

In this view, the lecturers make sure to familiarize their students with the new vocabulary as one of the pre-reading activities. Most of the lecturers depend on prediction, where students guess meanings from contexts. Also, some lecturers would provide the students with new sentences to help them deduce meanings. Lecturer 1 referred to the importance of extensive reading before starting lessons. Moreover, some lecturers, such as Lecturer 1 and Lecturer 4, depend on illustrations to introduce new vocabulary. They would ask their students to look for the meaning of new words and then provide visual representations for such words. Lecturer 10 highlighted the importance of art when it comes to vocabulary teaching. L10 stated, "Drawing always helps." L2 would ask the students to draw the text. They read the whole text and put it in pictures, bubbles, or flowcharts. So, one poster can reflect the main idea of the context.

4.1.1.3. Simple Technology

When it comes to technology, most of the lecturers agreed to refrain from fancy technologies and to depend more on simple technologies such as Learning Management System (LMS). Students also show a tendency and interest in learning more enthusiastically through technological devices in class. Lecturer 3 gave good examples of user-friendly LMSs such as Kahoot and Quizlet. Likewise, L10 uses related websites to introduce new topics and enhance discussions in reading classes.

4.1.1.4. Other Techniques

Lecturer 2 referred to using hashtags as a pre-reading activity. Lecturer 2 would ask students to read texts and create hashtags on the text themes. Afterward, they start discussing these themes. Another technique is that Lecturer 8 and Lecturer 9 ask their students to read related articles before coming to their reading classes. When they come back to class, they work in groups and discuss the main ideas and other related points. An interesting technique reported by Lecturer 9 is using pictures and storytelling. The lecturer stated that using pictures and telling real stories from students' cultures, or even of people they know, helps students to relate their experiences with the text.

Table 1 below shows the helpful pre-reading strategies that different experienced lecturers use for the improvement of the reading skill in their classes. This table shows that setting context and using visuals are highly popular among lecturers.

4.1.2. While-Reading Strategies

This stage focuses more on the text itself. Lecturers apply the hereunder various strategies and techniques as have been exhibited in the interviews with them.

4.1.2.1. Matching Pictures

The first strategy, matching pictures with the texts, is revealed to be a beneficial technique that helps students in their reading. For example, L10 explained that if lecturers want to teach students the main idea and "linking headings", they could give their students images and ask them to find ways to connect the images with texts. This approach teaches students critical thinking and trains their minds to find clues. Subsequently, they should be able to identify the headings correctly.

4.1.2.2. Flipped Classes

The second strategy is flipped classes, where L8 and L9 mentioned that they would preferably get students to read texts at home because they could take their own time to understand them without growing the feeling that they are working under pressure. Moreover, they can look up any vocabulary they may not understand. Then, when students come back to class, they read such vocabulary anyway and work in groups to discuss with each other what the main idea was.

Table 1. Pre-Reading Strategies

Lecturer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strategy	-setting context -personalized questions -visual literacy -using visuals -setting a purpose	-using visuals -idiom -hashtags -drawing	-setting context -videos -asking questions -Unit-openers -flash cards -Kahoot -quizlet	-using visuals	-context clues	-prediction	-using visuals -story telling	-unit-openers -articles	-using videos -read short stories -using articles	-art -using websites

4.1.2.3. Dividing Text

Another strategy is dividing the text, which has been implemented by L10. Facilitators could divide long passages into short paragraphs, and students work in groups on each of them, trying to understand each paragraph and then come up with the headings.

4.1.2.4. Teamwork

Another example of the applied strategies is teamwork. L7 has mentioned that teamwork is integrated where students create their own questions on passages and, later, answers could be elicited from another group in a competitively constructive, instrumental environment. Students could work in groups to answer questions successfully and effectively, but, on the other hand, there are many challenges encountered by teachers in order to apply teamwork, for example some students rely on classmates to get the answers.

4.1.2.5. Know, Want to Know, Learned Strategy

L5 believes that using KWL (Know, Want to know, Learned) chart is very practical to engage students throughout reading classes by activating prior knowledge (What students know, what they want to know, and what they learned).

4.1.2.6. Three, Two, One Strategy

According to L5, 3-2-1 Strategy is crucial for the development of reading passages. It generally means that students come up with three points they walked out of the lesson, two questions about two issues that are still unclear or not sure about, and one item that they enjoyed about the text. Some examples for these points are in the following strategies. For instance, L5 also added that using diagrams and organizers, like Reading Chart and Graphic Organizers, is vital. The lecturers explained that the Reading Chart activity might include main ideas, supporting details, numbers, dates, and names. In addition, the lecturer mentioned that applying activities on the part of speech is a key element to analyzing and approaching the written text and improving students' memory. An example is that the lecturer will write a paragraph on the board while omitting one part of speech (i.e., nouns). Students should read the paragraph and say the missing part of the speech.

4.1.2.7. Multiple Choice Questions

The last strategy is multiple choice questions, where students choose the best answer. The options could vary. There are different examples of multiple choice questions like T/F/NG or the best heading for each paragraph. L10 believes that this type of question puts students in "a challenging mode". When students have many options to choose from, the task will be challenging, trying to find the correct option. Students should respond while providing the rationale behind choosing such an option. This type of question is meant for students to figure out the best option and how to do so. Furthermore, students get more involved in reading the passage, and lecturers could assess students' understanding of the text.

In the below table, a number of gainful while-reading strategies are listed based on the experience of the certified qualified lecturers who participated in this study. According to this table, just like the pre-reading phase, using visuals is one of the predominant strategies that were constantly employed by lecturers for easier understanding the text.

4.1.3. Post-Reading Strategies

There are some strategies and techniques lecturers reported that they use after students read the text in order to enhance students' understanding of the gist (Table 3). At the same time, four out of ten lecturers in our study did not report doing any post-reading tasks.

4.1.3.1. Commenting and Evaluation

L4 mentioned that commenting on or evaluating the text can be a promising way for students to develop their own understanding of the gist. She reflected on the students' engagement in text evaluation for more discussion activities.

Table 2. While-Reading Strategies

Lecturer	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
Strategy	-contextual cues -using visuals -group reading.	-visual literacy -skimming -play the audio -competitions	-using visuals -flow charts -posters	-jumbled text	-KWL -part of speech -vanishing text	-diagrams/ charts	-Team work	-flipped classes	-group work -vocabulary activity	-matching pictures with the text -text division -team work -comparing

4.1.3.2. Personalization

L5 noted that personalization or relating the topic of the text to the students' lives, is always a good idea to make them understand the text better and relate their experiences to the topic of the text. She believes that building up connections between students' background experiences or schemata and the topic can assist them in constructing meanings. She sometimes seeks help on websites in order to increase students' knowledge of that certain topic.

4.1.3.3. Questioning

For L6, questioning to activate students' critical thinking skills is crucial. The lecturer assumes that this works better to help students tackle the text.

4.1.3.4. Making Judgments or Decisions

L7 supposes that clarifying vague points is significant in understanding and making judgments or decisions. As a result, she uses some vocabulary items, or comprehension activities, after the reading. Some lecturers believe that this is what they need to do before their students read the text, while others think that we need to allow students to first guess the meanings or concepts in the first place and then explain the difficult parts after they finish reading.

4.1.3.5. Debating

Debates are another highly effective elements to enhance reading skills for L9, who loves her students to debate after the reading.

4.1.3.6. Gaming

Gaming, or gamification, is another activity reported by L10, who confirms that many students and lecturers enjoy it and get benefits after reading passages. The games should be relevant to, and agree with, the topic and the vocabulary used in the text or the grammar that is new there.

In the following table, several post-reading strategies that the participants implement after their reading task is indexed. This table shows clearly that metacognitive sort of strategies that deal mainly with understanding of the text were prioritized among the participants.

5. Discussion

This study investigated a main research question as what strategies teachers use to overcome the challenges that they face in reading classes. In view of that, the above question was crafted as the research question to be interviewed with ten experienced lecturers. The ten lecturers elaborated on the challenges they encountered in the reading classes as well as the practical techniques they applied to motivate and engage, students in these classes. The aim was, in fact, to suggest some practical and already-passed solutions or techniques that help the experienced lecturers in this study and can be helpful to other teachers as well.

The results were highly in line with recent research worldwide (Yang, 2022; Ligudon & Ildefonso, 2022). The lecturers in this study stressed that the heavy teaching load, besides the large capacity of the classes, are some of the challenges that they run into while teaching. Also, the lecturers stated that some of these challenges were related to their students' low language proficiency, disinterest in the assigned topics, and unfamiliarity with the themes. Such themes reflect universal appeal and contemporary content. However, some students fail to relate to such themes due to the fact that these students hardly read in their first language anyway.

Hence, the ten lecturers applied diversified strategies to help students with the language barrier on the one hand and introduce the themes from different perspectives on the other. Such lecturers adopt three strategies to engage their students in reading classes. These strategies are pre-reading activities, while-reading activities, and post-reading activities.

5.1. Pre-Reading Strategies

For the pre-reading activities, lecturers ensure that they set a context related to the assigned topic. In the same context, Ríos-López et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of the pre-reading stage. Pre-reading strategies can be helpful in the sense of activating the background knowledge of the students and familiarizing them with the topic.

Table 3. Post-Reading Strategies

Lecturer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Strategy	-	-	-	-commenting -evaluating	-personalization -website	-critical thinking	-clarifying	-	-debate	-gamification

In addition to that, they make sure that they introduce the new vocabulary in an engaging, appealing technique while using visual literacy to relate to the topics. Setting context by visuals as Alam and Mohanty (2023) also mentioned is one of the helpful strategies in this phase. The lecturers also believed that they get better results when they introduce unknown vocabulary to the students before reading, just as Oh et al. (2023) proved in their study. Same as elaborated by Ebrahimi (2020), lecturers in this study also make good use of simple technologies to make reading understanding easier. Creating hashtag themes and discussing them was another brilliant idea by a creative teacher which surprisingly, this innovative technique was also suggested by Gkikas et al. (2022). Reading related articles in the context of the next reading passage before class is a technique presented by some of our participants which is also highly recommended by McGrew and Byrne (2022). Same to Hà and Bellot (2020) the participants also believed that using pictures and storytelling techniques are outstanding ideas.

5.2. While-Reading Strategies

Lecturers in this study also emphasise on while-reading activities same as Alfarwan (2021) who shed some light on the importance of while-reading techniques in reading. In order to facilitate the process of students' understanding of the text, the lecturers mostly used the following while-reading strategies.

One of the techniques that the participants loved to use was matching pictures with the text that Roembke et al., (2019) mentioned as an effective way as well. In addition, the lecturers relied on flipped classes, which Wittmann and Wulf (2023) also spoke favorably of using this technique. The other recommended strategy was dividing the text that Bhattara (2020) also suggested it in his study. Teamwork, as another important strategy is approved by Moore et al. (2020). He acknowledged that putting students in groups helps learners to perform better as the relaxing environment assists them in speaking and answering questions without any pressure. On the other side, Zhang (2023) emphasized that the failure of teamwork is a consequence of students' who lack constructive contribution. The other strategy is What students know, what they want to know, and what they learned that based on both our lecturers and Samarng (2023) helps students in speculating about the content as well as helping teachers to evaluate students' progress. Three, two, and one strategy is another strategy that Cserni and Rademacher (2021) believe that it inspires students to "pay attention, stay focused, and offer feedback". Lat but not least is the multiple-choice strategy that as Yan et al. (2022) emphasized can improve reading comprehension.

5.3. Post-Reading Strategies

In terms of activities, the lecturers depend on higher-order thinking skills, such as commenting and evaluation. This idea has its own pros and cons as on the one hand it may help develop students' understanding (Akib et al., 2020), yet contribute to building a biased belief on the other (Clemens & Fuchs, 2022). Also, personalization, or relating the topic of the text to the students' lives, is one of the post-reading activities lecturers use in their teaching. It is so effective to let students understand the text and relate them to their own experiences (Liu et al., 2019). Another post-reading strategy is personalization that Yang and Ogata (2023) also concluded that it improves reading and understanding of the texts. In addition, large research supports the idea of fostering question-posing and making students think critically (Sasson et al., 2018). Another strategy is that students can make judgements and decisions either before or after reading a text (Nation, 2019). Debating is another strategy with conflicting ideas. Opponents thereof are of the opinion that unless students understand the text fully, they won't be able to argue about the ins and outs of the topic in-depth and in detail (Parrish et al., 2022). Contrary to this view, opponents thereof trust that debates and arguments can develop readers' higher skills of thought (Nguyen, 2020). As the last drawn strategy gamification can improve motivation and boost students' interest in participating in the learning process (Legaki et al., 2020). It is obvious that having debates and playing diversified types of games create an interactive, competitive atmosphere in classes (Mohd et al., 2018).

Toyokawa, et al. (2023) believe that these strategies are active reading strategies that enhance learning and understanding a text. Although the above-mentioned techniques are useful to be applied in reading classes of any level or in teaching any language, it is recommended that teachers try other techniques that suit their own students as the needs and abilities of students are different from one setting to another. Sure, there are some other techniques that other teachers use and are missing in the suggested list of these particular lecturers who participated in this study.

6. Conclusion

This study shows the strategies that teachers use to have more promising reading classes. The experiences lecturers introduced the top effective strategies based on their experience and knowledge. They mentioned several strategies to be used before, while, and after reading a text to help students read and understand the text easier and deeper. The aim of this research was to suggest some promising reading strategies to other colleagues to implement the similar strategies in their own reading classes for a more successful session. Some of the most used pre-reading strategies by the lecturers were setting context, using visuals, introducing new vocabularies, and using technologies. A number of while-reading strategies are matching pictures, flipped classes, dividing text, and teamwork. As the post-reading strategies, we can name commenting and evaluation, personalization, questioning, and making judgements and decisions. These strategies were useful for EFL university students and can be similar for other target language learners. Therefore, it is suggested that future research explores reading strategies among school students.

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Sustainable Business Practices and Value Creation: Ecotourism Operators and Small and Medium Businesses in Sandakan

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ABSTRACT

This research paper presents empirical findings on the significance of sustainable practices implemented by ecotourism operators and small and medium businesses in Sandakan, Sabah. Employing a quantitative methodology, the study emphasises the awareness of environmental, social, and economic factors, as well as the challenges associated with implementing sustainable and responsible practices. The findings indicate that effective sustainable management maximises the social and economic benefits for the local community, cultural heritage, and environment, while also minimising negative impacts. Therefore, maintaining credible, sustainable, and responsible business practices in the long-term can yield positive effects on the environment, society, and economy.

Keywords: sustainable practices, ecotourism operators, small medium businesses, Sabah

1. Introduction

Sustainability, defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), has gained recognition among stakeholders in the business context. A sustainable business, as defined by Hubbard (2009), satisfies the needs of its stakeholders while ensuring its capacity to meet those needs in the future.

The importance of sustainable development and practices has been extensively discussed in the literature. Environmental sustainability, a critical facet of sustainability, is a prominent feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Phan, 2019). Recognised as integral to sustainable development, sustainable consumption was highlighted as an overarching theme of paramount importance at the UN Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, linking environmental and developmental challenges. It is considered one of the three overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development, alongside poverty eradication and natural resource management. Accordingly, sustainable consumption and production has been identified as one of the 17 SDGs by

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the United Nations in order to foster economic and social development (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the economic development of nations (Bannock, 2005) and are often seen as engines for growth (Brouthers et al., 1998), employment, and wealth creation (Chan, 2008). Hence, SMEs are vital for the overall health and stability of the global economy. In Malaysia, SMEs are widely present in the agriculture, manufacturing, and services sectors. However, there is limited knowledge of how these firms respond to sustainable practices. Gaining a better understanding of firms', particularly tourism suppliers', approaches to sustainability in their business operations and management can provide valuable and relevant practical insights to guide policymakers' decision-making.

Therefore, to investigate SMEs' responses to sustainable practices within their business environments, this paper focuses on the current sustainable and responsible practices of SMEs and tourism suppliers within the palm oil plantation and mill sector in Sandakan, Sabah. Specifically, the study explores how these firms create value for themselves and society through sustainable practices in their business operations and management. By identifying the pertinent issues and challenges faced by different small business firms and operators in adopting and promoting sustainable practices and development, this research contributes to a more enhanced and comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ecotourism and Sustainable Practices

Ecotourism and sustainable practices are essential considerations in the operations of businesses, driven by individual philosophical beliefs and the value they create for both the firms and society. Sustainable tourism aims to optimise the utilisation of environmental resources, which are integral to tourism development. This involves preserving ecological processes, safeguarding natural heritage and biodiversity, respecting the socio-cultural authenticity of local communities, conserving their living cultural heritage and traditional values, and fostering inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. Additionally, sustainable tourism ensures viable and long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders in an equitable manner. These benefits include stable employment and income-earning opportunities, access to social services for host communities, and poverty reduction (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005).

2.2 Concept and Framework of Sustainability

Font *et al.* (2016) have categorised the motivations for sustainable practices in SMEs into three clusters: lifestyle, business, and legitimisation. Similarly, sustainable practices can be grouped into three clusters: environmental, social, and economic. Various researchers in the field of sustainability have utilised these classifications in their studies, such as Tamajón and Aulet (2013), Mihalic (2014), Das and Chatterjee (2015), Mathew and Sreejesh (2016), and Blancas *et al.* (2017). Additionally, some researchers have expanded on these groups or principles in their works. For example, Tay and Chan (2014) incorporated four principles of sustainability, including ecological, economic, cultural, and social aspects. They further proposed that the core principles of sustainability encompass economic, environmental, social, and cultural factors, while the peripheral principles include political, managerial/institutional, and technological aspects.

Notably, Ashok *et al.* (2016) developed a hierarchical ecotourism sustainability assessment framework, represented by Principles-Criteria-Indicators-Verifiers, with the purpose of establishing strong connections from the upper-level ideals (Principles) to tangible measurements (Criteria and Indicators) and down to specific pieces of information (Verifiers). This framework enables the practical implementation and monitoring of sustainable ecotourism objectives at destinations (Ashok *et al.,* 2016).

2.3 Value Creation

According to Grönroos and Voima (2013), value creation is defined as the result of interactions between companies and customers, where these interactions represent the convergence of the provider and customer spheres of influence (Chen *et al.,* 2017). Similarly, Vargo and Lusch (2008) and Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) conceptualised co-creation as an interactive process involving various stakeholders. The customer's creation of value-in-use and value co-creation is the outcome of interactions between companies and customers, where the interactions occur at the intersection of the provider and customer spheres of influence.

Sinkovics *et al.* (2014), drawing from Todaro and Smith (2011), adopted three core values of development as a basis for investigating social value creation at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) by incumbent companies. These core values include sustenance, self-esteem, and freedom from servitude. Sustenance refers to the ability to fulfil basic needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare; self-esteem encompasses dimensions of dignity and legitimacy; and freedom from servitude extends beyond physical incarceration and labour exploitation.

Additionally, Auerswald (2009) identified several dimensions of social value creation, including financial value, reputational value, ethical value, consumer surplus, positive externalities, and the enhancement of human capabilities. Financial value not only allows firms to sustain their existence but also provides opportunities for reinvestment or cross-subsidisation of projects that can benefit individuals beyond the immediate transactions. Reputational and ethical values, achieved through the interactions between the enterprise and its environment, can also be leveraged to scale up social value creation activities and benefit individuals not directly involved in the initial transactions (Auerswald, 2009).

2.4 Small and Medium Enterprises

According to Rashid *et al.* (2013), SMEs in the tourism industry play a significant role in Malaysia's economic development. In 2019, Malaysia recorded 26.1 million tourist arrivals. The travel and tourism sector contributed 6.1% to Malaysia's GDP, with tourism receipts amounting to USD 22.2 billion (WorldData.info, 2023). The direct contribution of tourism to Malaysia's GDP was MYR 125.4 billion, accounting for 14.8% of GDP. In terms of employment, the tourism industry led to a 2.9% increase, employing 3.6 million people in 2019, which represented 23.6% of total national employment (Huong, 2023). Comparatively, in 2011, the total contribution of travel and tourism to Malaysia's employment, including indirect support jobs, was approximately 1,559,000, representing 12.9% of total employment in the country. The emergence of micro-SMEs in the tourism industry is also noteworthy, as they seize the opportunity to collaborate to enhance the well-being of their employees, streamline their operations, and develop long-term sustainability strategies for their businesses.

2.5 Previous Studies on Sustainability

Dedeke's (2017) research on sustainable tourism ventures revealed three key findings: the principal actor involved in creating the venture employs distinct phases of idea-action translation; they use a unique and previously unidentified mode of translation; successful translation occurs when the principal actor acts as an orchestrator, coordinating stakeholders who pursue their own interests but collaborate on a common platform. Moreover, Mathew and Sreejash (2016) found that local residents' favourable perceptions of responsible tourism practices are strongly associated with destinations' perceived economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability, as well as with the community's quality of life, societal well-being, and emotional well-being.

Apart from that, Blancas *et al.* (2017) advocated for the use of dynamic sustainability measures that enable differentiated valuations for various types of destinations through cluster analysis. This approach allows for the design of more effective benchmarking practices among different tourist destinations by introducing a new vectorial indicator comprising both dynamic and static components.

In the context of the tourism supply chain, Babu *et al.* (2018) introduced specific sustainability practices encompassing environmental, economic, and social factors. These practices assist hotels in identifying the importance and performance of various sustainability measures to attain long-term competitive advantages. However, Ahmad (2013) pointed out that while half of the tourism industry acknowledges the appropriateness of ecotourism products in Malaysia, there appears to be a lack of knowledge and understanding regarding the concept of ecotourism. As a result, tourism businesses and enterprises may not be fully engaged in adopting sustainable tourism practices that are widely accepted and implemented globally.

3. Research Methodology

In this research, the quantitative approach was adopted to gather empirical evidence and information on SMEs' sustainable practices, motivations, and challenges. In particular, a survey questionnaire, adapted from Font *et al*. (2016), was used to collect data on firms' sustainable business practices that align with sustainability principles and destination sustainability criteria. Using convenience sampling, the survey was administered among 65 ecotourism business suppliers and owners of SMEs registered as palm oil plantations and millers in the town of Sandakan, Sabah.

4. Findings

A total of 65 respondents, selected from SME business operators in Sandakan, participated in the study. Table 4.1 below displays the respondents' profile. More than half of the surveyed respondents have at least six years of experience, indicating their extensive industry knowledge and experience.

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents are aware of current sustainable and responsible practices. They demonstrated knowledge of various aspects such as their attitudes, responses, motivations, and challenges related to environmental, social, and economic resources. Additionally, the study revealed insights into value creation for both the firm and society through sustainable practices. These results are presented in Table 4.2, Table 4.3, and Table 4.4.

The majority of the respondents (69%) expressed a strong belief in the importance of conserving resources, including energy and water consumption. They also recognised the significance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, transportation pollution, wastewater, solid waste, and the use of harmful substances in their operations. Additionally, the respondents emphasised the importance of implementing practices to minimise pollution from noise, light, and water. In terms of environmental management, efforts have been made to conserve biodiversity, manage invasive species, and adhere to appropriate guidelines when visiting natural landscapes and interacting with wildlife.

Table 4.1. Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	60
	Female	26	40
Age	18-30 years old	18	28
	31-40 years old	20	31
	41-50 years old	13	20
	51-60 years old	8	12
	60+ years old	6	9
Education	Primary School	1	2
	Secondary School	32	49
	Diploma	21	32
	Degree	11	17
	Master/PhD	0	0
Experience in the industry	Less than 3 years	14	22
	3-5 years	14	22
	6-10 years	14	22
	11-20 years	14	22
	21 years and above	9	12

Approximately 57% of the total respondents stated that it is very important to implement long-term sustainability management systems that are suitable for the business size and scope. These systems should address environmental, social, cultural, economic, quality, human rights, health, safety, risk, and crisis management issues, and drive continuous improvement. It is crucial for businesses to comply with all applicable local, national, and international legislations and regulations in health, safety, labour, and environmental aspects. Additionally, businesses should communicate their sustainable policies, actions, and performance to stakeholders, including customers, while seeking their support. Staff engagement in the development and implementation of sustainable management is also important, and they should receive periodic guidance and training regarding their roles and responsibilities in delivering sustainability practices. Furthermore, businesses must be cautious with their promotional materials and marketing communication to ensure accuracy and transparency with regards to their products and services, including sustainability claims. It is essential to never promise more than what is being delivered.

Table 4.2. SMEs' Current Sustainable and Responsible Practices

No	Practices	Percentage (%)
1	Conserving resources	69
2	Reduction of pollution	69
3	Environmental management	69

Table 4.3. SMEs' Attitudes and Responses towards Sustainable Practices

No	Attitude	Percentage (%)
1	Implementation	57
2	Communication	57
3	Guidance	57
4	Satisfaction	57
5	Promotion	57
6	Provision of information	54
7	Involvement in planning and management	54
8	Compliance in regulations	54
9	Integrity	51
10	Appropriate materials	51
11	Compliance when acquiring	51
12	Accessibility for disabled people	49
13	Compliance in infrastructure zoning	49

Additionally, around 54% of the respondents believe in the importance of providing information and interpretation to tourists or customers about the natural surroundings, local cultural heritage, and appropriate behaviour. They also support involving tourists and customers in sustainable tourism planning and management at the destination.

Moreover, 51% of the respondents stressed the monitoring of customer satisfaction, including sustainability aspects, and taking corrective action when necessary. They emphasised that business buildings/ infrastructure should consider the capacity and integrity of the natural and cultural surroundings, adopting locally appropriate and sustainable practices and materials. Furthermore, they highlighted the need for legally acquiring land, water rights, and property, ensuring compliance with local communal and indigenous rights, attaining voluntary, prior, and informed consent, and avoiding involuntary resettlements.

On the other hand, 49% of the respondents expressed the belief that business buildings/infrastructure must comply with zoning requirements and laws related to protected or sensitive areas. They also underscored the importance of providing access and information for individuals with special needs, where appropriate.

Approximately 60% of the total respondents prioritise respecting labour rights and highlight providing a safe and secure environment for employees, ensuring they receive at least a living wage. Meanwhile, 57% of the total respondents give importance to local and fair-trade suppliers and take measures to avoid jeopardising the provision of basic services, such as food, water, energy, healthcare, and sanitation, to neighbouring communities.

Next, approximately 54% of the total respondents consider it highly important to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities for local residents, including managerial positions, without discrimination based on gender, race, religion, or disability. Furthermore, 51% of the total respondents believe in supporting initiatives for local infrastructure and social community development, such as education, health, and sanitation. They also support other local entrepreneurs and advocate for policies against sexual harassment or any form of exploitation of children, adolescents, women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups. Additionally, they focus on activities that do not negatively impact local access to livelihoods, including land and aquatic resource use, rights-of-way, transportation, and housing.

According to Table 4.5, the majority of the respondents consider it highly important to protect the environment based on sustainable principles and ethical codes of practice. Approximately 66% of the total respondents consider it vital to protect the environment. Additionally, a total of 60% of the respondents express their desire to enhance competitiveness in the global market, while 57% aim to increase their company's income by accessing new spending markets and responding to customers' demands. Meeting legal requirements is deemed very important by 54% of the respondents, and 51% emphasise the need to reduce the company's risk associated with environmental degradation. Other equally significant practices include gaining marketing and image benefits, acquiring new information, advice, and networks, improving business management data, complying with tour operator company requirements, and ensuring ease of implementation. Approximately 49% of the total respondents consider

Table 4.4. Firm and Societal Value Creation through SMEs' Sustainable Practices

No	Value Creation	Percentage (%)
1	Respect labour rights	60
2	Priority to local supplier	57
3	Availability of basic services	57
4	Equal employment opportunities for local	54
5	Policy implementation	54
6	Equal employment for everyone	54
7	Support community development	51
8	Support local entrepreneur	51
9	Provision of local access	51

Table 4.5. SMEs' Sustainable Practices based on Sustainable Principles and Ethical Code of Practices

No	Identified Sustainable Practices	Percentage (%)
1	Protection	66
2	Competitive	60
3	Improvement	57
4	Action	57
5	Law	54
6	Reduction	51
7	Benefits	51
8	Knowledge	51
9	Improvement	51
10	Compliance	51
11	Simplicity	51
12	Savings	49
13	Funding	49
14	Necessities	49
15	Choice	49

sustainable business practices important for cost savings, obtaining subsidies or grants, meeting the requirements of a chain/group, and as a personal and lifestyle choice.

Table 4.6 presents key sustainability indicators that contribute to the environmental sustainability of palm oil plantation and miller SMEs in Sandakan. Approximately 57% of the total respondents consider it highly important to value and incorporate authentic elements of tradition and contemporary local culture in their operations, design, decoration, cuisine, or shop while respecting the intellectual property rights of local people. Similarly, 54% of the total respondents emphasise the contribution to the protection, preservation, and enhancement of local properties without impeding access to them for local residents.

Around 51% of the total respondents find it essential to adhere to international and national best practices and locally agreed guidance for the management and promotion of visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites. Additionally, 49% of the total respondents believe that artifacts should not be sold, traded, or displayed, except as permitted by local and international laws.

There are several significant issues and challenges encountered by the respondents in implementing and promoting sustainable practices and development, as presented in Table 4.7. The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents face a lack of awareness regarding the value of sustainable practices, financial constraints, increased costs, and low customer demand for sustainable products/services. Additionally, time constraints and a lack of motivation are also key obstacles in incorporating sustainable practices into their business operations. These challenges highlight the need for SMEs to address and overcome these issues as they strive to embrace sustainable practices in their respective businesses.

Table 4.6. Key Sustainability Indicators that Contribute to the Environmental Sustainability of SMEs

No	Key Sustainable Indicators	Percentage (%)
1	Value	57
2	Contribution	54
3	Good practices	51
4	Protection of artifacts	49

Table 4.7. Challenges Faced by SMEs in Implementing Sustainable Practices

No	Challenges Faced	Percentage (%)
1	No value/valueless	43
2	Lack of money	40
3	Increased management costs	40
4	No request from customers	37
5	Unsure	34
6	Lack of time	34
7	Lack of motivation	29

5. Conclusion

Environmental degradation can significantly impact the performance of plantations, making environmental protection crucial. Accordingly, this study's findings indicate that the primary motivation for plantation SMEs to implement sustainable business strategies is the awareness of the need to protect the environment. Nonetheless, sustainable business practices are also driven by business motivations, such as maximising profit and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the SMEs. This research also asserts that embracing the concept of shared value can bring benefits without jeopardising the provision of essential services (e.g., food, water, energy, healthcare, and sanitation) to neighbouring communities. By adopting this approach, businesses can ensure that their activities do not have a detrimental impact on the local community's access to livelihood, including the use of land and aquatic resources, rights-of-way, transportation, and housing.

In conclusion, while the adoption of sustainable practices is largely motivated by business interests, business owners and managers play a vital role in promoting socially desirable behaviours that can catalyse sustainable development. Furthermore, socially responsible businesses gain customers' trust and confidence, increasing the likelihood of business success. Thus, given the ongoing issues surrounding palm oil and the stringent standards demanded by markets like Europe, sustainable management practices are essential for SMEs in the plantation sector.

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The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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The Relationship between Omani High School Students' Home Environment and their English Academic Achievement

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ABSTRACT

English language academic achievement (ELAA) is an important aspect of education, and understanding the factors that influence it can have significant implications for both students and educators. In this study, the authors investigated the relationship between the home environment of Omani Grade 12 students and their English proficiency. Three dimensions of the home environment backgrounds are considered: educational, socio-economic, and technological. The research is based on a pilot study to develop a quantitative data collection tool. Four key findings on the impact on English academic achievement emerged from the research. First, the educational status of the family has a significant impact. Second, family's social status has no effect. Third, the financial and technological status of the family does not have an impact. Four, the home environment has less of an impact on the English language achievement of females than males. Based on these, it is recommended that the Omani Ministry of Education establish a system for ongoing communication between schools and parents. Teachers should take students' backgrounds into account to identify challenging home environments.

Keywords: Education, academic achievement, social background, home environment

Introduction

The success of children is influenced by various factors, including their social background or home environment. Many scholars believe that the home environment is one of the most important factors in a child's success in life (Kumar & Lal, 2014; Olszewski, Kulieke, & Buescher, 1987; Rak & Patterson, 1996). In regards to academic achievement at school, research has shown that the home environment is closely related to students' success. Adewale (2012) states that "the responsibility of training a child always lies in the hands of the parents" (p. 230).

The relationship between students' social background and their academic performance is a topic that has been studied extensively by many scholars. There are numerous articles, dissertations, and research studies on this topic, with some researchers finding positive correlations and others finding no correlation at all. For example, Hill et al. (2004) argue that the parents' socio-economics influence the academic achievement of the children, while Adewale (2012) found that socioeconomic and educational background of the parents have no effect on students' academic achievement. These examples illustrate that this is a controversial topic

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that is dependent on various factors such as context, the population of the study, and the quality of the data collection.

Grade 12 is a critical and crucial stage for students in Oman as it often determines their future. After this stage, students have two options: obtaining good grades and pursuing higher education or completing grade 12 and entering the job market. English is considered a vital course, and for some students, it is considered the most challenging subject at school. Studies have shown that a majority of students struggle in this subject to achieve the required grades for acceptance into higher education institutions. Al-Issa (2006) explains the problems that students encounter: “When students in Oman exit high school, they generally encounter problems with using English communicatively (Al-Issa, 2005). They lack grammatical competence (how to use the structure and form of the language), discourse competence (how to provide cohesion and coherence across sentences and utterances), sociolinguistic competence (how to interact), and strategic competence (how to make the most of the language you have, especially when it is deficient) (Hymes, 1972). Omani students are exposed to substantial teaching of grammar rules, so grammatical competence is their least problematic area.” (p. 19)

In addition to the challenges students face in mastering the English language, other factors also impact their performance. One of these factors is the social background of the students. Ogunshola and Adewale (2012) argue that any factors that affect the development of a child’s environment will directly affect their academic performance. For this reason, the authors aim to investigate the correlation between Omani high school students’ home environment and their English academic achievement.

The current study is correlational as the researchers examine the relationship between independent variables (educational background, socioeconomic background, technological background, gender) and the dependent variable (English language achievement). The data collection and instruments are based on this research design. As such, four variables (educational background, socioeconomic background, technological background, gender) are examined in relation to the students’ academic achievement.

The aim of this research is to investigate the relationship between Omani high school students’ home environment and their English academic achievement. This study is focused on Grade 12 students as this is an important stage at school. To achieve the present aim, four objectives have been set:

R.O. 1: To evaluate the relationship between the socioeconomic background of the family and the student’s English language achievement.
R.O. 2: To evaluate the relationship between the educational background of the family and the student’s English language achievement.
R.O. 3: To evaluate the relationship between the technological background of the family and the student’s English language achievement.
R.O. 4: To evaluate the relationship between gender and the student’s English language achievement.

These four objectives lead to the following questions:

R.Q. 1: What is the relationship between the socioeconomic background of the family and students’ English academic achievement?
R.Q. 2: What is the relationship between the educational background of the family and students’ English academic achievement?
R.Q. 3: What is the relationship between the technological background of the family and students’ English academic achievement?
R.Q. 4: What is the gender effect on students’ English academic achievement?

The researchers address students’ performance, an issue that concerns students, parents, teachers, administrators, and thus the whole society. Furthermore, this study will impact Omani parents who have children in Grade 12 as they may benefit from the results of this study. The research is anticipated to be a pioneer in this field in Oman and will lead to further research related to the same topic.

However, this study has some limitations such as being conducted in one city in Oman, relying on online questionnaires which may not have been answered seriously by some students and having a small sample size. Therefore, it is recommended that future research investigate a larger population within Oman and conduct more interviews to provide more reliable and comprehensive results.

Literature Review

The literature review section of the research paper is meant to provide an overview of existing studies and research on the topic of the relationship between home environment and academic achievement. It is established that the home environment plays a crucial role in determining a child's success in life, and that success in education is closely connected to the social background of the student.

Research supports the theory that there is a relationship between social background and academic achievement. Studies traditionally focus on family status variables such as socioeconomic status and parents' level of education as predictors of children's academic achievement (Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013). Other studies emphasize the role of socioeconomic status in influencing personality, learning, and development of the individual and their academic achievement (Singh & Choudhary, 2015).

Different researchers approach the topic of home environment in different ways. For example, Okioga (2013) and Ogunshola and Adewale (2012) examine the socioeconomic status of the parents and family, while Egunsola (2014) focuses on the educational qualification of the parents and home location. This highlights that the concept of home environment can be presented in different ways depending on the context. However, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is no research conducted in the Omani context.

In this research, three main dimensions of the home environment are examined: educational background, socioeconomic background, and technological background. In this literature review, the authors present a general overview of each dimension, and then present findings from previous studies regarding each dimension.

The educational background of the parents and family is a crucial aspect of the home environment that has been studied extensively in the literature. According to Diaz et al. (2004), the influence of family educational climate is determined by the amount and style of help that children receive from the family, which is influenced by elements such as communication dynamics, effective relationships, attitudes towards values, and expectations.

The literature presents various perspectives on the relationship between parental educational background and student academic achievement. Some studies conclude that there is a significant correlation between the two variables. For example, human capital literature links the educational attainment of children to the background of the parents, and accordingly, parents' in educational attainment is a resource input in their children's human capital (De Serf, 2002). John et al. (1994) also argues that parental educational background can be expressed in the frequent use of English at home. Additionally, Saifi and Mehmood (2011) and Egunsola (2014) found that students from educated families tend to perform better than those from uneducated families.

Saifi and Mehmood (2011) found that the majority of studies have concluded that there is a positive correlation between parental education and student academic achievement. However, some other studies have found no correlation or even a negative correlation between parental educational background and student academic achievement. Adewale (2012) conducted research in Nigeria and found that the socio-economic and educational background of parents is not a significant factor in students' academic performance.

The socioeconomic background or status of the parents and family is a key aspect of the home environment. This concept combines both social and economic elements, such as a person's work experience and their family's economic and social position in comparison to others (Okioga, 2013). Research on this topic often includes socioeconomic status as it plays a crucial role in the home environment and can greatly impact an individual's personality, learning, and academic achievement (Ramasamy, 1990). Literature also includes the educational and occupational status of the family as part of the socioeconomic status, as it can be determined by factors such as family income, parental education level, occupation, and social status within the community (Demarest et al., 1993).

Research on the relationship between socioeconomic background and academic achievement has yielded mixed results. While many studies have found a correlation between the two factors, others have found no significant relationship. De Serf (2002) found that household income is a strong predictor of educational achievement. Saifi and Mehmood's (2011) research suggests that a stable socioeconomic status can create a positive learning environment, leading to higher academic achievement. Egunsola (2014) also found that parental economic status has an impact on students' performance, in addition to educational qualifications and home location. Furthermore, Paret (2006) states that "On average, students from lower socio-economic groups (particularly those from unskilled manual backgrounds) and who are from low-income families achieve less well in a range of tests, examinations, and assessments than those who are from higher socio-economic groups and who are not from low-income families." (p. 48)

A correlation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement is reported in numerous studies (Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013; Okioga, 2013; Singh & Choudhary, 2015), with research indicating that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds tend to perform better academically. However, some studies (Adewale, 2012) have found conflicting results and suggest that other factors such as parental education and occupation may play a larger role.

The third dimension of the home environment that affects students' academic achievement is the technological status of the family and parents. With the increasing role of technology in education, the availability and accessibility of technology at home can greatly impact a student's performance. Research on this dimension is limited, but some studies have included technology as a part of educational background (Egunsola, 2014) or socioeconomic background (Saifi & Mehmood, 2011). However, there is little research specifically focusing on the impact of technology on academic achievement. Studies have shown that technology advancements such as powerful personal computers can greatly impact the way people live and learn in today's information age (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005). Additionally, research has found that technology use in education is most effective when it is related to specific subject areas and focuses on student construction of knowledge (Lei & Zhao, 2007).

Methodology

The previous section discussed the relationship between students' background and academic achievement as presented in the literature. Different findings were presented from these studies, depending on the context, population, and other variables considered. However, it is challenging to apply these results, even those from studies conducted in the Middle East, to Oman as each location has its own unique factors. Thus, in this study the researchers aim to specifically investigate this relationship in Oman and provide findings that can assist parents and stakeholders in understanding the impact of home-environment on students' academic performance. The research is focused on the English academic performance of high school students, taking into consideration the role of gender as a variable. A quantitative method is used and a questionnaire is employed as the data collection tool. The questionnaire went through multiple stages of evaluation and was reviewed by three experts in English Education. It was then distributed to a sample of 60 12th-grade students in three stages, with feedback and comments from participants being collected to improve the questionnaire.

The methodology for this study includes using a quantitative approach, utilizing a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The questionnaire has undergone multiple evaluations and revisions with the help of experts in the field of English Education. The sample for this study includes 300 Grade 12 students from 10 public schools in the Ad Dakhiliyah governorate, with a pilot study being conducted with 60 students (30 males and 30 females). The choice of this number is based on (Browne, 2004). The questionnaire used in the study is adapted from a previous study by Van der Slik, Driessen, and De Bot (2006) and has been refined and tested for validity and reliability with similar groups in the Ad Dakhiliyah governorate.

The procedure of data collection was as follows, first, the researchers distributed questionnaires to the students at school after dividing them into three groups (20 each group) for quality purposes (Reliability). Then after collecting the questionnaires, the researchers conducted interviews with the students to ask them about their comments on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed after the first semester and at a time that was suitable to the students as the students' impression of the English language was very important to answer the questions. All students had already received their results from the first semester, and as such could clearly share their impressions through the questionnaire. The original questionnaire consisted of 35 questions, after conducting validity and reliably tests, the adapted one consisted of 28 questions.

Regarding data analysis, the correlation between pairs of the four independent variables (educational background, socioeconomic background, technological background, and gender) and the dependent variable (English language achievement) were measured with descriptive analysis where each question with its answers is presented and describe, and interpretations and final conclusions are given for each dimension. In addition, the results are set in comparison with the findings found in the literature. The quality assurance of the research is achieved through credibility, transferability, and confirmability for the quantitative method.

Findings

In this section, the responses to the different questions are presented, described, and analyzed.

Personal information

The presented pie chart shows the distribution of the responses among the cities within the Ad'Dakhilya region. 42 participants, 21 men and 21 women, from each Wilayah are involved in this questionnaire.

The pie chart represents the responses to the question related to gender. The responses show that 50% are men and the same percentage is women.

The figure above states the final mark in the English language subject in the Spring semester of 2022. This is the most important question that the whole research is based on. The pie chart reveals that around 32% of the students got "D". This category is dominant among other categories. On the other hand, 22.6 % got an "A" and around 80 students got a "B". The second dominant category is the "C" which contains 25.8 % of the participants. 9.7% got an "F" which means they did not pass the English language subject. The total percentage of the students who got 80-100 is over 32%, 80 students of those are women, while 22 are men. The opposite is true for the "F" students, 4 students out of 5 who got an "F" are men while 1 student only is women.

The shown figure presents the distribution of responses regarding the number of family members in the house. Over 37% of the participants have 4-7 family members. Around 25% of the students have 1-3 family members and it is the same percentage for those who have 8-12 family members. The lowest percentage is 12.5% for those who have 13 family members and above.

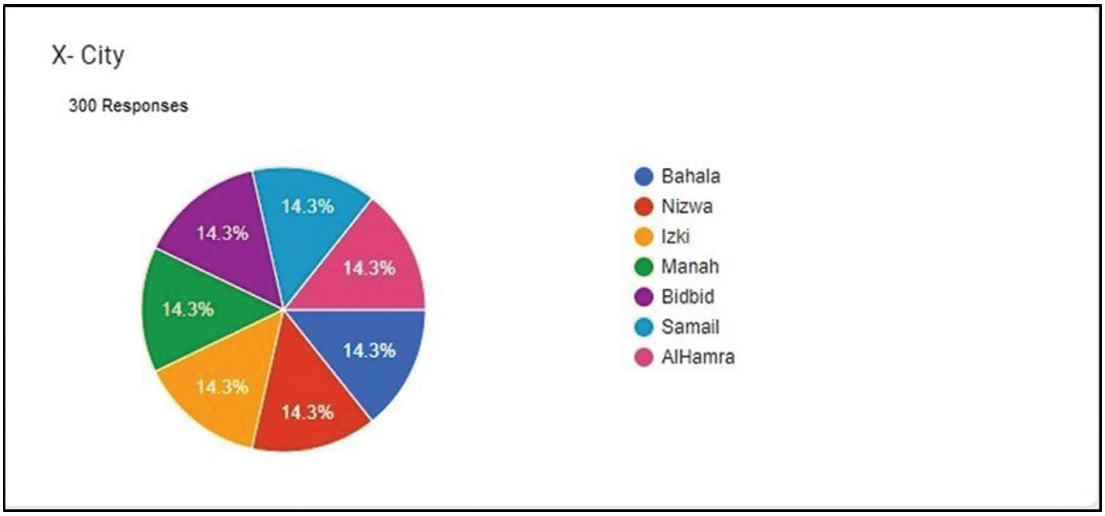

Figure 1. City

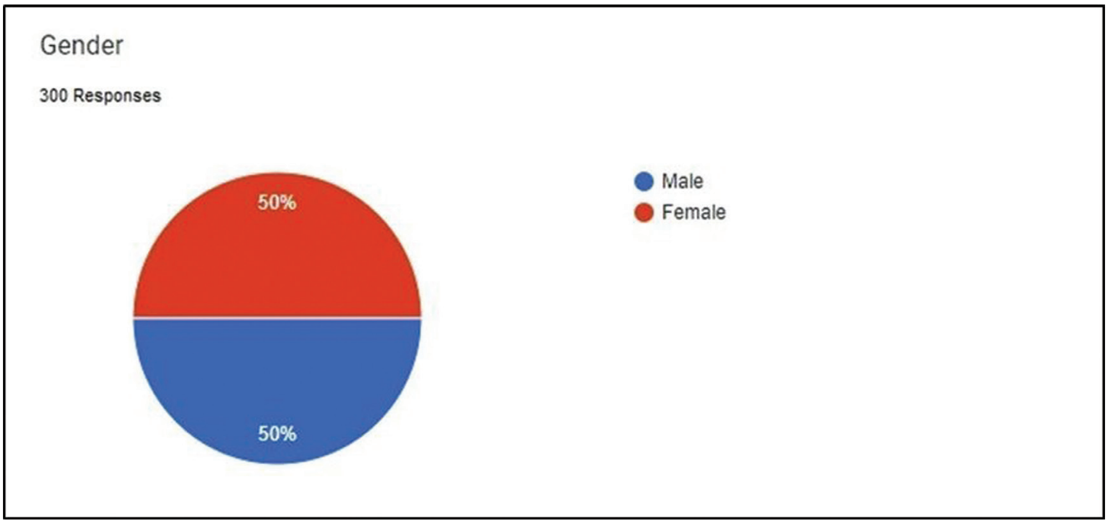

Figure 2. Gender

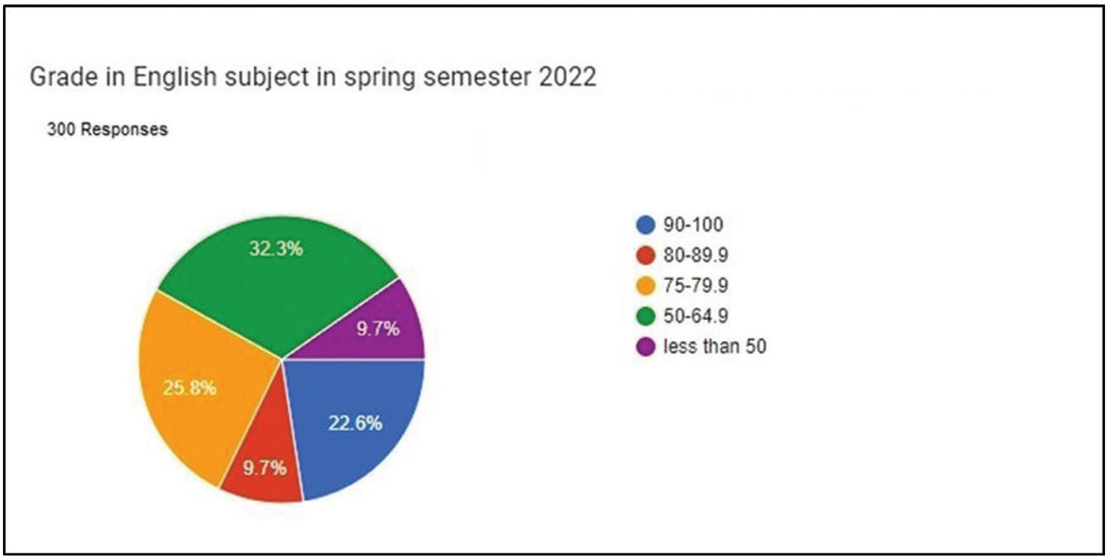

Figure 3. Final grade in English language subject

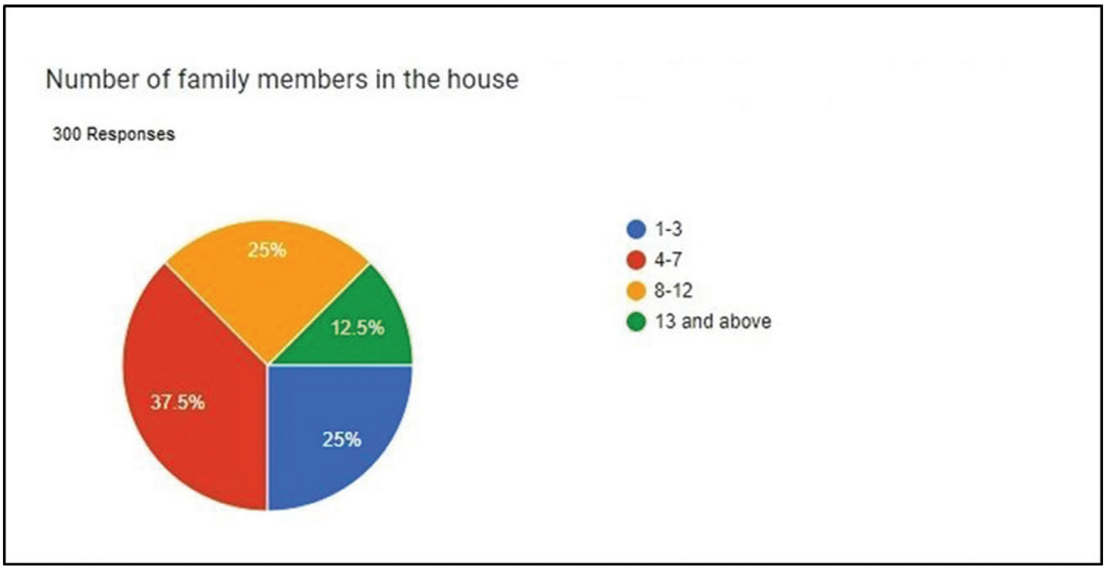

Figure 4. Family members

Social background of the family

The first question related to the social background of the family is about the marital status of the parents. 85% of the respondents' parents are still married, while 7% of the respondents' parents are divorced. 8% selected "other" which indicates that either the father or the mother passed away.

The presented pie chart describes the responses to the second question related to the social background of the family. The question is about whether the weather parents are alive or passed away. The majority (around 90%) say that their parents are still alive while 6% say that the father passed away. 4% say that the mother passed away.

The presented pie chart represents the responses of the participants regarding their beliefs about their family's social background on their English language academic achievement. Over 42% of the participants think that there is no effect of their family's social background on their English language level. 35.7 % have a neutral situation toward this relationship. 14.3% think that they are affected positively by their family's social status, and 95% of these participants got "A" and "B" in the English language subject. 7.1% is the only percentage for those who believe that they are affected negatively by their family's social status, all these students got "D" and "F" in the English language subject. Accordingly, over 77% of the students think that there is no direct relationship between their family's social background and their English language academic achievement.

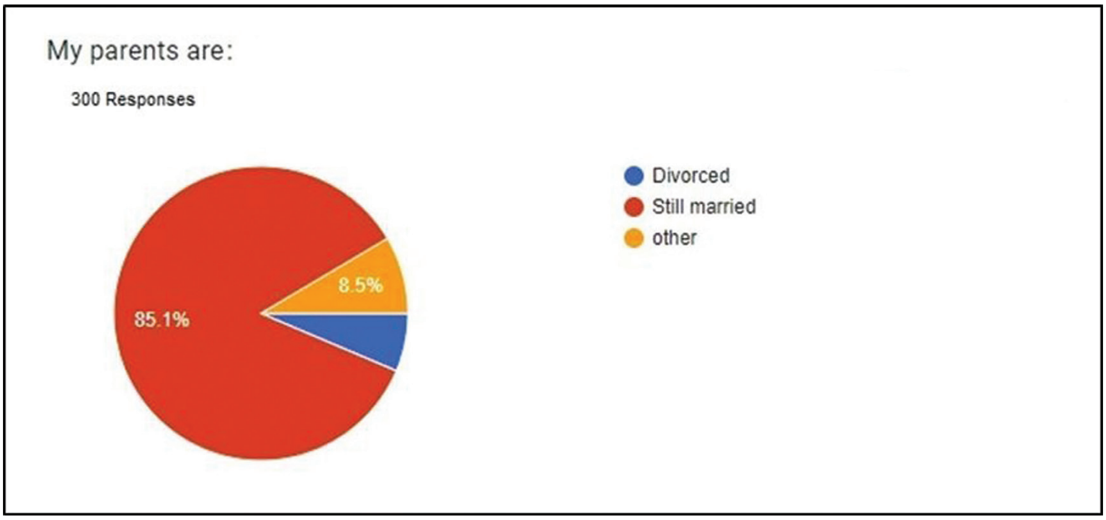

Figure 5. Marital status

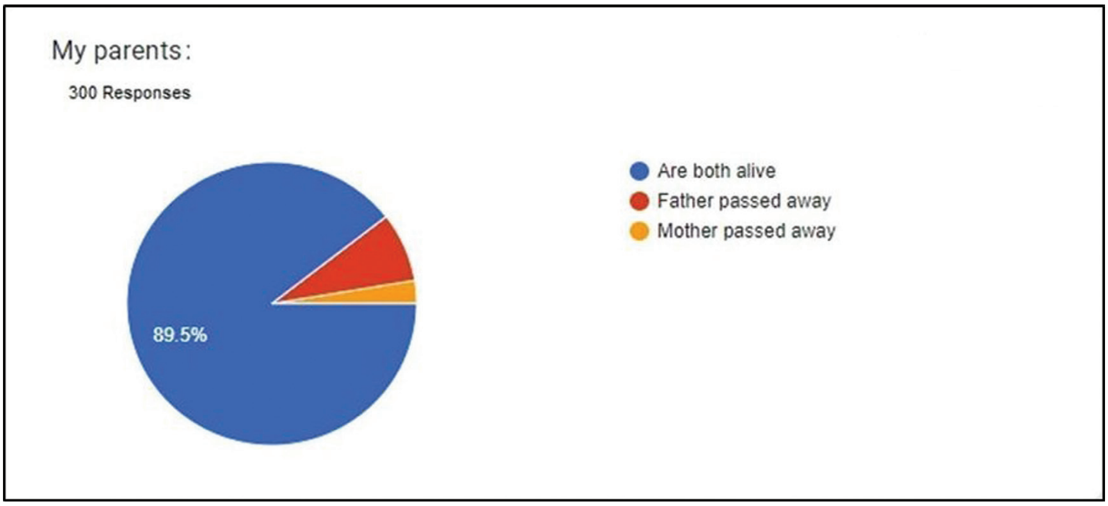

Figure 6. Parent existence

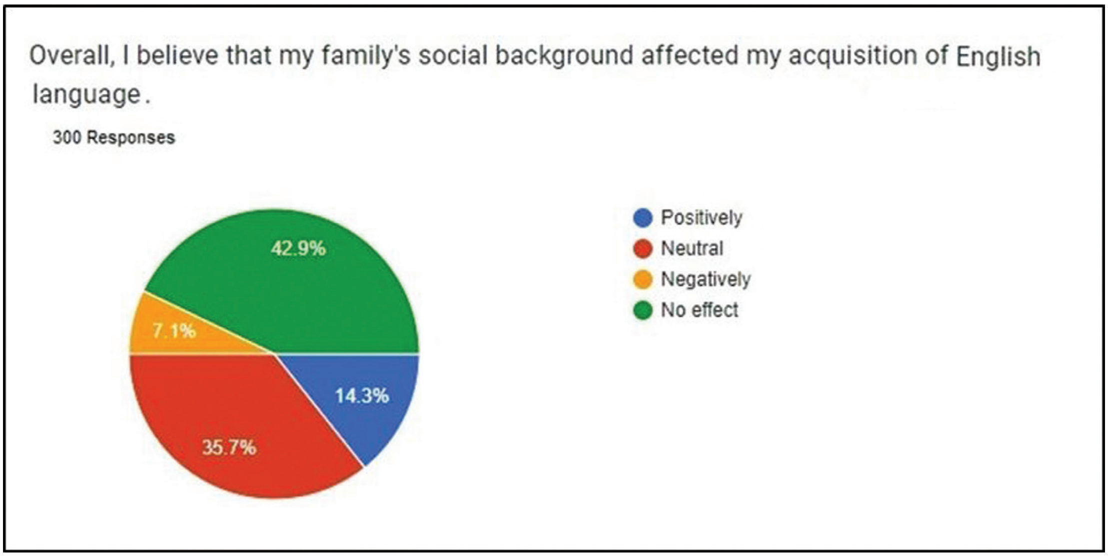

Figure 7. The effect of family social background on English achievement

Educational background of the family

The first question regarding the family's educational background is about the father's educational certificate. The majority of the respondents' fathers, around 40%, hold a preparatory and/or secondary degree. 30.4% of the participants responds that their fathers got a Diploma and/ or a Bachelor degree. A few numbers of students' fathers, 8.7%, got Masters and/ or PhD degree. On the other hand, 21.7% do not have any educational degree. The major note is that 92% of the students who got "A" and "B" in the English language subject are those whose fathers hold Diploma, Bachelor, and PhD degrees.

In this figure, the population responds to the father's occupation. The percentage is divided almost equally between the stated occupations. 13.3% goes for "teacher", 16.7% goes for "engineer", 16.7% goes for the military, and the same percentage goes for "administrative". 10% only do not have a job and around 27% have other occupations.

The responses in the pie chart are related to the participants' opinions towards their fathers' English language level. 44.4% who are almost half of the participants think that their fathers' English language level is "weak". 22.2% think their fathers have a "good" English language level. Around 28% think their fathers have "very good" and "excellent" English language levels and 90% of these students got "A" and "B" in the English language subject. A percentage of less than 7 goes for "other" which means that either they do not their father's English language lever or their fathers are dead.

The responses in the pie chart above are related to the participants' opinions towards their mothers' English

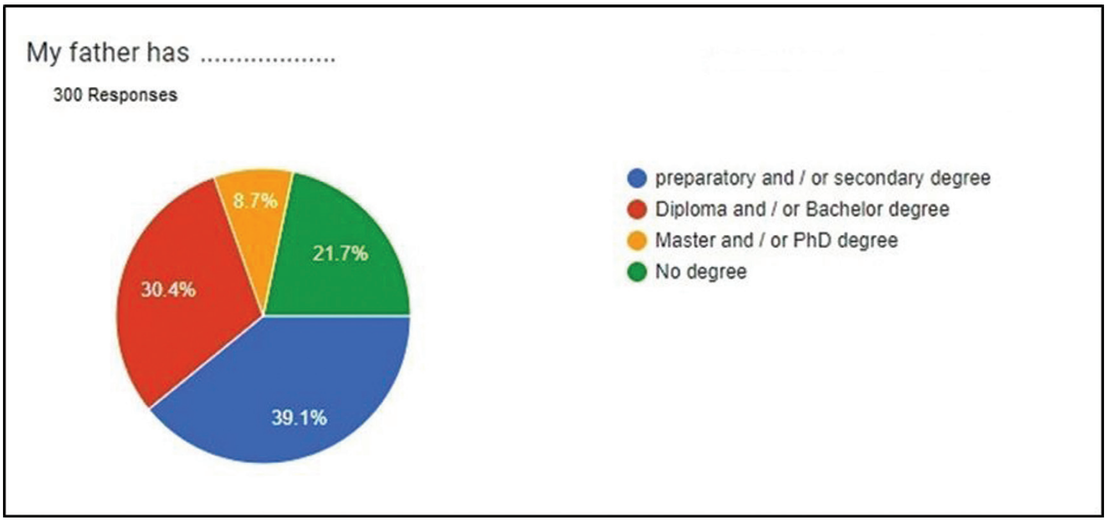

Figure 8. Father's educational degree

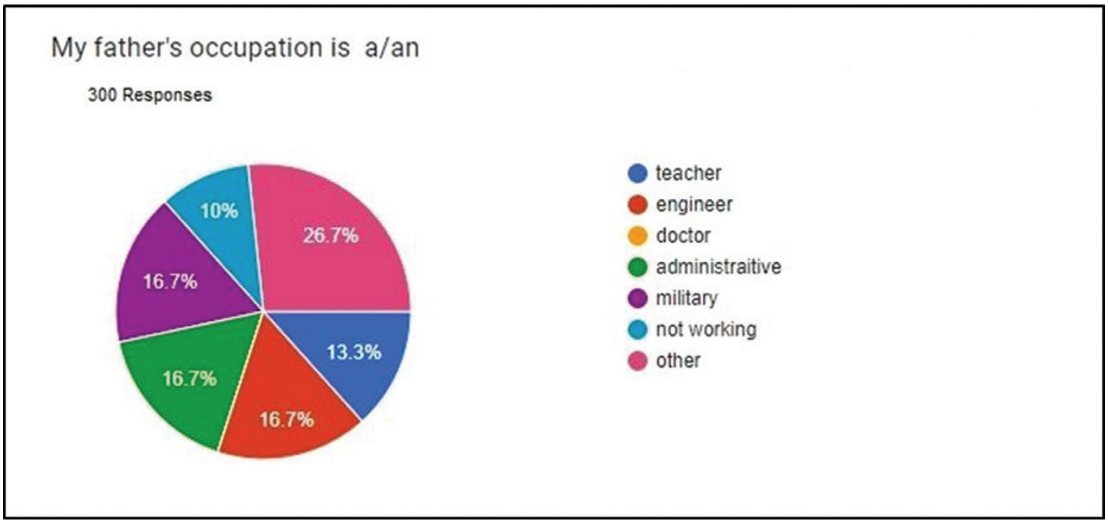

Figure 9. Father's occupation

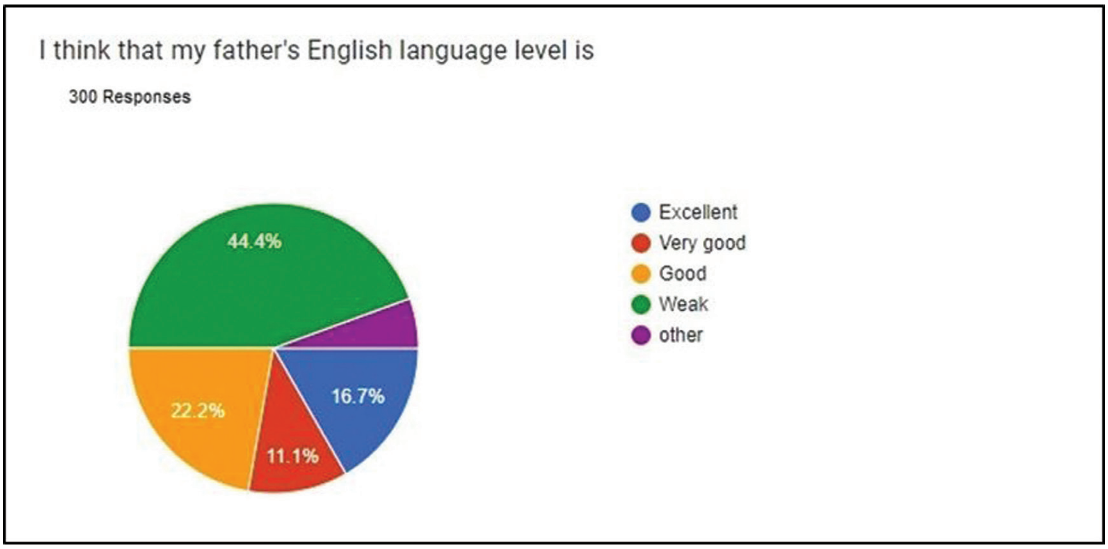

Figure 10. Father's English language level

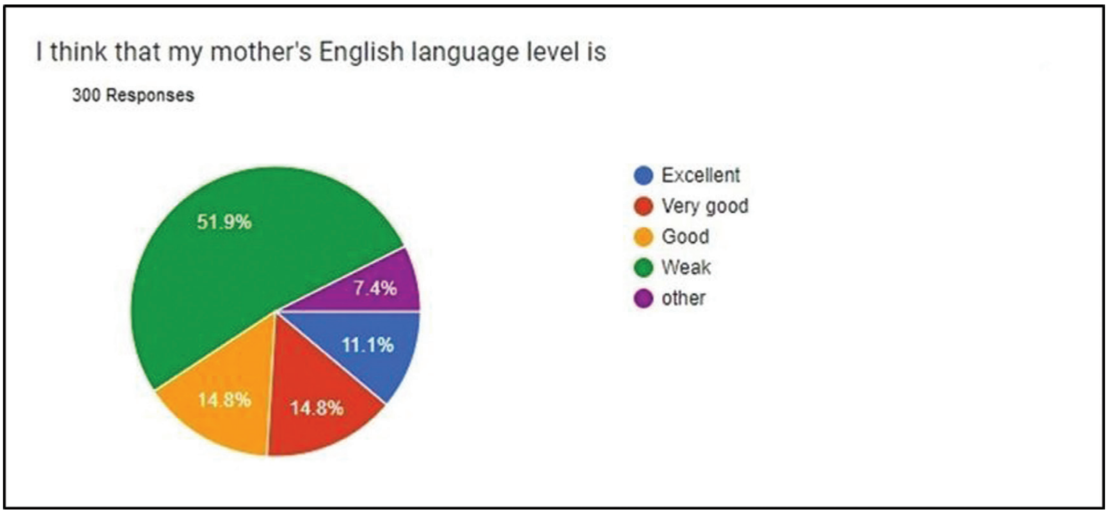

Figure 11. Mother's English language level

language level. 60% who are more than half of the participants think that their mothers' English language level is "weak". 14.8% think their mothers have a "very good" English language level, and it is the same percentage for those who think that their mothers' English language is "good". 11% only is the percentage for those whose mothers are excellent in English, 94% of these students got "A" and "B" in the English language subject.

The last question in the section of the educational background of the family is about the participants' beliefs regarding the effect of the educational background of their families on their English language acquisition. One-third of the overall participants think that there is a positive effect of their family's educational background on their English language achievement. 54% of this category got "A", 40% got "B" and 6% only got between "C" and "D". On the other hand, the pie chart shows that 25% of the respondents believe that their English language achievement is affected negatively by their family's educational background. The majority of this percentage, 92%, are those who got from "F" to "C" in the English language subject.

4.2.1.4 Financial background of the family

The first question in the third section is about the average income of the family per month. More than one-third respond that the average income is between 500 to 900 Omani Rials. 30% get between 900 to 1200 Omani Rials. 21.7% got more than 1200 Omani Rials. 13% only get less than 500 Omani Rials.

The second question in the financial background section is about the evaluation of the family's financial status.

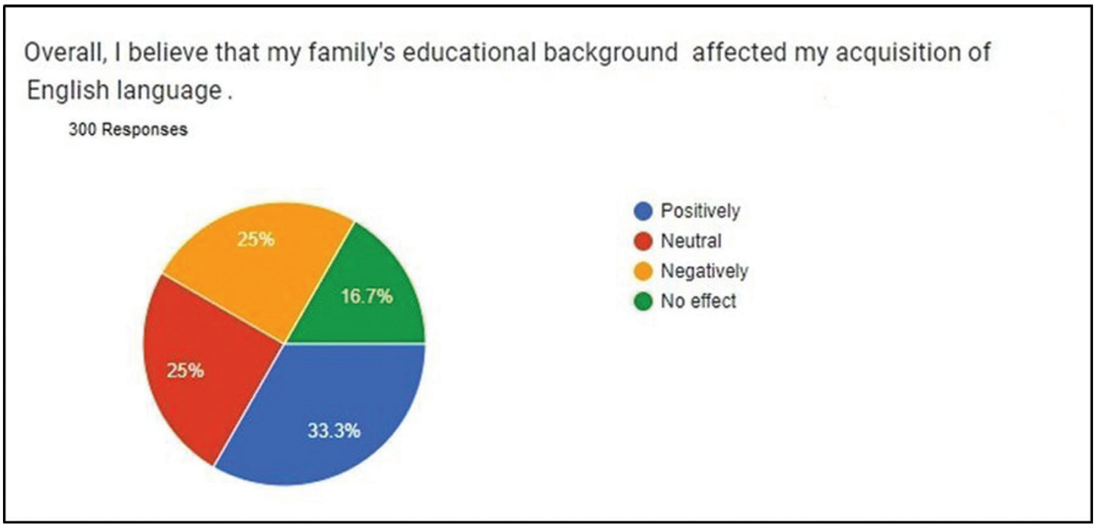

Figure 12. The effect of family educational background on English achievement

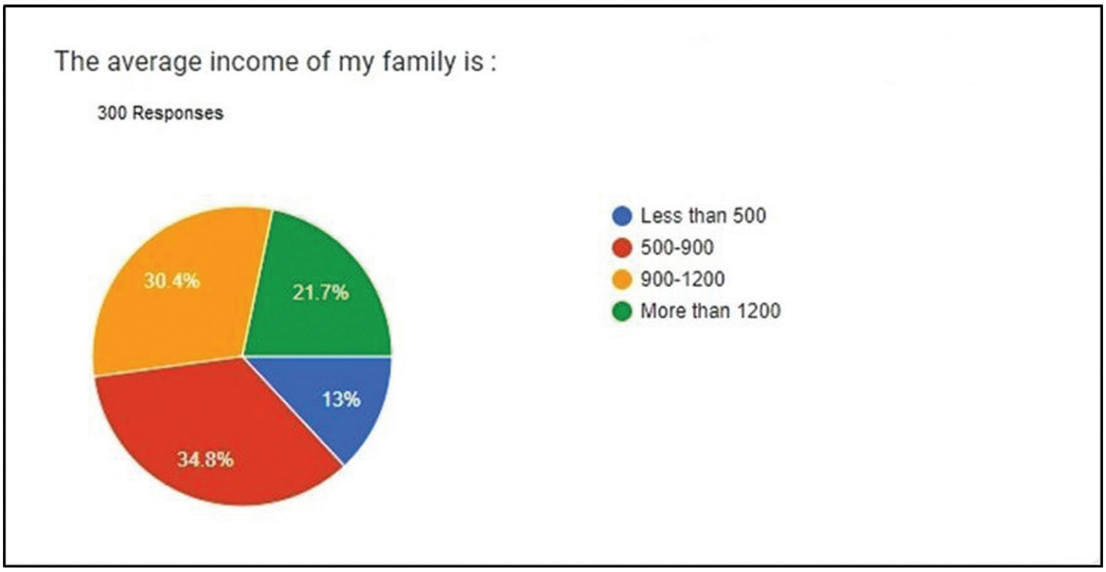

Figure 13. The average income of the family

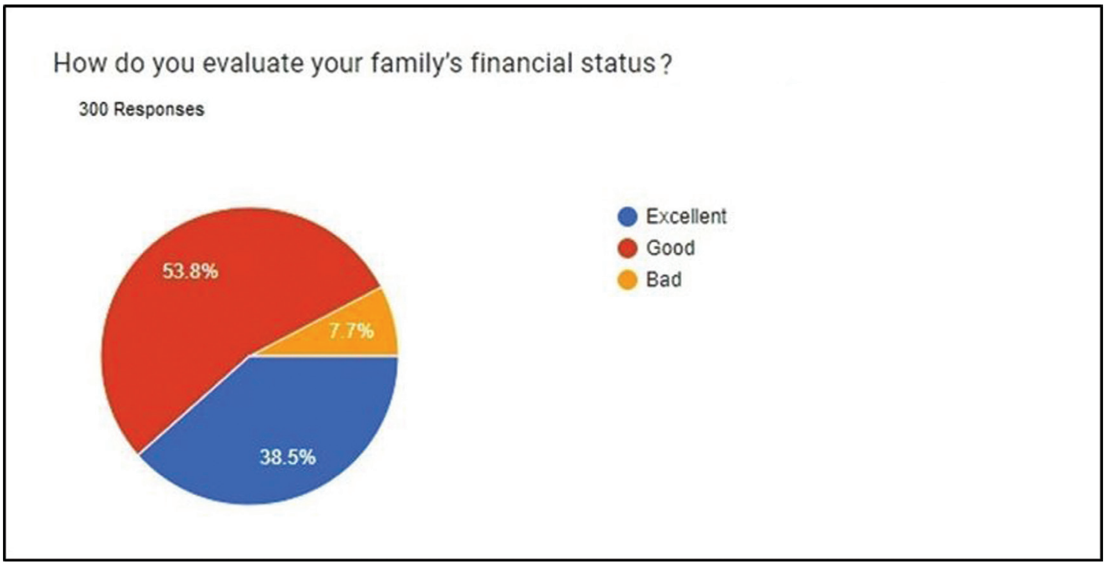

Figure 14. Evaluation of family's financial status

More than half of the students think that their family's financial status is "good", while 38.5% say it is "excellent". 7.7% only say it is "bad".

As shown in the pie chart, the final question in the economic status of the family section is related to the participants' beliefs regarding the effect of this home-environment side on their English language achievement. The responses vary, around 43% say that there is no effect of their family's financial background on their English language performance. 35.7% are neutral about this fact while 14.3 only say that it affects their English language achievement positively. On the other hand, 7.1%, which is the least percentage, say that there is a negative effect from the financial status of their families on their English language academic achievement at school.

Technological background of the family

This figure presents the results of the first question of the third home-environment dimension, the technological background of the family., it asks if the father uses a smartphone. Around 85% of the participants responded with "yes:" while 7.7% responded with "other" which means their fathers passed away. A small percentage, 8%, respond with "no".

Like the previous figure, this figure presents the results of the second question related to the third home-environment dimension, the technological background of the family, it asks if the mother uses a smartphone. 79% of the participants responded with "yes:" while 7.7% responded with "other" which means their mothers passed away. A percentage of 8 responded with "no".

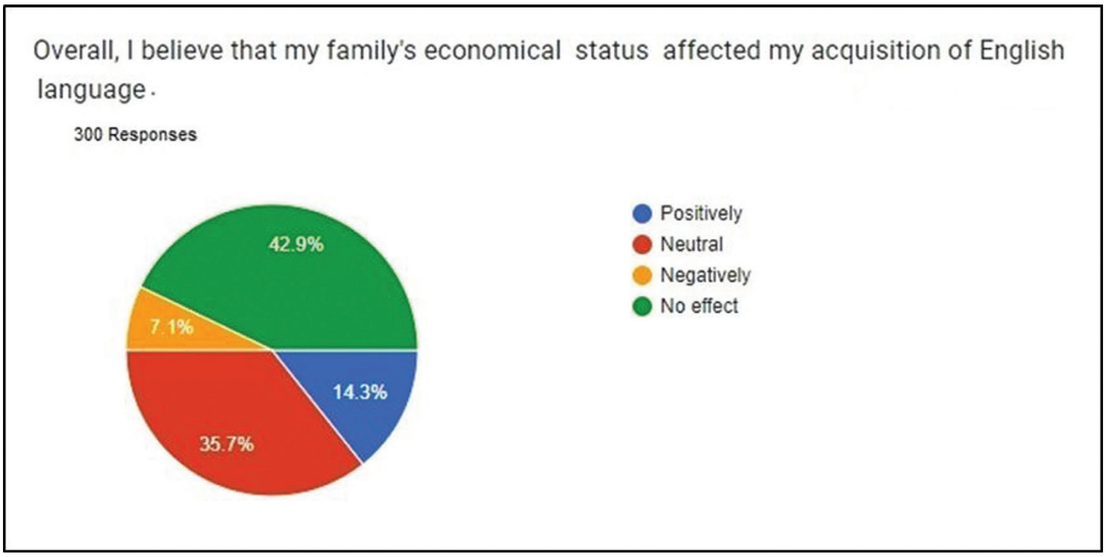

Figure 15. The effect of family economic status on English achievement

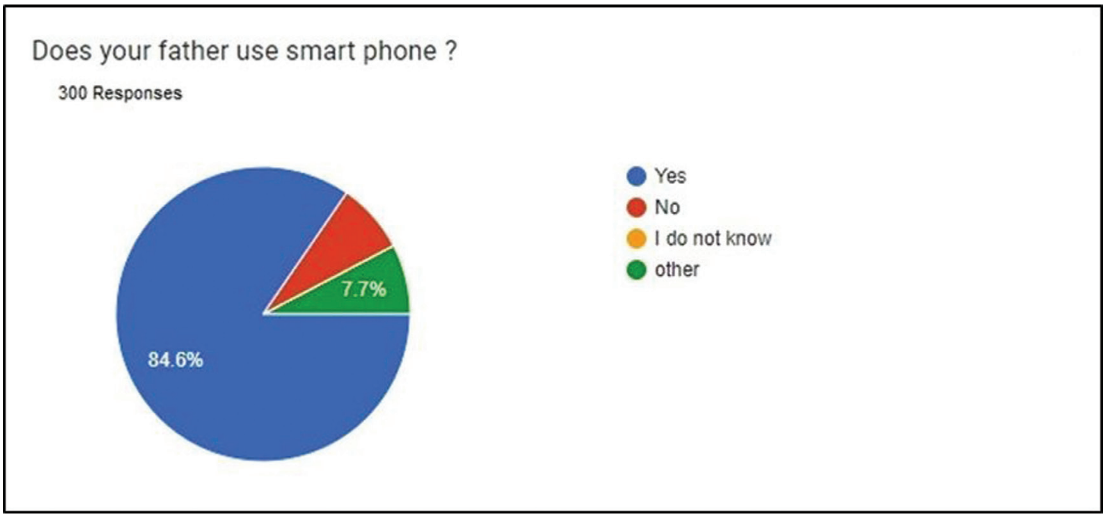

Figure 16. Father's usage of smart phone

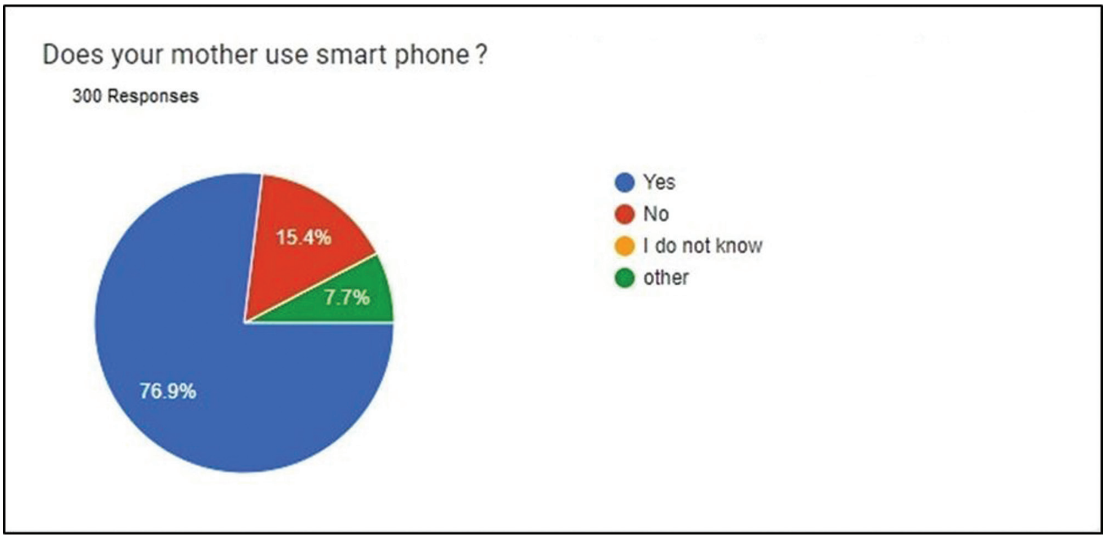

Figure 17. Mother's usage of smart phone

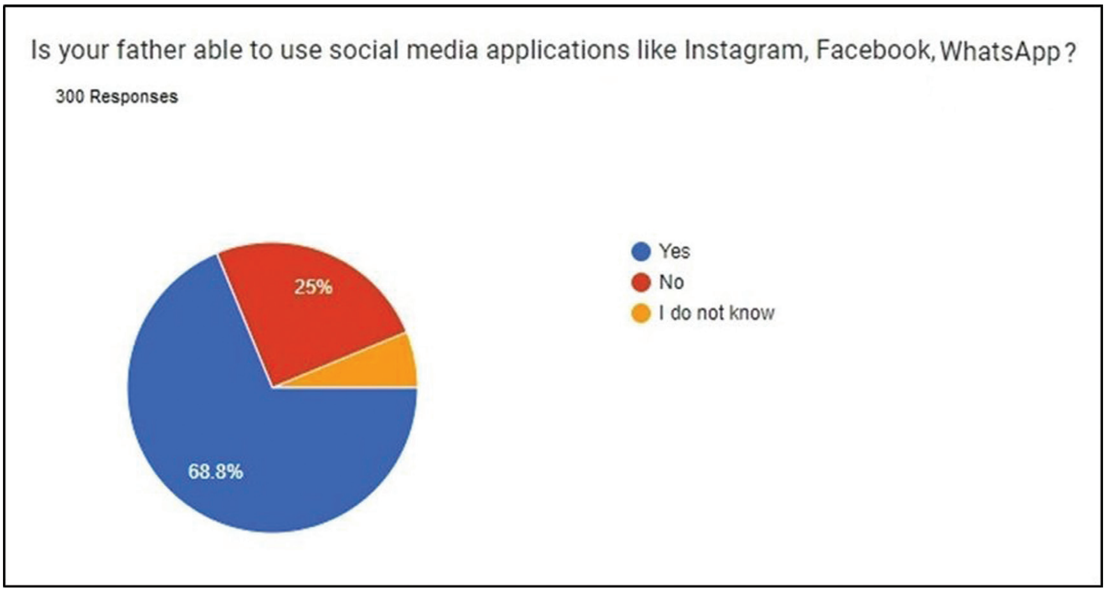

Figure 18. Father's ability to use social media

This pie chart describes the responses to the third question in the technological background section which is about the father's ability to use social media applications. 68.8% responded with "yes", and 25% responded with "no". Almost 8% of the participants chose "I do not know". According to the figure, the majority of fathers, 68.7 %, are capable of using social media.

According to the shown pie chart, over 85% of the population respond with "yes" to the question asking about the existence of Wi-Fi at home. 14.3% only respond with 'no".

This figure shows the results of the parent's perception of their children using social media during their study. 35.7% say that their parents encourage them to use social media applications. However, over 42% respond with the opposite, they say that their parents do not think it is a good way to learn English. 7.7% say that they are not allowed to use any kind of social media application.

The results in this figure are related to the question asked to the participants about their evaluation of their parents' technological background. 55.6% respond with "good", 22% respond with "poor", 16.7 responds with "fair", and 7% only respond with excellent.

The last question in the technological background section is related to the respondents' beliefs regarding the effect of their family's technological background on their English language academic achievement. The majority of the participants are neutral,47.4%. 36.8% say that there is

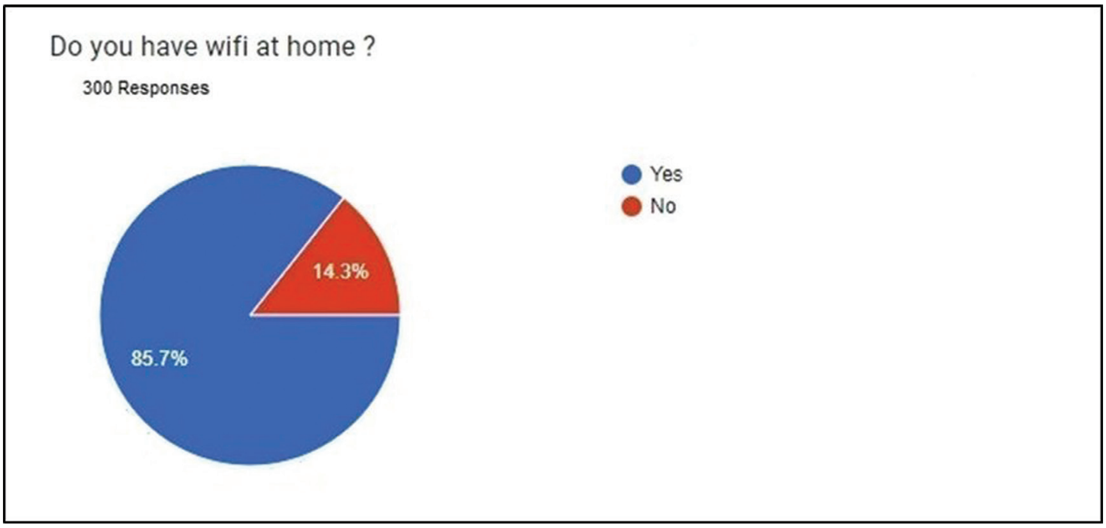

Figure 19. availability of WIFI at home

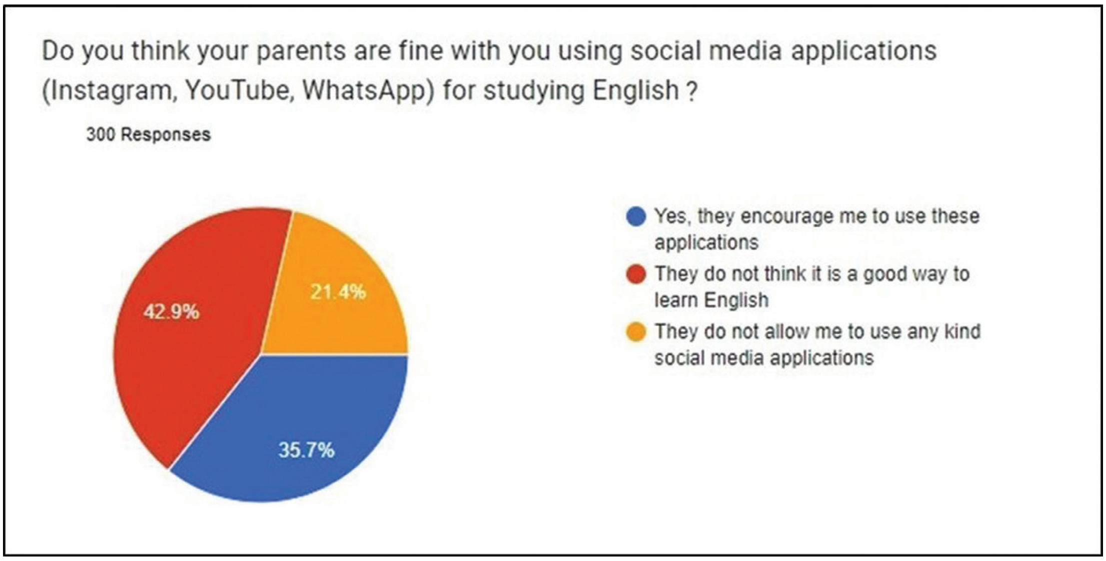

Figure 20. Parents' allowance of using social media during the study

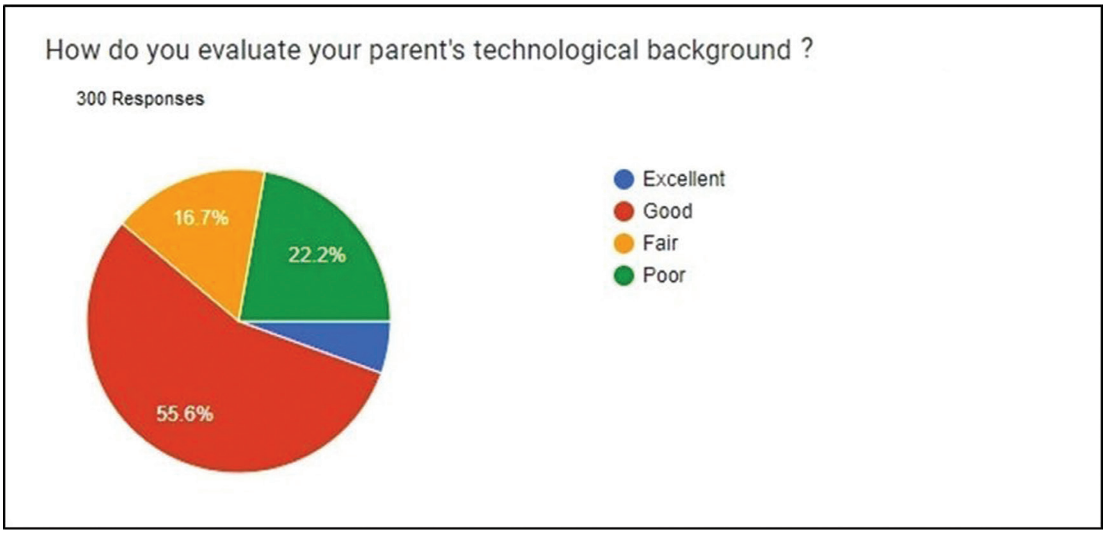

Figure 21. Evaluation of Family technological background

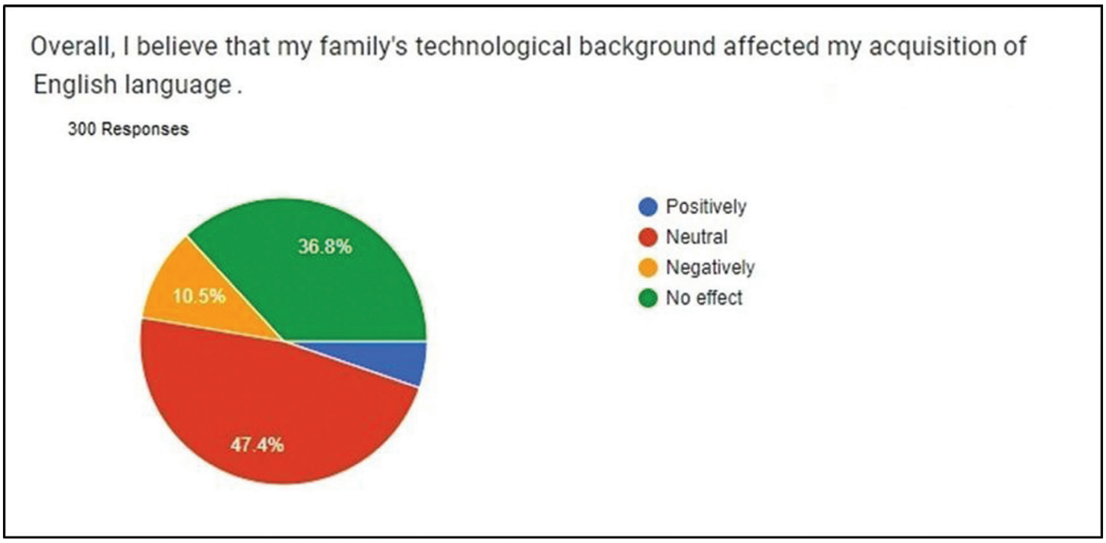

Figure 22. The effect of family technological background on English achievement

no direct effect. 10.5% say there is a negative effect. On the other hand, 6% only say that there is a positive effect.

4 Gender

The table above illustrates the distribution of responses regarding gender and final mark in English. The table shows that around 22.6% of the participants got an "A" in the English language subject. The results show that 85% of these students are women while 15% only are men. In addition, women constitute 82% of the total number of students who got a "B" in the final mark of the English language subject. Accordingly, the majority of "A" and "B" students are women as they constitute around 83% of the "A" and "B" categories. On the other hand, the majority of men got "C", "D" and "F". These three categories constitute around 67% of the total number of participants for both men and women. Men constitute 78% of this number, and 22% goes to women. According to the stated statistics, women got better marks in the English language subject than men students.

Table 1. Gender Vs Final mark in English language subject

Mark/gender	Men	Women	Total (%)	Total (number)
90-100 (A)	2	12	22.6%	14
80-89.5 (B)	2	4	9.7%	6
75-79.5 (C)	7	8	25.5%	15
50-64.5 (D)	14	5	32.3%	19
Less than 50 (F)	4	1	9.7%	6

Source: Adapted from (Alrashdi, 2023).

Discussion

After taking the students' responses into account, it is crucial to view these against the literature. This section provides a discussion in light of previous studies. As witnessed from the results obtained from the questionnaires, educational status plays a major role in academic achievement in English. By relating figure 1 with Figures 8,9,10,11 12, and 13, it can be clearly seen that the majority of students who obtained high marks in English come from educated families. Figure 13 also shows that the majority of students (57%) think that the educational status of their family is the most relevant and effective factor to their academic achievement. The literature supports this (Masrom, 2015; Muthoni, 2013; Okioga, 2013;) as educated parents may transmit their knowledge to their children which can translate into academic achievement. An important point mentioned in the literature (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006; Marjoribanks, 2005) is that parents who are well educated tend to be financially comfortable. Furthermore, they will have sufficient knowledge of technology which may benefit their children's education. Therefore, this factor is the key to the other factors. As evidenced in the literature (De Serf, 2002; Egunsola, 2014; Finnie & Mueller, 2008), there is mounting support to the claim that the educational status of the family plays a significant role in academic performance. However, Adewale (2012) concludes his research by noting that parental educational status does not play a big role in academic achievement. This view is rare among the literature.

Based on the findings, it is challenging to measure the social status of the students as there are not enough students who have social cases like divorce, or death.

However, there is only one student scoring higher than 80 whose father passed. Therefore, it is difficult to reach a conclusion based on a single case. Regarding the economic status of the family, the data indicates that the majority of students in the poorer category obtained high marks in their English language course. This suggests that the financial status of the family does not play a determining role in academic performance in English. This is supported by the findings of the interviews where respondents claimed that they did not pay a huge attention to their financial status as education is free in Oman. However, in the literature, the majority of papers reporting on the financial status supports that it plays a significant role in academic achievement. Egunsola (2014), Saifi and Mehmood (2011), and De Serf (2002) are examples of publications supporting this view. All noted that educational achievement is correlated with the financial status of the family. On the other hand, Ogunshola and Adewale (2012), who conducted their research in Nigeria, reported that "socio-economic is not a significant factor besides the educational background of the parents" (p. 23). It can be inferred that the effect of financial status on academic achievement depends on other variables such as the context and the age of the examined population. In other words, there is no financial effect as education is free in Oman. As such rich and poor families have access to the same education in Oman.

Based on the results emerging from the data, it is challenging to draw a clear conclusion. As demonstrated in Figure 9, the majority of students (90%) are allowed to use technology at home and thus have access to the Internet. During the interviews, parents explained that technology is important to education, but it is not the determining factor to the success of students. The literature (Gulek & Demirtas, 2005) supports this idea as technology may affect the students' achievement, but this comes under the educational status of the parents since there is no technology without education and knowledge.

The results of the questionnaire show that females perform better academically than males. Exactly 77% of students who obtained 80 and above are females. Previous studies (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Changchun & Xiaotian, 2008) found that females are less affected by their social background than boys. This could result in them investing greater efforts to study since they have fewer opportunities in higher education and the job market. However, Saifi and Mehmood (2011) reported that "there are no significant differences in Academic Achievement of male and female adolescents" (p. 268). This contradicts the results of the present study and may be due to cultural and contextual differences.

Conclusion

The focus in this research paper was the investigation of the relationship between Omani high school students' home environment and their English academic achievement. Three main dimensions were investigated. These were: educational background, socio-economic background, and technological background. It also drew attention to gender as a variable that may affect this relationship. Based on careful interpretation and analysis of the findings of this research and relating them to literature, five key findings are presented. First, the educational status of the parents and family plays a significant role in the English academic achievement of Omani twelve-grade students. Second, it is not possible to determine the effect of the social status of the family on the English academic achievement of Omani Grade 12 students. Third, financial status does not play a significant role in the English academic achievement of Omani Grade 12 students. Fourth, the technological status of parents and family does not play a significant role in the English academic achievement of Omani Grade 12 students. Finally, females' English language achievement is less affected by their home environment than males. Based on the main results of this research, there are four significant recommendations stated for stakeholders, teachers and parents. First, the Omani Ministry of education should provide a complete system that enables the school to continually communicate with the parents. Second, teachers should consider individual differences and backgrounds of students (Dhanapal, Salman, & Ong, 2022) in order to provide additional help to those from unfavorable backgrounds. In other words, teachers should consider the effects of the home environment on students. Third, parents should consider the importance of having an educational qualification that will not only help them to be successful but also will help to drive their children's success in the future. They should also further care about their children's performance in English from an early stage. Finally, the authors recommend that researchers interested in this field conduct additional research in this area as it is a sensitive subject warranting further investigation in the Omani context.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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Empowering Women Through the Lens of Matriarchy in Creating Contemporary Dance Work "SOPAN"

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ABSTRACT

For this paper, I produced a choreography in dance work emphasizing the scope of matriarchy or empowering women by exploring semiotics through movements. In general, women have often been looked at as sex symbols from the perspective of gaze and are often looked at as weak. My practice as research attempts to review the status of Malay women in Peninsular Malaysia by examining the impact of Islamic revivalism and industrialization on the Malay family, kinship, and marriage system through *Adat Pepatih*, which is norm-based practice in one of the states in Malaysia, Rembau, Negeri Sembilan into a dance choreography title SOPAN. This research looks at the semiotics ideology in societal behavior related to the practice of *adat perpatih* and transforms to contemporary dance choreography by looking at the movement's symbolism and costume related to religion (symbol) towards the developments in the modern era. In this research, I argue how religion reform and automation have had similar effects in increasing gender differences, paternalism, and misogyny, shifting the rule of bilaterality in the direction of patriarchy and considerably undermining the status of Malay women in both traditional and modern society. In Malaysia particularly the *adat* (culture) has been sat under one pillar, which has made the concept of *adat* concept is seen as bad according to the religious point of view. While the perspective of the community sees women who dress less politely as not showing good manners. To address this, I have used Schechner's Workshop-rehearsal/performance model to make this contemporary choreography and look at the theory of semiotics to peel the process of producing SOPAN works that highlight the movement's ideas and costuming. This creative work metaphorically explained the meaning of *SOPAN* from the perspective of matriarchy. Through this discourse, the view from the semiotic foundation perspective will support the ideology of *adat* in modern society.

Keywords: Matriarchy, Choreography, Gaze, Gender, Contemporary Dance

Introduction

There has been an accumulation of studies about the Minangkabau Malays in Negeri Sembilan back to British colonial times. However, most of these were historical studies by colonial officers[1]. A major part of such society is the customary law of *adat perpatih* which has been practiced by the Malays of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia from the past until the present. Extensively as part of

[1] For example, see Lister (1887,1890,1891), Parr and Mackray (1910), Taylor (1929,1948) Moubray (1931), and Winstedt (1934,1935,1954). For critical reviews of these studies and detailed references, see Peletz (1981,1988).

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the intangible cultural heritage (ICH), *adat perpatih* was brought to the Malay land in the 19th century by the immigrant of the Minangkabau from West Sumatra, Indonesia. *Adat perpatih* which was available in Negeri Sembilan today is the blended version of the existing *adat* in the Malay community and also the customary law that the Minangkabau immigrants brought. Instead of *adat perpatih*, which represents the identity of the Malays of Negeri Sembilan in Malaysia, there are other customary laws, which are also known to the Malays and were practiced in other parts of the states, namely *adat temenggung*. These two *adats* are highly regarded as one of the cultural identities of the Malays in Malaysia as they adhered to the *adat* in every aspect of their lives. *Adat perpatih* follows the matrilineal system, which is reflecting on its Minangkabau ancestry through the immigration of West Sumatran people to the Malay land; meanwhile, *adat temenggong* follows the patriarchal system which inherits from the father's side (Peletz, 1981).

The Religious Affairs Sector of the Rembau branch of the UMNO (United Malays National Organization) started a political movement for the abolition of adat, asserting that the inheritance rules of *adat*[2] were haram (illegal) from the viewpoint of Islamic law. Under Islamic law, all the land and property must be inherited bilaterally, whereas *adat* law differentiates ancestral land (*harta pusaka*[3]) from individually acquired land (*harta carian*[4]). The matrilineal *adat* law is applied to ancestral land, thus confining its inheritance to women. In Malaysia, Negeri Sembilan is the only state in which this custom of matrilineal inheritance is practiced. In the district of Rembau, said to be the most conservative and the strongest in *adat* tradition, this custom became the target of UMNO's harsh criticism. Thus an anti-*adat* campaign was carried out as part of a movement to sweep away anti-Islamic customs. As some of the *adat* chiefs (Lembaga) supported this movement, some Rembau women stood up against the men and proclaimed that they would divorce any husband who supported the abolition of matrilineal *adat*. In the end, the issue was resolved when some of the Lembaga was forced to resign, and so the attempts of the anti-*adat* reformists failed.

From the context approach of the Malay community in Malaysia particularly in *Rembau*, *Negeri Sembilan*, a matriarchy is an approach and practice that is used to show the power, rights, or strength of women to own something, dominate, and obtain absolute ownership of the property, property rights, and influence that allows a tribe to be seen as dominated by women and articulately described our fascination with ancient matriarchs through her book, The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory (Eller, 2013). According to her, matriarchy allowed us to imagine other women as people whose biological sex and not immediate status provide the perspective of women's strong leadership, creativity, or autonomy, either ridiculous or suspect. It provided a vocabulary for "dreaming of utopia and a license to claim that it was not mere fantasy, but a dream rooted in an ancient reality". The influence of this culture and approach has made the choreographer produce his work within a matriarchy approach, named "SOPAN," an award-winning work at the YOKOHAMA Dance Collection 2022, performed by Natasha Koo, and Jocelyn Tay Mei Xuan after Jazlyn Tan Jia Yu, and Nurul Elyana Hamlan. Both performers graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts, School of Dance and Theatre, Singapore.

This practice research work takes a perspective and practice approach from a man's view (researcher as a male choreographer) towards women's rights, which are often manipulative or considered a sex symbol, especially when dressed sexily, seductively, and dominating some emotions or aspects by using their physical forms. This choreographic research tries to challenge those perspectives by emphasizing that women do have their own influences and should be seen through their characters, thinking, and rights while maintaining the dignity of these women and honors. In Malaysia, one of the Southern States, Negeri Sembilan, practices "*Adat Pepatih,"* which is a notable example of the concept of matriarchy (https://www.ns.gov.my/kerajaan/info-negeri/adat-perpatih, n.d.) In *Adat Perpatih*, women's influence and domination have the absolute right to family inheritances and marital property, indirectly protecting women in the family if they are divorced or abandoned by their spouse. This practice nevertheless prevents the husband from doing polygamy which is seen as contrary to the sunnah of Prophet *Rasulullah S.A.W* in which the men have the right to marry and own four wives at a time if the husband is sufficient, Fath al-Bari (9/329). Therefore, *Adat Pepatih's* practices are intended

[2] Based on Malaysia Dictionary (Kamus Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka) 4th edition, adat is a rule (action) that is commonly followed or carried out since ancient times; way (behavior) that has become a habit; the form of cultural ideas consisting of cultural values, norms, laws and rules which are related to one another to form a system.

[3] (Harta Pusaka) Inheritance is defined by the Distribution Act 1958 and the Inheritance (Family Provision) Act 1971, both of which lay out the conditions of inheritance. Civil law allows for the personal wishes of an individual to dictate the ownership of an estate upon their death through the use of a will.

[4] (Harta Carian), According to Section 2, Islamic Family Law (State of Selangor) Enactment 2003, "matrimonial property" is defined as property that is acquired jointly by husband and wife during their marriage effective according to the requirements set by the Islamic Law

to defend woman's rights; hence they are not oppressed and used at will. Observation of women's influences these days, especially within the perception of society by men, these women are often misinterpreted and presented as not capable of being leaders due to certain factors such as physical strength, being fragile in making decisions, and always being represented in the form of character which is needed to serve the opposite gender will.

Gradually as the concept of women's empowerment started to grow within the communities, and conversations about women's contribution to society were getting more expansive, bigger, and robust. Over time, with the myriad ways women tend to become powerful and empower the world around us, the idea of matriarch in society is becoming salient. Most of society, where the majority of the rights belong to men, often sees women as companions rather than pleasers. In some religious contexts, women are shown as someone who need to be cared for, pampered, and given attention. Moreover, this duty relies on the responsibility of the husband once married. The man's duty and responsibility are expected to take care of his wife as a woman who has given birth to his son or daughter and to lighten the burden of managing family affairs. Men are often responsible for every heavy job because women are considered weak. Gradually, a change is witnessed in societal structure with women now adapting roles established for men, evident from the fact that many top leaders of countries worldwide are dominated by women these days. The closest example is the New Zealand Prime Minister, led by Jacinda Ardern (Gallagher, 2019).

Matriarchy vs. Patriarchy

Women are no longer expected to settle for housewifery. Just like men, women can now comfortably pursue a career of their choice while balancing the requirements of a mother and a wife. Thus, family setups have changed completely when compared to four or five decades ago. Men, too, have evolved their roles such that some of them are embracing the role of a stay-at-home dad. Therefore, it is safe to say that patriarchy and matriarchy in family settings have tremendously progressed to ensure fairness. Similarly in workplaces, the level of equality and equity between a male and a female employee has improved; however, this is yet to be evidenced in other societies, in the Middle East nations, hence suggesting the presence of societal structure as a discriminatory factor (Kelbert & Hossain, 2014).

Unlike in the past, when husbands would dominate their wives, domestic violence has been on the decline. This is due to the implementation of laws such as the Domestic Violence Act implemented by the Malaysian government in 1994 (Randawar & Jayabalan, 2020), which has ensured the safety of wives and young girls from vicious men. Such acts and various other factors have contributed to reduced patriarchal dominance in families. It can be stated that matriarchy is less belligerent compared to patriarchal leadership in a family setup. Thus, with increased matriarchal ascendancy in families, the chances of conflict have reduced among the society. The revolution from patriarchal to matriarchal leadership in families has been enhanced by feminism, which received serious recognition in the 1970s as observed by Lebovic (2019). It was not until the 70s that women were allowed to use their maiden names without being obligated to take their husbands' last names. This was the beginning of the matriarchal revolution. Again, an argument against a patriarchal society can be pointed to the times before the 1970s.

It is impossible to argue against the reversed roles taking place in our current society. However, this is demonstrated in certain parts of the world. Some cultures still practice strong patriarchal supremacy like Middle East and North Africa (MENA) as observed by Costa-Font & Györi, (2019). The question involving reserved roles on the basis of gender is subjective, whereby different scholars have different opinions. There are situations and occasions where matriarchal dominance has been disadvantageous, in which patriarchal setups have shown some signs of positive effects. Therefore, although patriarchy is gradually losing its dominance, only some support the changes. Once again, this depends on a scholar's viewpoints. Nonetheless, Carli and Eagly (2001) illustrate that society can tremendously benefit from a matriarchal system. The argument is that patriarchy has been plagued with violence, which is male-dominated. The explanation for men's love for violence is based on their nature rather than nurture. Even though society is still patriarchal, women's influence is everywhere, from families to workplaces and even in sports suggesting a stronger presence and growth of matriarchy not as a challenge to patriarchy but as a better social management system.

Patriarchy is a widespread gender ideology that positions men as rulers of private and public life in a house. Within the household, the eldest male is recognized as head of the family, organizing the activities of dependent women and children and governing their behavior. Family resources such as money and land are controlled by senior men. Men make decisions; women acquiesce. Beyond the family, men are accorded positions of leadership throughout society, and women are summoned to play a supportive and enabling role as marginalized subordinates.

Matriarchy means rule by senior women. In a matriarchal society, women would exercise authority throughout social life and control power and wealth. Like patriarchy, matriarchy is a gender ideology. Unlike patriarchy, however, matriarchy is not embedded in structures and institutions in any culture in the contemporary world. That is to say, it's just an ideology—not a dominant one, and certainly not hegemonic.

While societies with patrilineal kinship systems are strongly patriarchal, societies with matrilineal kinship systems are not matriarchal. This is a common source of confusion. In matrilineal kinship systems, children primarily belong to their mother's kin group, and inheritance passes through the maternal line. However, even in matrilineal societies, leadership is exercised by the senior men of the family as observed by Arifin et al. (2023). Instead of a woman's husband, it is her brother or mother's brother (her maternal uncle) who makes decisions about family resources and disciplines the behavior of family members. Scholars such as Shannon (2019) who theorize the existence of ancient matriarchies suggest that those societies were not only matrilineal but also dominated by the leadership of women as well as the values of fertility and motherhood.

Matriarchy influence in SOPAN choreography.

In this particular choreographic process, it went through a lot of versions! I couldn't find a way to say "women empowering women" that wasn't cheesy until I thought of the idea of matriarchy. Why is the word "patriarchy" so easy on our tongues? Why aren't we talking about our matriarchy? The more we talked about what it means to have your voice heard, the more they realized what women-empowering women really look like. It was highlighting where it was good in their lives but also showed them where it could be better. Consider the similarities between the elements of religion and culture described in this chapter such as the role of symbols and stories in both accounts and the pursuit of life according to what either faith or culture determines to be the higher standards of living.

An important question to ask is whether 'culture' should be necessarily understood as the larger or more significant category in international relations, always casting 'religion' as a subset within it. Such a view makes sense because no one religion encompasses an entire society in the world today, and no society lives entirely according to one set of sacred rules and practices as noted by Kawangung (2019). On the other hand, in some contexts, religious authority and identity can be more significant than any other cultural element which is stated also by Burhani (2020). This section shows the two separate ideologies in religion and culture, with each aspect focussing on different tole of religion in society where it shows certain symbols in the costume and movements connection between the two dancers.

There were a lot of conversations around holding multiple emotions at once. How can we hold the reality of this and also work toward something better? It shows in the three sections of the work. Part one is called "Religion not to Religion" This first part came up when I realize in Malaysia, the culture and religion have been mixed where Malaysia's National Cultural Policy 1971-2021 and current cultural developments have stated that Islam is an important element in the formation of National Culture which has been extensively highlighted by Chin & Tanasaldy, (2019). Theorists have long drawn such links and these are useful for our consideration here. For example, the anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously described religion as a 'cultural system' composed of myths, rituals, symbols, and beliefs created by humans as a way of giving our individual and collective lives a sense of meaning (Woodhead, 2004). Thus, prior evidence was also recorded where the societal structure was slowly accepting religion and culture as one and the same aspect.

Part two is called "Resilience". This part has shown the symbol of women's power through movement difficulties which have been noted by the entire women's community under different situations as observed by Matharu & Juneja (2021), Huang et al., (2019), and Aniefuna et al. (2020). This part has inspired me from the reality not only in the community commonly practice the *adat perpatih*, but women, in general, in the manner how they raise the kids, do household work, arrange the schedule for the family, and so on. The time is very limited yet they still have the energy to do all in twenty-four hours a day. The Matriarchy vibes are shown throughout the movements of women in accomplishing regular tasks in their lives.

Part three is called "Paradise." This is in reference to the historic Matriarchy prehistory book written by Johann Jakob Bachofen in 1864, women gradually lost their freedom, mystery, and superior position which is studied by several scholars including Miller (2021). For five thousand years or more, the gynocritic age had flowered in peace and productivity. Slowly, in varying stages and in different parts of the world, the social order was painfully reversed. Women became the underclass, marked by their visible differences in both public as well as private life. The adoption of three stages show when the dancers are holding a hand each other and consistently raising to show that they have finally had freedom. That particular section shows the reference to the *adat perpatih* where the woman has to take charge of wealth in the family after marriage. It is not to show the power, but it shows how freedom is part of the power, where the dancers show their desire and what they want in life as women and are not scared to break the rules, want to be able to walk to the car and not be scared, want to run at night without being judged, want to be able to walk around without getting cat-called or harassed, want to live without fear and so forth.

Choreographic Process in Making *SOPAN*

This research of looking at the matriarchy as a symbol of power for women, particularly in *Rembau, Negeri Sembilan* has enabled me as a choreographer to adapt and look at the behavior patterns of that particular community who practice this *adat* and then look at the symbols found in their daily activities to be taken as movements ideas in designing SOPAN choreography in accordance with study objectives. In this choreographic research, various factors are studied primarily to investigate the ability of women to perform various forms of movement that may be considered incapable of being performed by them under patriarchal system. Each movement in this *SOPAN* work has specific symbolisms and metaphors that show what is regarded as a negative to a positive form.

The choreographer, while developing the methods used in creating this piece, has used Schechner's Workshop-rehearsal/performance model as earlier utilized by Zahid & Anizaim (2022). The specification of each phrase is interconnected with each other on societal issues, which include cultures, religions, gaze, and gender perspectives. This choreography process will also introduce a different meaning of each phrase and movement from the standpoint of Speech Acts Theory coined by Austin et al. (1969) based on the different situations. Using Speech Act Theory has helped the choreographer and audience to understand each part of the performance especially when it relates to metaphor or symbolism. As Austin and later Jacque Derrida mentioned, the meaning in every movement can be interpreted differently from what is being seen, felt, and observed. This is because, as pointed out by (Episcopius, 1644), there is always GAP, which provides a separator between two opinions and observations. This often happens to the choreography, which leads to the abstract structure, refer to Figure 1. Workshop rehearsal/performance model by Schechner, 2013.

A performance model is a tool for analysing the various levels of interaction in the choreographic making and interconnection between metaphors and symbolic and actual meaning, which are later translated into movements Sun et al. (2020). Schechner's performance model has organized a format for collaboratively exploring new and different possibilities in one dance performance that inform and define the content and structure of subsequent performances. A performative task is an organizational unit for planning group activities manifest in shared performances. It can refer to tasks such as repetitive activities to an outcome towards the exercise given to the performer during a process and introduce a framework for analysing and proactively organizing work and activities throughout a method of making choreography (Hansen, 2022). Schechner's also explained the possibility explained in the "performance model" and the ideology of "as if," "what could work," and "what we have got" (Schechner, 2013). This model also will give a different perspective on highlighting women's functionality inside society in creating choreography from a different point of view which has not been present in patriarchal societies.

The ideology of using two female dancers to represent women's power will be implemented in the current project. Even if we look at Malaysia, for the first time in 2018, Dr Wan Azizah has become the first woman Deputy Prime Minister. It has brought back the history of the late Che Siti Wan Kembang (1610–1667), a legendary queen who reigned over a region on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, now located within the Malaysian state of Kelantan. She was known as a warrior queen and engaged in battle on horseback with a sword accompanied by an army of female horse-riders. It was said that she and her adopted daughter *Puteri Saadong* possessed mystical powers which also finds evidence in academic literature in the work of Stark et al. (2022). Those figures have become a strong symbol in creating SOPAN. The Power and the amount of energy have been portrayed in the movements to emphasize the difference between alpha and gamma, which will include the great difficulties of lifting and technique. This work's difficulty level was proven when this piece was announced as a winner of the

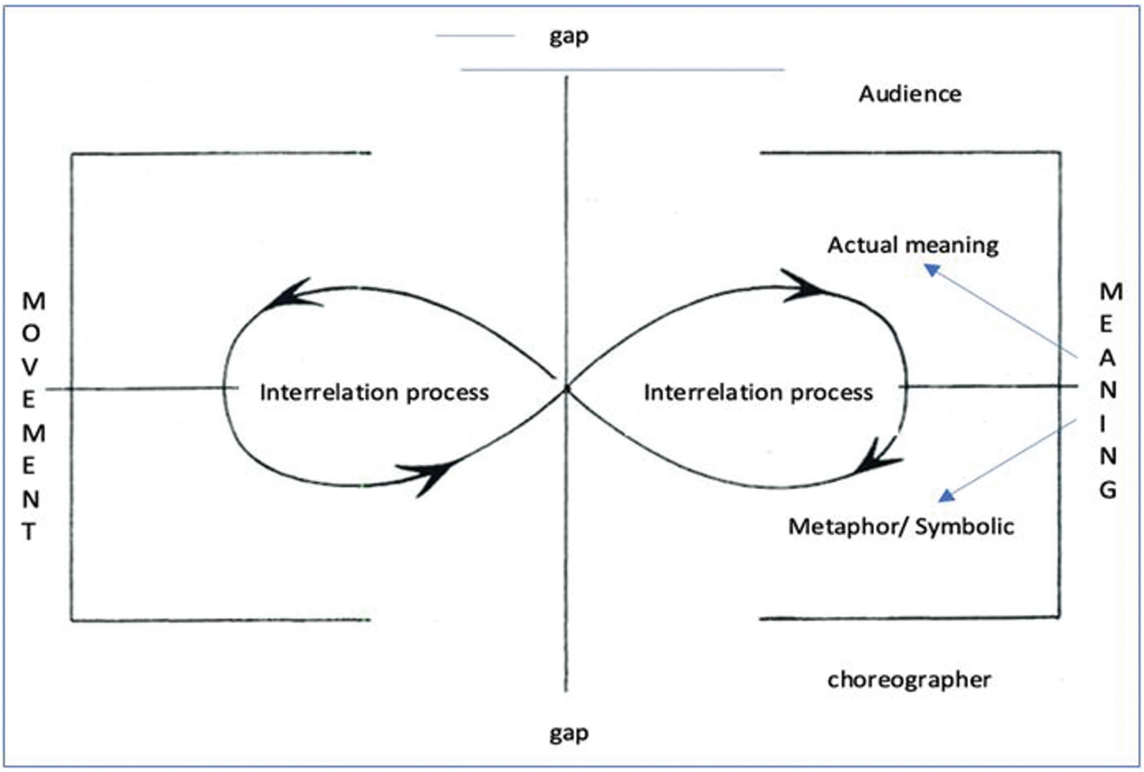

Figure 1. Workshop-rehearsal/performance model
Source: Schechner, 2013

MASDANZA[5] Award at the YOKOHAMA Dance Collection[6] 2022. The judges mentioned, that "this award goes to Fairul Zahid (LASALLE Dance) because the choreography has portrayed a very clear message based on the synopsis given, and the dancers deliver it together with a strong technique. The level of maturity of the dancers has made the choreography stronger. The woman issue has been covered excellently in this choreography. With that, MASADANZA has awarded this prize to Fairul Zahid (LASALLE Dance)."

The gap between different viewers

In producing SOPAN, the analysis has been done from three different perspectives; the first one is to position me as a woman, in which I need to feel and know what is necessary and what is desired for each woman herself. In this process, it is not enough to see with the naked eye without fully immersing in the feeling. Apart from that, interviews with some communities living in Negeri Sembilan who practice this *"Adat Pepatih"* is done to get more knowledge regarding woman's perspectives and offer broader perspectives. Second, assigned as an audience seat, I need to know how effectively the audience can acknowledge that this work is portraying the ideology of women's empowerment instead of sex symbols that is against religion.

The last one is to put me as a choreographer. This includes my approach and observation through perspective gaze and gender bias. Referring to Figure 1, Workshop-rehearsal/performance model by Schechner, 2013 above, there are two main points in understanding the true meaning of each issue found in this work. For example, the title of this work is *SOPAN*. If it is placed in the audience's view, they will expect this piece will portray the modesty of women and the softness of women; however, the presence of the costume itself has already made it astray and against the chosen title. This is what I said earlier; everything found in this *SOPAN* work has an implicit meaning. The perspective and understanding of the audience who watches this piece can be different from the intention of the choreographer when creating this piece. It will always have a gap (Episcopius, 1644).

[5] Founded in 1996 by dancer and choreographer Natalia Medina, MASDANZA holds since 2019 the EFFE Quality Label from the European Festivals Association, an initiative of the European Union, and has been nominated for the Best European Dance Festival Award.
[6] Yokohama Dance Collection is the annual contemporary choreography dance festival at Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse Number 1. Japan. This December marks the 28th year since its start in 1996 as a Japanese domestic platform for a global choreography and dance competition. In addition to sending roughly 500 established choreographers out into the world through its competitions, YDC consists of various programs such as performances by recent award winners, new works by internationally established choreographers, and collaborative programs with overseas dance festivals.

This Gap will always appear between two eyes, as referred to in Figure 1.

This is because, as pointed out by (Episcopius, 1644), there is always a gap, which provides a separator between two opinions and observations. This often happens in the choreography, which leads to the abstract structure of the dance performance. Therefore, it is very likely that the audience and choreographer's acceptance are different according to the theory of the "Gap" approach by Vedic (1987) written by Anna Bonshek in her book "Transformation Within the Gap: Liminality and Principles of Vedic Language Theory in Performance" (Bonshek, 2000). Anna states that everything done between the performer and the audience has a different meaning and delivery. It is divided into two parts based on imagination and understanding the audience has created based on their experiences throughout life or at that time. Every piece of information received through what is seen will be processed by the mind and, in return, give birth to the imagination and a storyline that may be different from what the performer is trying to convey.

Creating specific movements, particularly in this performance piece, communicates an idea or intention to the audience; the movement vocabulary provides a major tool for the choreographer's artistic expression through the arisen issues. The ideology behind this creation is to show women's empowerment through dance using societal issues. Of course, from the audience's perspective and gaze, it is mostly about entertainment. Most of the audience tends to see and feel direct translation. For example, dancer A oppresses dancer B; for the audience, it needs to show the symbol of oppression. In *SOPAN*, most of the deliberation is through precise movements from beginning to end. It is very hard to identify the narrative in this piece; however, it is full of the message to be delivered.

People generally recognize dance as a bodily practice centered on establishing an innate and intelligent corporeal understanding of oneself, movement potentials, and bodily techniques. Regardless of the academic, professional, or recreational purpose behind the dance, dance is considered a physical practice that lends to the habituation and training of the body. Through this conditioning, choreographers pass along a great deal of information to dancers, peers, and audiences. For several decades, understanding the relationship between movements and meaning has been addressed and theorized from various perspectives and experiences. Scholars have addressed topics including the dancing body and limited participation in dance choreography (Gard, 2006; Burt, 2007; Risner, 2008); how the intersection of text, religion, gender, semiotics, and culture can be part of the tools in making choreography. The role of the intersection will be a necessary aspect to be considered. It will give an idea to the choreographer to start thinking about what and where to start.

The Semiotics theories in creating SOPAN Movements

Semiotics, or semiology, is a branch of linguistics that studies signs and symbols and their interpretation in communication (Peirce, 1931-1958). According to Peirce, a sign is anything that represents something else to someone in some capacity; it consists of three components: 1. the sign itself or signifier; 2. its representation (the signified meaning); and 3. an interpretant - which provides interpretation from this sign. Semiotics offers an insightful framework to investigate the role of spoken word interventions in contemporary choreography, helping us comprehend how language and movement are employed to convey meaning and communicate ideas.

Semiotics has been applied in making this contemporary choreography by considering signifier and signified concepts. In making this contemporary choreography (SOPAN), the signifier is the word that I play which is SOPAN while the signified is the movement where the word SOPAN itself has created an image in the dancers' brain. Throughout the teaching, I have given the ideology and knowledge to the dancers on what is SOPAN in the Malays' perspective. This has made the dancers aware of those words. During the process of creation, dancers often ask "Where is SOPAN in this particular movement?" As a result, I gave them an ideology of SOPAN as a symbol of culture and religion believe where it is common to all human beings in this world. It represents "being polite" or "being respectful" to the elderly and so on. However, in this particular choreography, it represents showing the other side of women who can do some of the men's work through the movement's vocabulary. The intricacy and difficult level of movements that I gave are representatives of what women can do. However yet, it still has a gap.

Another concept from the field of semiotics that applies to the research on making this contemporary choreography is iconicity. An icon, as defined by Peirce (1931-1958), is a sign analogous to what it represents in a specific way. Modern choreography can implement this idea to establish linkages between expression and physical movement. For instance, a choreographer might use words throughout the process to describe an action or emotion and then employ movement representing that action or emotion as an effective link between the two. It can be as simple as bending the upper torso (head to waist) 45° and straight one arm to point on the floor and the five fingers pointed 45° on the floor as a symbol of respect if we want to walk or pass by the elderly. This particular movement has shown the strong symbol not only as women but in Malay culture in general where we have been taught since childhood to practice it. Another sample of movements that are related to a sign is pointing five fingers 180° in different directions which shows a symbol of "we practice our religion and beliefs" where we pray five times a day, refer to Figure 2. Those gestures have been used repetitively throughout the dance. It is also a significant gesture where humans "cannot judge others by its cover".

The Symbolism of *berkemban* in creating *SOPAN*

The costume of *berkemban*, which involves wearing a cloth named Sarong, which is tied around the chest and untied to the calf, became the starting point for the development of clothing in the Malay world. *Berkemban* is a synonymy by Malay Women as they wear it daily at home and still practicing today, especially when taking a bath (Rusli et al., 2022). *Berkemban's* historical origins are from the Peranakans and the Influence of their maternal forebears from Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Siam, and Bali. The Nyonyas liked to wear *berkemban* in the privacy of their homes. Probably the only Chinese women who do so. Some senior nyonyas and aunts still like to wear *berkemban* for informal wear today - cool, comfy, and nifty with no buttons or zips. But it's not popular with younger Nyonyas who prefer housecoats, kimonos, bathrobes, or just a towel. Another style of *sarong* is by tying it around the waist. The length of the *sarong* fabric is long enough to reach the ankle (Septiarini et al., 2022). In this way, you can see an example of Cik Siti Wan Kembang's elegant dress, which consists of *kemban*, *sarong* fabric, and a long scarf, plus jewelry such as *dokoh*, bracelets, and pendants. Advent to the Islamic revolution in the 1970s, women were ordered to wear a *sarong* over the *kemban* to cover the exposed head and shoulders. The Sultan of Kelantan also announced to any woman who went out without a head covering that they would be punished by smearing black paint on their body theory of sign and face (Ismail, 2011). This also indicates the government's concern about implementing Islamic law in the Malay community.

In context, the meaning behind each costume can be read differently depending on Austin's writing and perspective in the book "*How To Do Things With Words,*" He mentioned it always has a different meaning in every single word or text. If we look at the word SOPAN from the audience, they will say or interpret "*wahh.. so sopan…*", or it can be "*mana sopannya*?" (where is the polite?). However, for me, the interplay of the word SOPAN in this piece is to show that even though they are wearing what we call Malay *berkemban* yet, they are still protective of their pride. In the olden days, all Malays women would take a bath at the river together with all women; however, even though there were only women, they still took baths with *berkemban.* The concept of *berkemban* is to show that, as a woman, it is not necessary to be judged as a sex symbol even if they are wearing sexy cloth such as *berkemban.* This is what I referred to as *kiasan* (figurative); the intention is more likely to show what needs to show without intention; it is more like a constative instead of performative; however,

Figure 2. Costume of SOPAN performed by Jazlyn Tan Jia Yu, and Elyana bt Hamlan
Source: Sugawara Kota

it carries a strong statement behind it. Based on Figure 3, the costume has shown the actual process and style of wearing the costume in *berkemban;* however, it has been modified and changed during the YOKOHAMA Dance Collection Competition 2022.

Another example, there at the beginning of the dance piece is when one dancer stands and one dancer sits on her leg. These particular movements and positions show the different levels in the Minang community (Fanany & Fanany, 2020), and the dancers wear what we call a *hijab*. A hijab is a head-covering scarf that some Muslim women wear in public. For many such women, the hijab signifies modesty and privacy (see Figure 4. The significance of this hijab in this contemporary choreography is to show that women still have honor, pride, and modesty (Mohamad & Hassim, 2021). The symbol of this hijab appears for at least one and a half minutes with slow, and soft movements as a representation of women in what community and religion expected them to be. However, towards the end, the dancers have opened the *kemban*, but facing the opposite direction from the audience to show a symbol of freedom while still protecting their honor and pride. Refer to Figure 4.

Figure 3. New approach to styling berkemban by SOPAN dancer, Natasha Koo
Source: Author

To some extent, the ideology of *berkemban* in this work gives room for the choreographer to see from the perspective of gaze and gender. This is because, as stated at the beginning, in producing this work, the choreographer looks at the performance from different perspectives, including as an audience. If placed from a man's glasses, the view and meaning of his gaze must be different, (Fischer-Lichte, 1997). Therefore, it will have a different meaning. Nevertheless, if put from a woman's glass angle, it may be seen as an emphasis on all women having rights and desires. This probability was emphasized when producing this work. The message needs to be in line with the needs of the situation. As mentioned by John Berger in his book *Ways of Seeing* (2008), two eyes may interpret it differently based on desire and interpersonal thoughts. However, as mentioned earlier, the intention of using such a costume is to ensure it reflects the concept of semiotics (Saussure, 2011).

Conclusion

This practice as research methodology in producing a SOPAN choreography provides an ideology and approach

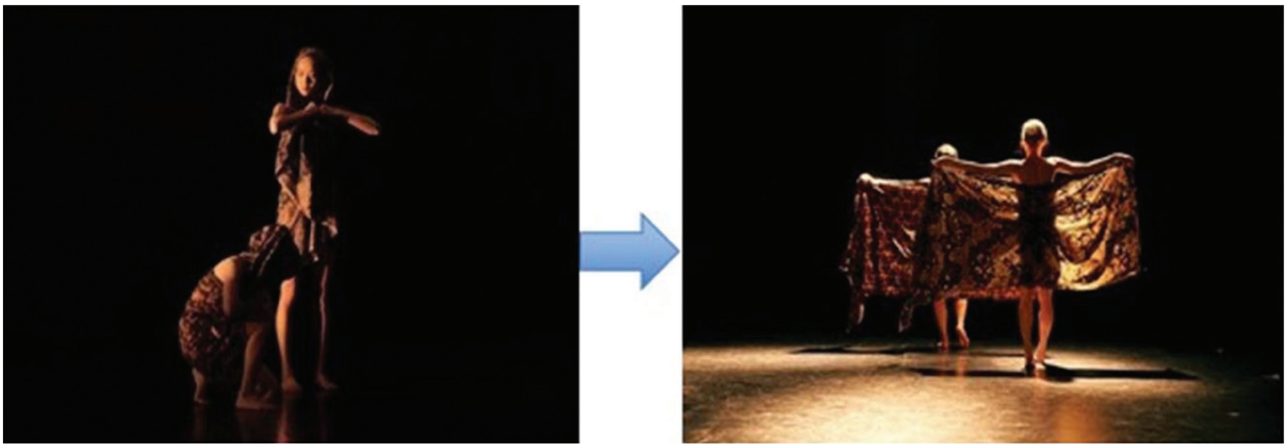

Figure 4. Symbol of honor
Source: Author

to raising the rights and causes of women's power in a community. Women are capable as men and should be treated equally. No doubt, their ability, and power are something to look at. The context of creating *SOPAN* not only offers symbolic stories in various aspects but also gives a new breath in showing the strength of women in a community, whether in Malaysia or other countries. The opposing view of women as sex symbols can be seen from different aspects and strengthened it for women. On whether matriarchy is less violent than patriarchy, the argument is explainable by examining history in the past centuries compared to today's modern world. Due to laws such as the Violence Against Women Act, domestic violence has not only been reduced, but the world has witnessed men embracing equal treatment of the female sex. This shows reduced violence against women and, thus, a less belligerent society. At the same time, evidence-based in today's society shows that matriarchy can be less violent than patriarchy. The reason for this is based on the lack of wars, whereby the world has not experienced any war since the end of World War II in 1945. Nonetheless, although a gender-favoring community is fine and acceptable, gender centrism is not tolerable. Although patriarchy is more violent, it would be a mistake to replace it with matriarchy. This is because some women can still influence violence. Violence is more of human nature rather than a sex issue; thereby, belligerence is not reliant on either matriarchy or patriarchy.

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The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

Work Sample

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dowzaqdqO4

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Fairul Zahid holds a master's degree (MFA) from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts. He was a principal dancer/ choreographer at ASK Dance Company, Christina Noel and the Creature NYC, The Nutcracker New York City Ballet, LaneCo Arts NYC, as well as an artistic director of Asia Duo Dance Company.

Fairul was a lecturer at several universities in Malaysia including the National Academy of Arts, Culture and Heritage (ASWARA) and University Technology MARA (UiTM). He was also invited as guest lecturer/ choreographer by several universities, including Minzu University, Capital Normal School (Beijing), University of Philippines, Temple University Philadelphia among oters.

Fairul has produced several full-length and mix-bills performances for tours in Beijing, Los Angeles, New York, Jakarta, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Chicago. He is a prolific and versatile choreographer/dancer working in the disciplines of contemporary ballet, Malay dance, Chinese classical dance, Indian classical dance, and jazz.

In his work, he has collaborated with local and international artists including Riki Von Falken, Gideon Oberzanek, Un Yamada, Ena Herosie, Pamela Pietro, Sean Curran, Netta Yerusalmy, Patrick Suzeu, Jeff Tsei, Brigel Gjoka, Pamela S.Pietro, Yachao Zhu, Herbert Alvarez, Akram Khan, Elena Laniog, Lane Gifford, Hala Shah and Crystal Pite.

Fairul was a top 20 finalist of So You Think You Can Dance 2008 (Malaysia). In 2020, he won the Best Group Performance in the Cameronian Arts Award for the theatre production of Oedipus under the FiTA Theatre Assemble, and was nominated for Best Choreographer for TRANSCENDENCE, an evening of contemporary dance performance. In 2018, his work CanSur was awarded best group performance at the Cameronian Arts Awards and nominated for best choreography in 2018. He also was a winner of the MASDANZA Award at Yokohama Dance Collection 2022.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence in the Effect of a Toxic Working Environment on Employee Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The topics of the Toxic Work Environment (TWE), Employee Well-Being (EWB), and Emotional Intelligence (EI) are becoming more relevant in today's workplace. However, there is a lack of research examining the moderating role of EI in the impact of TWE on EWB, and associated demographic variables.

Methods: Researchers employed convenience sampling, a quantitative method, and a cross-sectional study design with 208 employees (n= 208 participants) with previously used standard instruments; while ensuring reliability, and validity. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed during the data analysis stage to test the hypotheses for the study.

Results: According to the study, TWE could have negative effects on EWB, whereas EI had no discernible moderating influence. EI did not diminish the impact, according to the results of the regression analysis ($b = 0.134$, 95% CI [-0.79-1.059], $t = 0.28$, sig = 0.775, $p > 0.05$). EI, however, is a valuable skill. The survey also discovered a significant difference in EI between married and unmarried employees.

Conclusion: It is crucial to identify the impact of TWE on EWB. While EI is a vital skill, this study found that EI did not play a moderating role between TWE and EWB. Therefore, organizations should prioritize addressing toxic behaviors and promoting a healthy work environment. However, limitations such as the use of self-reported and private data may restrict the study's feasibility. Further research is necessary to explore effective strategies for combating TWE and promoting EWB across diverse professions.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Employee Well-Being, Moderating Role, Toxic Workplace Environment

INTRODUCTION

The undesirable impact of TWE on EWB is well-reported in literature (Rasool et al., 2021; Thapa et al., 2022). Research studies demonstrate that a TWE can lead to a negative significant relationship between job productivity, and stress (Anjum & Ming, 2018). Similarly, a study by Anjum et.al(2018) revealed that ostracism, incivility, harassment, and bullying have direct negative significant effects on job productivity(Anjum et al.,

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2018).Likewise, the feelings that come with a TWE, e.g. harassment, bullying, and ostracism, can be negative and lead to unnecessary stress, burnout, depression, and anxiety among workers(Rasool et al., 2021).However, not all employees are equally affected by a TWE(Baburajan et al., 2019). Some individuals are more resilient and equipped to cope and deal with the worries associated with toxicity at the workplace. This is where the concept of EI comes into play as a potential moderator of the relationship between TWE and EWB.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to a person's aptitude to distinguish, comprehend, a manage their own feelings, as well as the feelings of others(Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Schutte, 2004; Thapa, Adhikari, et al., 2023). Research has shown that individuals with a higher level of EI may be better equipped to handle the stresses and challenges of TWE (Karimi et al., 2021; Lo et al., 2023; Nel, 2019; Thapa, Rana, et al., 2023). They may be more adept at recognizing and managing their own emotions, as well as the emotions of others(Goleman, Boyatzis, 2013; Mayer & Salovey, 1993), which can help them to navigate interpersonal conflicts and other challenges that may arise in a toxic workplace(Karimi et al., 2021; Thapa, Rana, et al., 2023). Additionally, Employees with higher EI are more committed to their organization, have higher job satisfaction, are less likely to leave their jobs, are less likely to be depressed and perform better at work(Miao et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have emphasized the moderating role of EI in the association between TWE and EWB(Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Karimi et al., 2021; Nel, 2019; Thapa, Rana, et al., 2023). For example, a study by Nel, (2019) revealed that there was significant negative relationship between workplace harassment and flourishing. Emotional intelligence (EI) significantly moderates the relationship between workplace harassment (Nel, 2019). Persons with high EI stayed less likely to involve stress and undesirable emotions, even in a TWE(Thapa, Rana, et al., 2023). Likewise, a study demonstrated that EI regulates the relationship b/t workstation toxicity and EWB(Nel, 2019). Subsequently, individuals with greater EI were less likely to practice negative emotional consequences in response to toxicity, such as worry and depression(Miao et al., 2017).

In addition to representing the undesirable an effect of TWE on EWB (Pauksztat et al., 2022), EI has also been creating to have an encouraging influence on job satisfaction (Singh & Kumar, 2016). A meta-analysis by Miao et al., (2017) revealed that EI has a substantial and helpful effect on work performance and satisfaction(Sewell, 2011). Additionally, the study found that EI played an important moderating role in the association between work demand and work performance, interpersonal competence, job performance, effective leadership, motivation and accomplish job performance(Sultana et al., 2021).

In Nepal, violence against women has largely gone unreported up until now, either because women are ashamed (Kumar Joshi, 2008). However, in Nepal, workplace sexual harassment is gaining attention although there has not been a public discussion of this issue in Nepal (Kumar Joshi, 2008). For instance, it is not yet clear which precise workings of EI have the greatest significance in moderating this association or whether the consequence of EI differs depending on the nature of the TWE or the person's work role. More studies are needed to regulate whether mediations intended to restore EI could help alleviate the undesirable effect of TWE on EWB.

In conclusion, EI seems to show a key role in how persons navigate challenges and TWE(Sewell, 2011; Sultana et al., 2021), such as those that are considered by toxicity and negativity. Although the study has revealed that individuals with higher levels of EI may be better prepared to handle the challenges of TWE(Miao et al., 2017; Sewell, 2011; Sultana et al., 2021; et al., 2022; Thapa, Adhikari, et al., 2023), additional research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms underlying this relationship and to develop effective interventions that can help mitigate the TWE.

Literature Review

Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE) and Employee Well-Being (EWB)

In recent years, research by Bano & Malik, Harvey & Too, and others (2012, 2013, and 2022) have examined the impact of TWE on EWB. Workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and negative physical and social conditions can have detrimental effects on EWB. For instance, Pauksztat et al. (2022) found that workplace bullying led to seafarers' depression, anxiety, and exhaustion, while Sthapit (2014) noted that Nepali financial cooperatives commonly faced mild forms of workplace harassment. Azuma et al. (2015) discovered high prevalence rates of building-related symptoms (BRSs) in Japanese employees, while Llop-Gironés et al. (2021) found that nurses worldwide faced precarious employment and working conditions, with gender, social class, ethnicity, age, and migrant status furtherer compounding their vulnerability. It is essential for organizations to address workplace toxicity and create a more positive work environment to protect the well-being of their employees.

Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ) and Employee Well-Being (EWB)

The ability to recognize and regulate one's own and others' emotions, strengths, and weaknesses is referred to as emotional intelligence (EI) (Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Ott, 1998; Thapa et al., 2023). Employees with a high level of EI/EQ are better able to forge bonds with co-workers, overcome difficulties, and find job satisfaction and well-being (Cavaness et al., 2020; Karimi et al., 2021; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Thapa et al., 2023). Emotional well-being, which involves the power to create moods, feelings, and thoughts; cope with challenging circumstances; communicate effectively; and take care of oneself, is essential to building attentiveness, compassion, and empathy (Goleman, Boyatzis, 2013; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Thapa et al., 2022). The strain on today's employees to improve the quality of their work and enjoy WB is growing, and organizations are looking for innovative ways to promote traits like psychological empowerment and WB (Thapa et al., 2023). There is compelling evidence that EI plays a significant role in enhancing job performance (Goleman, Boyatzis, 2013; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Improving EI/EQ can increase satisfaction and psychological WB at work and the likelihood of expressing positive emotions (Miao et al., 2017; Singh & Kumar, 2016). Individuals with high EI and EQ have higher job satisfaction, higher organizational commitment, and lower turnover intentions, minimize negative sentiments, and are more proactive and contented workers (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008; Karimi et al., 2021). A positive and significant correlation between EQ/EI, empowering employees, and psychological empowerment benefits organizations' ability to build positive leadership, and lower staff turnover (Karimi et al., 2021; et al., 2023). Numerous studies have found a positive association between WB and EQ/EI (Goleman, Boyatzis, 2013; Karimi et al., 2021; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Ott, 1998).

The Moderating Role of EI/EQ in the effect of a TWE on EWB

The impression of a TWE has gained substantial attention in current years due to the negative influence it can have on EWB. A TWE is noticeable in several ways, including poor administration, workload, a lack of empathy, and negative work culture. Such an atmosphere can lead to many adverse consequences for employees, such as stress, job disappointment, and turnover intentions.

Current studies have highlighted the mediating role of EI as a potential moderator in the relationship b/t TWE and EWB. Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to a person's ability to remark, understand, regulate, and express emotions. Developed levels of EI have been accompanied by better results in various work-related domains, such as job enactment, job gratification, and happiness.

The moderating role of EI advises that individuals with high EI may be better equipped to deal with the negative consequences of TWE. Specifically, high EI may allow individuals to better regulate their emotions and manage the stressors related to TWE in themselves and others. However, many researchers suggest that EI may play a moderating role in this relationship. People with high emotional intelligence (EI) are better able to control their emotions and manage stressors, which may empower them to better accomplish the adverse effects of a TWE. Several studies have explored the moderating role of EI in the relationship between TWE and EWB. For instance, a study by Sultana et al. (2021) indicates that the EI constructs such as interpersonal competence, job performance, effective leadership, motivation, creativity, well-being, and social competence have a significant impact on the performance of organizations (Sultana et al., 2021). Another study by Kafetsios and Zampetakis (2008) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between EI, job satisfaction, and WB. The study suggested that EI skills play a crucial role in increasing job satisfaction and happiness. However, EI is not only beneficial for work performance and WB, but it also has a positive impact on an individual's persona beyond their organizational roles (Sewell, 2011). Karimi et al.'s study from 2021 reports that higher EI predicts better service outcomes, expanding our understanding of EWB in understudied contexts and predicting EWB, psychological empowerment, and service quality. A study by Nel, (2019) that included a cross-sectional study with 1,102 employees from higher education institutions found that workplace bullying has a negative impact on employees. Emotional intelligence was found to significantly moderate this relationship (Nel, 2019). A study conducted by Lo (2023) examined the relationship between EI, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions among nurses. The result indicated a direct relationship between job satisfaction and turnover among employees Workplace toxicity can take different forms, such as bullying, harassment, workload, and sociological well-being, and can have a negative effect on EWB, work performance, and the organization.

In conclusion, recent research suggests that EI may play a moderating role in the relationship between TWE and EWB. High Individuals with EI may be better able to manage TWE such as physical workplace hazards, psychological stress and worries, and socio-emotional insults, humiliations, miscommunications, and inappropriate behavior. Emotional intelligence is a vital skill that can help prevent toxic work environments and improve personal and professional performance, yet it has not been given much consideration in Nepal. Therefore, more research is needed to explore this phenomenon and its effects on EWB and performance. So based on the above evidence indicating the moderating roles of EI in the effect of TWE on EWB are proposed:

Hypothesis (H1): Impact of TWE on EWB

Hypothesis (H2): The moderating role of EI in the effect of a TWE and EWB

Hypothesis (H3): Married and unmarried employees have significantly perceived different on wellbeing.

Hypothesis (H4): The emotional intelligence of married and unmarried employees differs significantly.

METHODS

The study methodology employed in this study is rigorous and systematic. The use of convenience sampling and a quantitative approach permitted for a large and varied sample size to be composed effectively, while the cross-sectional study method helped to capture a snapshot of the contributor's understandings at definite points in time. The online survey was encouraged on a diversity of social media sites, which assisted to ensure that a different group of adult Nepali health professionals were able to contribute. The research study focusing on private health organizations in Kathmandu adds an appreciated contribution to the existing literature on this topic, and the addition of medical doctors, nurses, radiographers, and technicians, physiotherapists, and other non-medical professionals in the study provides a stable perspective of the relationship between TWE, EWB, and EI skills in the healthcare field. The researchers' efforts to confirm that contributors in this study remained entirely anonymous, assisted to keep the contributor's confidentiality and autonomy. The study's adherence to Cochran's algorithm confirmed that the sample size was applicable and realistic for illustrating of accurate conclusions from the data. The minimal suggested sampling size was firm using Cochran's algorithm (Gu, M.; Lai, 1991). A minimum sample size of 208 contributors was desirable for this study to have a 95% confidence level, 5% accuracy, and a 0.5 predictable proportion. Overall, the methodology utilized in this study is sound, ethical, and rigorous, which adds reliability to the framework and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of healthcare.

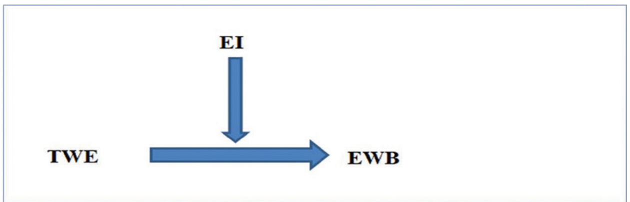

Figure 1. Emotional Intelligence (EI/EQ) as a moderator of the between Toxic Workplace Environment (TWE), and Employee Well-Being (EWB)

Instruments of Study

The four sections below deliberate on the data collection tools applied in the study. The first part of focuses on included socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, years of work experience, and marital status.

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), which was developed by Dr. Nicola Schutte, was a part of the second tool. It uses four subscales to measure four different aspects of general emotional intelligence (EI), including emotion perception, emotion use, emotion management, and emotion management of others. 33 items on the SSEIT were self-reported and evaluated from 1 to 5 on a scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree). The outcomes of each subtest are evaluated, and the total scores of the participants are then determined. Dr. Nicola Schutte has provided the researchers written consent to use these instruments for this study. In this study, the EI's test had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.876. It revealed that the test in this study had good internal consistency (Palmer, Stough, Harmer, & Gignac, 2009).

In the third section, which is titled "Toxic Workplace Environment," there are seven items that are assessed using a Likert scale of 1to7, where 1 denotes strongly disagreeing and 7 strongly agreeing. These items were utilized with written consent from Rasool, S.F., his research team (Rasool, Wang, Tang, Saeed, & Iqbal, 2021). The toxic workplace environment had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.935. The research instrument items were considered effective since their alpha values were higher than the required level of 0.70. As a result, the items utilized in this study's instruments are deemed reliable

The part on employee well-being in the fourth was adopted and written permission was secured for this instrument which also uses a 7-point Likert scales, where 1 stands for strongly disagreeing and 7 for strongly agreeing with the five items. The employee well-being A Cronbach's alpha attained was 0.843. The study's items were confirmed valid because the Cronbach's alpha values were higher than 0.70.

Researchers used regression analysis and descriptive data analysis to test the study hypotheses. The institutional review committee of Kathmandu's (IRC), Yeti Health Science Academy (YHSA) has provided ethical approval for this study. Additionally, authorization from the National Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the Nepal Health Research Council was also received.

RESULTS

Data analysis for the study included reliability and validity evaluations, descriptive analysis, and regression analysis models. The descriptive analysis shows that 65.86% of participants are female, 37% of the participants are between the age of 20 and 30. The majority of participants or 55.3 % is married, and the majority (30.4%) has six to ten years of work experience.

A regression analysis model was used to investigate Hypothesis 1. Employee wellbeing is a dependent variable, and there is a toxic work environment, which is an independent variable. Table 2, 3, illustrates the outcome of the regression summary model. According to Table 2, 3, R = -.073a, R =.005, Coefficient Beta-.073, and P = 0.001 all indicate that toxic workplace environments have a negative effect on employee well-being. Therefore, hypothesis 1(H1) is accepted in this study.

As a result of the regression analysis of the simple effect, the H2 hypothesis, a moderating role of EI on TWE and on employee well-being was found. In this analysis, toxic workplace environments and emotional intelligence are both independent variables, and employee well-being is a dependent variable. A regression analysis data

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants

Mean	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	71	34.1
Female	137	65.86
Age		
20-30 years	77	37
30-40 years	68	32.7
40-50 years	29	13.9
50-60 yrs	19	9.1
above 60 years	15	7.2
Year of work experiences		
0-5	53	25.6
6-10	63	30.4
11-20	48	23.2
21-30	34	16.4
31-40	10	4.7
Marital status		
Married	115	55.3
Unmarried	93	44.7

Table 2. Effect of Toxic workplace Environment on Employee Wellbeing (model summary)

Model	R	R Square	MSE	F	df1	df2	P
Mean_ TWE	-.073[a]	.005	. 1.39920	403	1	206.00	0.001

□ *Predictors: (Constant, TWE Mean, Dependent Variables: Mean EWB);R, R-value; R2, R- squared; MSE, Mean Square Error, Value; Df1, Degree of freedom, : df2 , degree of freedom2; P, significance*

Table 3. Effect of Toxic Workplace Environment on Employee Well-being (Coefficient Model)

Model	UC		SC	t	LLCI	ULCI	Sig
	B	SE	Beta				
Constant	5.011	.298		16.796	4.423	5.599	.000
Mean TWE	-.108	.103	-.073	-1.044	-.310	.095	.298

[Dependent variable: Mean EWB]

□ *SE, Standard Error; UC, Unstandardized Coefficient; SC, standardized Co-efficient; LLCI lower level confidence; ULCI, the upper level of a confidence interval.*

summary as shown in table, 4, found that the negative impact of toxic workplace environments on employee well-being is statistically accepted (b = - 0.051, 95% CI [-0.286, 0.133], t = -0.719, p > 005). This is due to the discovery of the p-value (.473). In other words, it is above the "0.05" significant value. However, the H1 hypothesis was supported, and revealed that one of the main factors contributing to poor employee well-being at work is a toxic workplace.

Table 4. Emotional intelligence did not play a moderating role in the effect on employee well-being, according to the summary of the regression analysis data (b = 0.134, 95% CI [-0.79-0.79, 1.059], t = 0.28, p > 005). The p-value is 0.775, which is greater than the "0.05" significance level. There is not a significant level; therefore, hypotheses are not accepted in this analysis. However, there is no evidence that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in toxic work environments and employee well-being.

The independent sample t-test analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between married and unmarried employees in terms of employee well-being (p =.106 and p > 0.05). The level of significance "0.05" is exceeded by the p value. The hypothesis is rejected as a result.

The results of the independent sample t-test on emotional intelligence showed that married employees' emotional intelligence levels (mean = 3.658) were significantly higher than those of unmarried employees' (mean = 3.603) according to the P value of.048 (p 0.005). Therefore, the hypotheses were accepted.

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of this study is to understand the moderating role of EI in the effect of a TWE on EWB. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, including regression analysis, and the t-test were used to acquire the study's findings. However, in light of the descriptive study's findings, the research found that a number of factors, including the COVID19 epidemic and transforming culture in the workplace, had a substantial impact on employee wellness and led to significant concern in areas including mental health, social relationships, and balancing work and personal obligations. Researchers in this current study, surveyed

Table 4. The moderating Role of EI in the effect of a TWE on EWB

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	5.628	1.387		4.059	.000	2.893	8.362
TWE	-0.076	0.106	-0.051	-0.719	0.473	-0.286	0.133
EI	-0.199	0.375	-0.038	-0.532	0.596	-0.938	0.54
(Constant)	6.989	4.95		1.412	0.16	-2.772	16.75
TWE	-0.561	1.693	-0.374	-0.331	0.741	-3.898	2.777
EI	-0.577	1.372	-0.109	-0.421	0.674	-3.283	2.128
TWE_EI	0.134	0.469	0.334	0.287	0.775	-0.79	1.059

a. Dependent Variables: EWB
□ *TWE, Toxic Workplace Environment; EI, Emotional Intelligence; EWB, Employee Wellbeing; TWE _EI, Toxic workplace environment, and Emotional intelligence]*

Table 5. Independent sample t-test (employee wellbeing)

Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	p
Married	111	4.742	1.441	.1368	.513	.106
Unmarried	93	4.640	1.366	141		

Table 6. Independent Sample t-test (Emotional Intelligence)

Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	P
Married	115	3.658	0.273	0.025	3.96	.048
Unmarried	93	3.603	0.249	0.025		

a total of 208 employees using convenient sample approaches. Researchers examined the validity and reliability of measures about three-dimensional scales such as toxic work environments, employee well-being, and emotional intelligence.

The data analysis from the study establishes that a TWE that creates a negative work culture can negatively impact EWB. The research also revealed that TWE has a significant negative impact on EWB at work. To investigate Hypothesis H1, a regression analysis model was used, with EWB as the dependent variable and TWE as the independent variables. The outcomes are presented in Tables 2 and 3, which show that the R value is -.073, the R square is.005, the coefficient beta is -.073, and the p-value is 0.001. These values indicate that TWE has a statistically significant negative effect on EWB. As a result, Hypothesis (H1) is supported by the findings of this study. The outcome of the research demonstrated the vitality of creating a favorable work culture that nurtures EWB. Personnel ought to take steps to recognize and address toxic workplace behaviors and foster workplace values. Doing so can progress worker satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and eventually lead to better structural performance. However, more studies are necessary to examine the definite strategies that can be used to stimulate a healthy and constructive work culture. In a study by Thapa et al. (2022), researchers found that workers, who experienced workplace stress, humiliation, bullying, and workplace conflict, reported a low level of physical, mental, and emotional WB. The study highlighted the importance of addressing organizational support and wellbeing interventions and strategies in the workplace in order to promote a diverse work culture (Thapa et al., 2022). Similarly, another study by Anjum & Ming, (2018) found that TWE is significantly negatively associated with success, low prosperity, job stress, and productivity at work. These results are echoed in a study by Colligan and Higgins; (2006) which revealed that TWE is influenced by a number of variables, including workload, role conflict, interpersonal connections, bullying, and harassment.

The result of the regression analysis suggests that the negative impact of TWE on EWB is statistically accepted, indicating that TWE is a significant factor contributing to poor EWB. The finding is consistent with previous research that has shown that TWE can have a negative impact on EWB, leading to physical and mental health problems. However, the analysis did not find evidence to support the hypothesis (H2) that EI plays a moderating role in the effect of TWE on EWB. This finding is in accordance with some previous research studies that have suggested that EI can help workers cope with workplace stress and improve their overall physical, mental, and social well-being. It is vital to note that the lack of evidence for the moderating role of EI does not mean EI is not important for EWB. Rather, it may suggest that EI alone may not be sufficient to mitigate the negative effect of TWE on EWB. Other factors, such as organizational policies and interventions aimed at addressing workplace toxicity, may also be necessary to improve WB. *Overall, the result of this analysis supports the importance of addressing TWE in order to promote EWB. While EI may not play a significant moderating role, it is still a valuable skill that can benefit workers in a variety of settings, including the workplace.*

This research study examined the relationship between marital status, EWB, and EI. The result showed that there was no significant difference in EWB between married and unmarried employees, but these results are consistent with previous research studies that have shown that marital status can impact various aspects of an individual's life, including EI.

Limitations

The limitation of this research study is that it depends on a convenient sample method, which may not exactly represent the whole population. In addition, the study covers employees from select Health care backgrounds in the Kathmandu Valley, which may edge the generalizability of the results. Another limitation is that the study did not reflect other possible moderating variables that may further impact the relationship b/t TWE and EWB. Moreover, the study did not examine the definite methods that administrations can use to mediate to address TWE and stimulate EWB. Finally, the focus is on self-reported procedures, which may be subject to response biases.

Recommendations

The current study examined how TWE affected EWB and how EI acted as a moderator in this relationship. The current study demonstrates that TWE has a detrimental effect on EWB, and that fostering a mutually beneficial work environment is crucial for employee satisfaction, productivity, and health. EI is still a useful ability for people in the organization and in their personal life, even when it might not have a big moderating role. The study's convenient sampling design and emphasis on self-reported measurements, however, restrict the phenomenon's generalizability, and more research is required to look at efficient tactics for combating TWE and advancing EWB. In order to improve performance and job satisfaction in various professions like education, military organizations, commerce, travel, and tourism, developing EL abilities are essential.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the moderating effect of EI on a TWE's impact on EWB was investigated. The study discovered that TWE has a statistically significant adverse impact on EWB, and although EI may not moderate the effect significantly, it is still a crucial ability that can help workers in a variety of contexts, including the workplace. The study recommended that organizations recognize and address toxic work practices, attitude knowledge of work quality and worth, and attitude a mindset that building a mutually congenial work environment is vital for employee satisfaction, productivity, and health. The study had some drawbacks, including the use of a single methodology and a self-reported approach, as well as the fact that it was restricted to Kathmandu.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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Online Quizzes as a Teaching and Learning Tool: Perceptions of Bioscience Students

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major change in the delivery of knowledge and assessment practice worldwide and currently, a web-based formative online assessment has become the key feature in the teaching/learning process. This form of assessment arose due to the limitations of paper-based formative assessments in terms of delayed and inadequate feedback. Although online formative assessments have a sound theoretical basis in higher education settings, data to establish their educational benefits are still lacking. Thus, this study was conducted to identify biomedical students' perceptions on the significance of online quizzes towards enhancing their understanding of the subject taught. The researchers developed a suitable questionnaire based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) using Likert scale-type questions to capture the perceptions of Biomedical Science degree students on the use of online quizzes. The quantitative data was then analyzed using SPSS version 23.). The findings from the research shows clear evidence that the respondents' have an overall positive view on the perceived usefulness of the use of online quizzes with responses ranging from 58.8% to 90.2%. The findings on perceived challenges were enlightening as the respondents' highlighted those technical difficulties and accessibility to hardware and software were among the challenges faced most. The researchers are assured that online quizzes are perceived positively by the respondents' and it is advocated that they are used more extensively in the teaching and learning at institutions of higher education.

Keywords: online quizzes, teaching and learning, formative assessment, biomedical sciences, perceptions, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a paradigm shift in the teaching and learning process globally. Like many other countries around the world, the Movement Control Order (MCO) was enforced to flatten the curve of the spread of Covid-19 in Malaysia. The restrictions which were induced abruptly compelled many universities to shift from in-person to blended and/or total online modes of delivery (Mutseekwa & Mudavanhu, 2021). This was done to adhere to the Ministry of Higher Education's announcement that all public and private universities in Malaysia are to conduct teaching and learning activities via online learning (MOHE, 2020). As a result, online education became the centre of attention recent years, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and educational institutions have been forced to transit into fully online education within a short period of time (Kaur & Singh, 2020). Despite this, the academic fraternity were very resilient, quick to adapt and proactive

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in overcoming the challenges presented by MCO (Chung, Subramaniam & Dass, 2020). Chung, Subramaniam & Dass (2020) went on to add that although it is undeniable that online learning is deemed the best solution to ensure continuity in learning in the era of what has been coined the “new norm”, there may be some setbacks due to lack of human touch such as sensing students’ incomprehension via facial expressions, cracking small jokes to enlighten mood, student engagement and interaction which can be done more effectively in traditional face to face learning. These setbacks had the most significant impact on health professions’ education (HPE). HPE is a separate domain of higher education that emerged in the 1960s with the responsibility to society to produce competent practitioners trained to work in a health or health-related fields (Blouin, 2022). According to Krishnapillai et al. (2022), there is a dearth of evidence covering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Malaysia. He asserted that previous studies merely explored students’ perception (Sababathy et al., 2021), the efficiency of e-learning (Nordin and Nordin, 2020), and university employees’ well-being (Daud et al., 2020) during the pandemic and there are no evidence of research focusing explicitly on the challenges faced by HPE establishments in Malaysia. However, he identified that similar studies have been undertaken in other settings, including higher income countries where resources and familiarity with e-learning approaches such as the studies of Alrasheedy et al. (2021), Alsouf et al. (2020), Azlan et al. (2020), Azman and Abdullah (2021), Chowdhury et al. (2022), Dhawan (2020), Etando et al. (2021) and Sharma et al. (2022).

It must be noted that the paradigm shift in the teaching and learning process as a result of the pandemic did not only apply to online delivery of knowledge but also to the assessment processes. The digital world has given more opportunities for educators to be innovative with a variety of digital tools and the pervasive availability of information anywhere anytime. Furthermore, there is a tremendous capacity to creatively employ a diversity of assessment approaches to support and evaluate student learning in higher education (Boitshwarelo, Reedy & Billany, 2017). The use of technology both in the teaching and assessment of students has led to the popularity of the new term called blended learning which is dominant in the educational arena. According to Valiathan, (2002) the term blended learning is used to describe a solution that combines several different delivery methods, such as collaboration software, Web-based courses, Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS) and knowledge management practices. She went on to add that blended learning is also used to describe learning that mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning, and self-paced learning. Over the years, the terms blended learning and hybrid learning are used interchangeably and without a broadly accepted precise definition. However, Bonk and Graham (2012) described blended learning systems as a combination of face-to-face instruction and computer-mediated instruction. The development of blended learning parallels the development of online assessments. According to Ramsden, (1992) assessments have powerful effects on learning, and they went on to distinguish formative assessments from summative assessments. Michael Scriven (1967) has been often cited for first introducing the terms formative vs. summative methods when evaluating education curriculum. According to Frick (2021), these methods of evaluation are distinguished by their purpose where formative evaluation is used to improve teaching during its development whereas summative evaluation is used to determine its merit or worth when that development is completed. They assert that formative assessments are designed to give feedback on performance and suggestions for improvement and are intended to promote students’ learning where timely, relevant, and supportive feedback is provided to improve learning outcomes while in contrast, summative assessments are predominantly utilized for grading and certification at the end of a period of study, often without providing feedback to students on their performance (Rolfe & McPherson, 1995; Gipps, 2005).

Online formative assessments have a sound theoretical basis and are prevalent in higher educational settings, but data to establish their educational benefits are lacking. According to researchers (Zakrzewski & Bull, 1998), an online learning environment embedded with formative assessment tools presents key benefits. Among these are the timing is flexible to allow students to take the assessment at any time convenient to them but within a deadline, students can have several attempts at the assessment until they achieve the desired minimum grade and online formative assessment provides students with prompt feedback needed to assess their learning and remedy weaknesses in instruction and their learning (Wang, Wang, Wang & Huang, 2006; Zakrzewski & Bull, 1998). This is further supported by Noyez (2004) who said that past researches have shown that online assessments can reduce the “lag time” in reporting scores, increase the efficiency of assessment, achieve flexibility in terms of time and place, give immediate feedback and announce students’ scores immediately, analyse student performance that cannot be investigated from paper-based tests by implementing individualized assessments customized to student needs and minimize the paper consumption and cost as well as duplicate or mail test materials. Velan et al. (2008) carried out research to identify whether participation and performance in integrated online formative assessments in the biomedical sciences have measurable effects on learning by junior medical students. Their research results support the contention that well-designed formative assessments can have significant positive effects on learning. According to Barnard and Mostert (2015), continuous formative assessment with timely feedback helps motivate students to work consistently, while the addition of just-in-time support may further motivate and support learning. Information and communication technologies have the potential to reduce the administrative burden of frequent formative assessment and enhance the provision of timely feedback. Assessment feedback has now become a topic of growing interest amongst lecturers as well as teaching and learning scholars, especially in Australia and the United Kingdom (Li & De Luca, 2014). Many researchers in the past have attributed this interest to the high rates of student dissatisfaction with the quality, quantity, and speed of feedback on written assessments which is a widespread and long-standing issue in universities in these countries (Bailey, 2009; Goel & Ellis, 2013). Thus, in current times, one of the major weaknesses of most modern higher education programs, as evidenced by course evaluation surveys is the failure to provide adequate feedback to students on their learning (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005). To cater to this weakness, over the years the use of Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA) has been increasing.

Research has proven that advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offer lecturers new means of administering, collecting, marking, and returning feedback to undergraduate students (Espasa & Meneses, 2010; Gikandi, Morrow & Davis, 2011; Yeh & Lo, 2009). Niroula (2021) asserted that many studies (Junco et al., 2011; Guzacheva, 2020; Rani, 2017; Mikre, 2011) have adequately illustrated that online tools have assisted in the teaching and learning to a great deal during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Özden, (2005) computer-assisted assessment (CAA) encompasses a range of activities, including the delivery, marking, and analysis of all or part of the student assessment process using stand-alone or networked computers and associated technologies. Bull and McKenna (2001) had shown in previous research that there is a range of motivations for implementing CAA in a course; to increase the frequency of assessment, motivate students to learn and encourage skills practice, to broaden the range of knowledge assessed, to increase feedback to students, to extend the range of assessment methods, to increase objectivity and consistency, to reduce marking loads and to aid administrative efficiency. According to pre-service teachers, there were many advantages of carrying out online formative assessment activities such as allowing students to receive feedback to improve their performance (Yilmaz, 2020). Productive formative assessment activities increasing students' motivation depend on providing opportunities for students in obtaining feedback instead of points (Shepard, Penuel & Pellegrino, 2018). According to Wallihan et al. (2018) besides helping in content retention, formative assessment through quizzes can benefit both learners and teachers in several ways such as learners can identify areas of weakness and become accustomed to the exam timing and format while teachers can assess the efficacy of curricula and instruction methods, as well as identify learners who may be struggling or at risk for failure, allowing early, targeted intervention

According to Towle (1998), the encroachment of Information Technology (IT) in the past decade forced radical changes in health care delivery and patient-oriented care around the globe. These progressions resulted in worldwide amendments of pharmacy curricula and teaching methodologies to meet the increasing demands of an advanced IT-based healthcare system (Masys, 1998). This progression has also led to it being used for assessing students in these fields. Feedback on assessments is central to formative learning in higher education. According to Olson, (2015) advances in e-learning and e-marking has the potential to improve teaching and learning. Further, current research has also found that students perceive the use of multiple-choice quizzes, true/false quizzes, matching quizzes, gap-filling quizzes, e-portfolio, peer assessment, wikis, weekly assignments, offline assignments, essay type assignments, reflection, and database type assignments as effective tools of formative assessment in online learning settings (Ogange et al., 2018).

Past literature has also shown that online assessment or e-assessment can improve the procedure and method of assessment as it has the advantages of timesaving, immediate feedback, better use of resources and more efficient and convenient recording of assessment performance (Morris, 2008; Chen, Wei & Huang, 2009). Sorensen (2013) researched the Department of Chemical Engineering at University College London (UCL) into the use of e-assessment in a second-year module and, in particular, the student perceptions of this mode of assessment. The findings showed that the students felt that e-assessment added value to their learning, and they would like to see it implemented in other modules.

Although the quizzes designed in his study were intended to be mainly beneficial to the weaker students as they allowed them to go over key aspects of the material in their own time, the findings revealed that the stronger students were even more in favour of e-learning than the weaker students.

Dermo (2009) conducted a survey of a cohort of 130 students from several disciplines at the University of Bradford, who had taken part in an online assessment, either formative or summative, during the academic year 2007–2008 to gauge student opinion and the results showed that the most positive aspect of e-assessment in the eyes of the students was the benefits it can bring to learning and teaching. However, the findings showed that the students had concerns about fairness in the use of random questions from a question bank.

Concerning studies on the use of technology in teaching and learning, a model called Technology Acceptance (TAM) has emerged. In the TAM model, people who perceive technology as useful and easy to use will accept it more readily than those who do not, with usefulness more important than ease of use (O'Donnell, Molyneaux & Gibson, 2010). TAM was initially proposed by Davis (1989, 1993). It comprises two beliefs, the perceived utilities and the perceived ease of application which determine attitudes to adopt new technologies (Ordanini & Arbore, 2008). The attitude toward adoption will decide the adopter's positive or negative behaviour in the future concerning new technology (Wagner, & Klaus, 2009). TAM can be said to be one of the pioneering theories which aim to determine the behaviours of users towards particular technologies by employing two factors: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Sezgin, &Yildirim, 2016). It is one of the most frequently employed models for research into new information technology acceptance. The TAM suggests that when users are presented with new technology, several factors determine their decision about how and when they will use it.

Among the key elements identified in the TAM model are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. These two beliefs (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use) predict attitudes, which in turn influence the intended use of a technology (Mahfouz, 2009). This intention then consequently impacts the behaviour of actual system usage. Perceived usefulness is the degree to which a user thinks a technology would enhance performance or productivity in the study or workplace while perceived ease of use is the degree of lack of effort required by the user in adopting a given technology (Su, 2006).

According to Thandevaraj, Gani and Nasir (2021), past studies on online learning have determined that students are affected psychologically and show symptoms of depression and anxiety but there are many studies that have also presented opposite results. Further, past researchers have also identified that usage of online quizzes has been increasing since blended learning approaches came into existence in the field of teaching and learning in the 21st century. As noted, one of the advantages of online quizzes is their effectiveness as an assessment tool. As a result, numerous studies have been carried out to evaluate how using this tool enhances teaching and learning. Despite the increase in the use of computer-based assessments, research is lacking on students' perceptions of online assessments. Thus, this study examined students' perceptions of the use of online quizzes in the teaching and learning of Biomedical Sciences and to achieve this objective, the researchers adapted the TAM model to design their survey questionnaire.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this section, the materials and methods used in the research are discussed. A quantitative research method adopting an online survey was used to achieve the research aim which was to investigate students' perceptions of online quizzes in the teaching and learning of their courses and this was done using an online questionnaire. The researchers developed a suitable questionnaire based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989) which was further improved by various other researchers. A Likert scale-type questionnaire was used in this study to capture the perceptions of students accurately. The questionnaire for the students had two parts: demographic questions and perceptions of online quizzes in enhancing their learning. The perceptions' part was divided further into five sub-sections, namely perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived values, perceived challenges, and perceived intention for use. Using the original TAM Model of Davis (1989) as shown in Figure 1, and subsequent development to the model, the researchers designed the online surey questionnaires as indicated in Table 1.

The questionnaire was prepared using online Google form and was distributed to the students via email. The respondents comprised of Biomedical Science students from Year 1 to Year 4 in a private higher educational institution in Malaysia. All the responses were captured in real-time and subsequently, the data was extracted and analysed. The quantitative data were analysed using

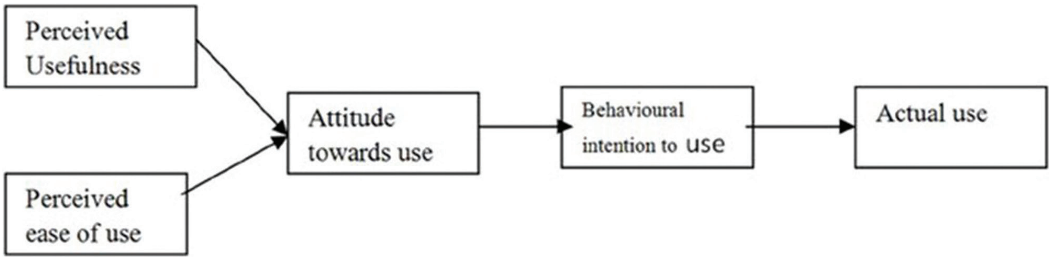

Figure 1. The Original Technology Acceptance Model TAM (Davis, 1989)

Table 1. Survey Questionnaire

PERCEPTIONS	SURVEY STATEMENTS
1. Perceived usefulness	1. Improves my learning process. 2. Acts as a self-check tool on my level understanding. 3. Improves my independent learning skills. 4. Improves my time management skills. 5. Gives me greater control over my learning process. 6. Makes my learning and revision process easier. 7. The content is informative. 8. A useful learning tool
2. Perceived ease of use	1. Provides flexibility and convenient to learn at my own pace. 2. Helps develop digital literacy skills. 3. Appropriate types of questions were used. 4. Immediate feedback system is very useful for me. 5. User friendly and simple to perform. 6. Instructions are clear and unambigous. 7. Lecture notes and materials available online prepared me well for the quiz. 8. The timing was appropriate for the activity.
3. Perceived values	1. The activity was beneficial 2. Increases my confident level. 3. Fun and attractive. 4. Cost saving. 5. Promotes green technology.
4. Perceived challenges	1. Technical difficulties were experienced. 2. Need access to both hardware and software. 3. It may create room for cheating. 4. Limited type ofquestions were asked. 5. Tests only memorizing skills rather than application.
5. Perceived intention for use	1. I can use online quizzes to assist my learning. 2. I prefer to have my online quizzes graded.

SPSS version 23. Before this, the students had undergone online quizzes in various courses throughout their years of study in the institution. These quizzes were all conducted using the university's Moodle platform. The data collection was carried out after the necessary ethical clearence from the institution and survey respondents were obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the findings from the analysis of the data collected via a Google questionnaire. The discussion presents the demographics of the respondents including their gender, age and year of study. This is followed by a detailed discussion on their perception of the use of online quizzes in the teaching and learning in their Biomedical Science degree program. The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents were females 86% (n=88) while the remaining 14% (n=14) were males. About the ages of the respondents, the findings indicated that they ranged from the age of 17 to 26 with a mean age of 20.55. The demographics of the respondents are shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

3.1. Perceived Usefulness

To gain insight into the respondents' perceptions of the usefulness of online quizzes, eight statements were given to them where they were required to agree, disagree, or take a neutral stand. The statements are

Table 2. Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	14	86.3
Female	88	13.7
Total	102	100.0

Table 2. Year of Study of Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Year 1	42	41.2
Year 2	30	29.4
Year 3	28	27.4
Year 4	2	2.0
Total	102	100.0

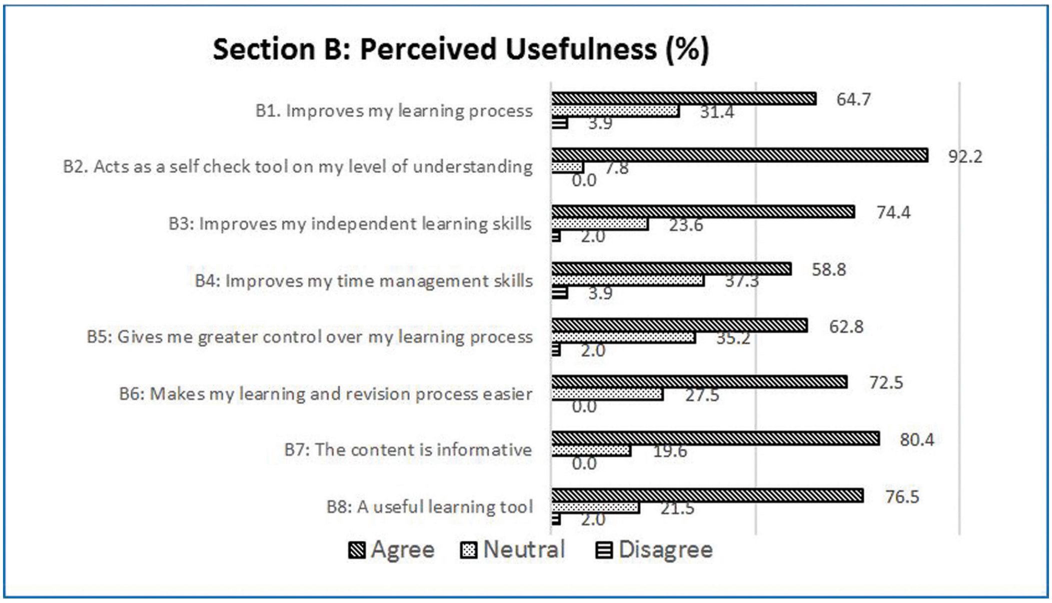

Figure 2. Perceived Usefulness of Online Quizzes

shown in Figure 2. Of these eight statements, Statement B2 (Online quizzes acts as a self-check tool on my level of understanding) reflected the highest percentage of agreement (92.2%) while statement B4 (Online quizzes improves my time management skills) reflected the lowest percentage of agreement (58.8%). Su (2006) agrees that online learners should be assessed formatively with self-check quizzes, serving to inform future learning experiences. A correlation test between the year of study of the respondents and the eight statements of perceived usefulness indicated that only four statements (B4, B6, B7 and B8) had a positive correlation ($p<0.05$). Past studies have also highlighted the benefits of online quizzes and students' positive attitude towards them (Cohen & Sasson, 2016; Wallihan et al., 2018) including improving student motivation, enhancing understanding and active learning, and deterring cheating, as long as the quiz questions are not too easy (Cook & Babon, 2017).

3.2. Perceived Ease of Use

Figure 3 portrays the findings of the respondents' perceived ease of use of the online quizzes. The highest percentage of agreement (88.2%) is seen for Statement C5 (Online quizzes are user friendly and easy to perform) while the lowest percentage of agreement (64.7%) was seen in State C2 (Online quizzes help develop digital literacy skills). The user-friendliness which is mainly attributed to the Moodle platform used is supported by many researchers (Dougiamas, 2004; Kaminski, 2005). A positive relationship was seen between the year of study of the respondents and two out of eight statements of perceived ease of use (C4 & C7) with a significance value of $p<0.01$ and $p<0.05$ respectively in the bivariate correlation test that was carried out.

3.3. Perceived Value

The findings for the respondents' perceived values of online quizzes are shown in Figure 4. Both statements D2 (Online quizzes increase my confidence level) and D6 (Online quizzes promote green technology), reflected the highest percentage of agreement (90.2%) while the lowest percentage of agreement (58.8%) was seen in Statement D1 (The activity was beneficial). The correlation test carried out indicated that Statement D1

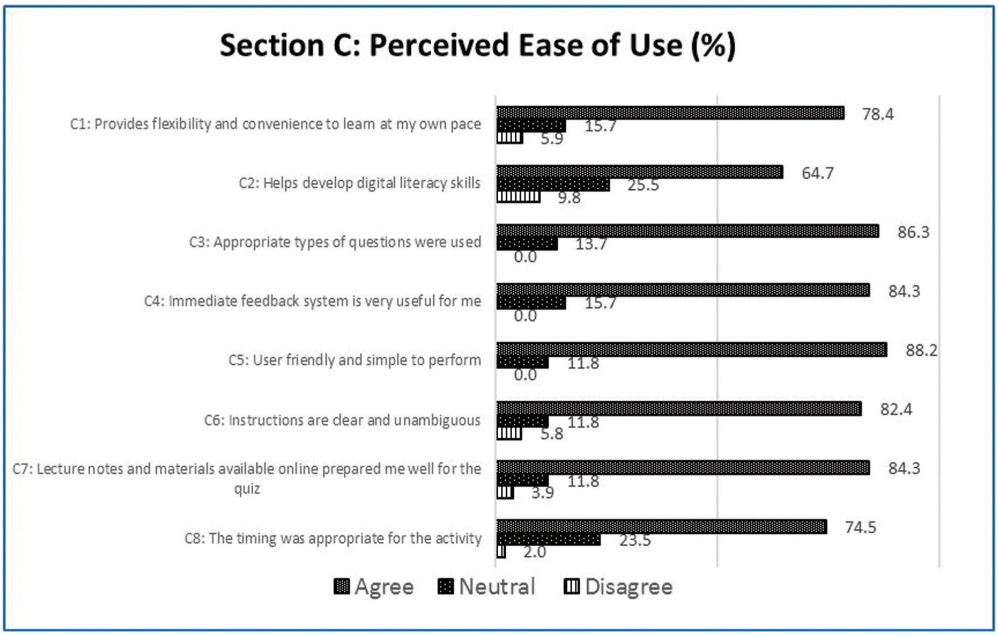

Figure 3. Perceived Ease of Use of Online Quizzes

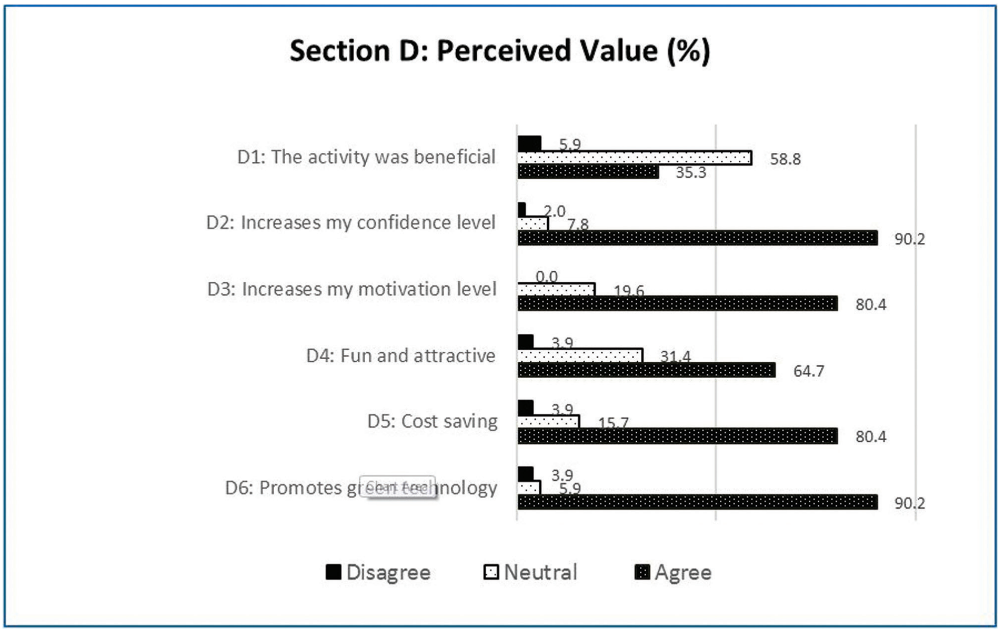

Figure 4. Perceived Value of Online Quizze

has a significant relationship with the year of study. The findings for statement B1 on motivation is supported by past literature where it has been stated that effective use of formative assessment can aid undergraduate online instruction in ways that improve student confidence (Ogange et al., 2018).

3.4. Perceived Challenges

Figure 5 shows that out of the five statements given on perceived challenges, Statement E1 (Technical difficulties were experienced) reflected the highest percentage of agreement (60.8%) while statement E5 (Online quizzes tests only memorizing skills rather than application) reflected the lowest percentage of agreement (35.3%). A study by McBrien, Cheng & Jones (2009) also found that students rated convenience and technical issues as important elements in their online learning experiences. Similarly, according to Hickson et al. (2022), one problem mentioned consistently by all participants in his study was in regard to poor internet connectivity. He claimed that the participants had asserted that it did not only affect their learning

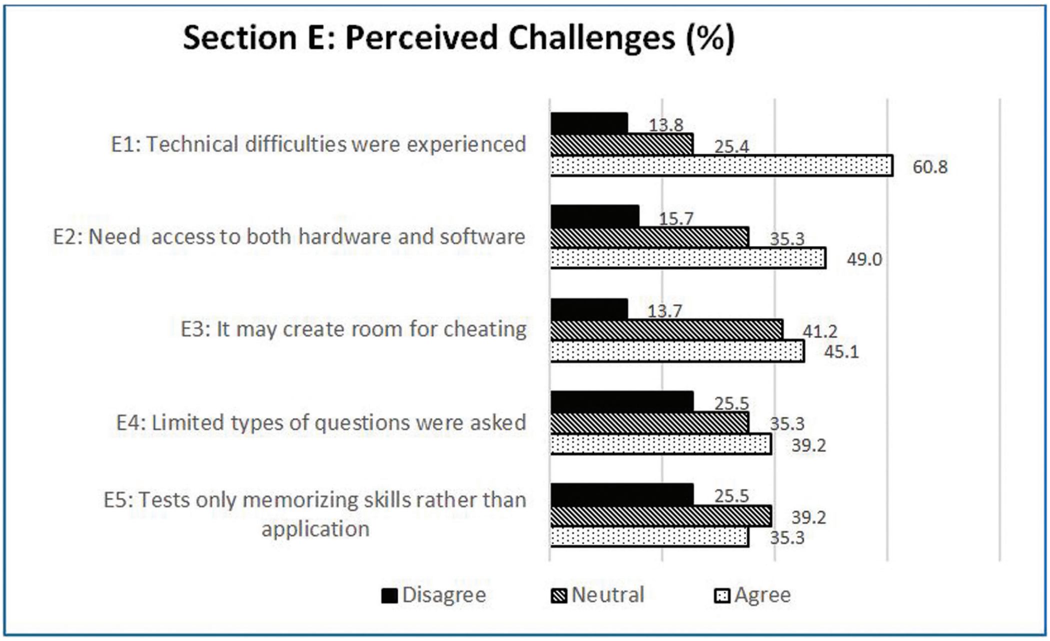

Figure 5. Perceived Challenges of Online Quizzes

but also their ability to interact with their fellow classmates. Further, Hickson also stated that the findings of his study revealed several instances where technology which intended to facilitate online learning has either failed to meet its intended purposes or, worse, has inhibited learning. It must be noted that I correlation test did not show any relationship between the year of study and respondents' perceived challenges.

3.5. Perceived Intention for Use

Findings from Subsection F on the perceived intention for use indicated that Statement F1 (I can use online quizzes to assist my learning) had the highest percentage of agreement of 80.4% while statement F4 (I prefer to have my online quizzes graded) recorded the lowest percentage of agreement (45.1%). The correlation test indicated a relationship between the year of study and the perception of respondents on Statement F4 with a significance at $p<0.05$. Statement F5 of this subsection which required respondents to select their most preferred online activity indicated that 50.0% of the respondents' preferred online quizzes over other activities such as discussion forums, social media (e.g., Facebook groups) and online games. However, an interesting finding from this research was that 30.4% of respondents selected online games as their preferred activity. As research in the area of gamification in the teaching and learning of sciences is still scarce, this provides an area for future research.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings from the research shows clear evidence that the respondents' comprising of Biomedical Science degree students have an overall positive view on the perceived usefulness of the use of online quizzes with responses ranging from 58.8% to 92.2% of agreement. In the case of perceived ease of use of online quizzes, the respondents' agreed to a large extent, ranging from 64.7% to 88.2%. In reference to perceived value, the responses were also positive ranging from 58.8% to 90.2%. The findings on perceived challenges were enlightening as the respondents' related technical difficulties and accessibility to mostly hardware and software issues. Thus, as a conclusion, the researchers are of the opinion that online quizzes are perceived positively by the respondents, and it is advocated that this type of assessment is to be used more extensively in the teaching and learning of Biomedical Sciences at institutions of higher education. However, these findings are not conclusive due to the small sample and as such, it needs to be verified with future studies involving larger samples from diversified institutions and countries. Further, the researchers are of the opinion that to enhance the effectiveness of this technology-based learning tool, it is crucial that the institutions address the challenges faced by the respondents. Future research should also look at lecturers/teachers' perceptions of the use of this tool. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of online quizzes which will in turn ensure that the application is managed efficiently to provide better outcomes for both the learners and the educators. In addition, the authors also advocate that besides online quizzes, other online assessment methods such as Kahoot, Padlet, Socrative, and Google forms can be used to evaluate the efficacy of the teaching and learning processes.

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7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Crafted Identities: A Psychoanalytical Reading of Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

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ABSTRACT

We currently live in a postmodern society in which the ever-challenging problem of self-cohesive identity, individuality, diversity, scepticism and innovation is on the rise. On an average, society is becoming more and more tolerant of new ideas and ways of thinking as opposed to remaining committed to supposedly objective truths established by previous generations. Paul Auster's *City of Glass* deals with many transactions of the concept of identity in postmodern society. It proclaims a set of wondrous mazes of identity, peopled with mysterious observers, authorial surrogates, mirrors facing mirrors and persons missing in one degree or another. Identity, gender and mythology are essential components of the fabric of human society as we know it. Our society is made up of stories and narratives, those that are told to us and those that we craft for ourselves. In this study, the objective is to study how society addresses them and how we investigate those narratives, often leading us to greater insights into our individual and collective psyches, bringing us closer to answers regarding the essential nature of mankind and our mythology. This is the method of this paper. The process by which we determine and craft our importance to the community at large will be investigated.

Keywords: Paul Auster, City of Glass, identity, psychoanalysis, post-modernism, gender studies

Introduction

Through globalisation, individuals become interconnected with one another leading to the exchange of culture and ideas, which in turn results in everyone growing in their perspectives and knowledge of the world around them. Identity, in its base form, is linked with existential anxiety in individuals. Identity, gender and socialisation are essential components of the fabric of human society as we know it.

The sense of self and its identity, followed by multiple choices and crises of uncertainty, has been the central notion in the course of the twentieth century and has become the principal site of human thought. This is true not just for the Western world but increasingly for the entire globe. The self provides a link between the experience of socialisation and the evolution of individual personality through the course of life. It is a well-established fact that while modernism, as one of the greatest schools of thought, has portrayed the subjective consciousness as unstable, disorderly, and irregular, postmodernism prefers to focus on revealing that fictionality, which is the condition of being fictional, constructed, narrated and mediated (one that produces a great scope and sense of distrust, scepticism and alienation in individual consciousness) resulting in a profound perplexity in the community of human subjects and their enigmatic space of identity.

Apart from this, however, identity is deeply connected with subjectivity. Subjectivity is a condition of being a subject, i.e., the quality of possessing perspectives, experiences, feelings, beliefs, desires and/or power.

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Subjectivity is an inherently social mode that appears through innumerable reasons within society. This implies that the individual is not isolated in a self-contained environment, but is endlessly engaged in an interaction with the surrounding world.

The concept of a self-cohesive subject, which has been one of the prominent topics of debate throughout the history of civilisation, could be extrapolated in a postmodern manner, which saw a great awareness of the personal biases, frameworks and lenses that colour an individual's view of the world. Jean-François Lyotard states that it is impossible to pass judgement on the validity of a certain individual's framework of understanding, rather "all we can do is gaze in wonderment at the diversity of discursive species just as we do at the diversity of plant or animal species" (*The Postmodernist Condition, 2000,* p.26).

The contemporary era is considered a period of social, political, economic and moral transition from modernism to postmodernism, which brings into notice the overall claim that modernism cultivated as doctrines, the individual genius in alienation from society, the autonomy of the subject and the instability of human language. Even to examine the complexity of the human situation and the intrusion of chaos in human lives, the crisis of the language that arises in modernism can be thought of as one example of the impossibility of a mutually acceptable meaning for true communication. The ideological frames within which identities are formed, occupy a position within society that facilitate a way for postmodernism to adopt a "model of rapture" (Hutcheon, 2003, p. 27) that is predicated on the irremediable breach in the social construction, signifying the instability of all spaces of the subject's identity. It is evident that in this activity, the postmodern writer has been especially willing to embrace what Lyotard considers the new subject of postmodern science, the search for instabilities.

Although the concept of identity has a long tradition in Western culture, the idea of an identity that can be constructed by every person is a rather new one, that is to say about 200 years old. It is closely linked to the beginning of the so-called modernity. This is what Douglas Kellner (2003)—among many others—proposes. In modernity, identity is slowly becoming subject to change and innovation. Mobility, multiplicity and self-reflexiveness are characteristics of modern identities. Yet the forms of identity in modernity remain for a long time relatively substantial and fixed, depending on a circumscribed set of roles and norms. Change is one feature of modern identities, the other-relatedness another, for as the number of possible identities increases, one must gain recognition to assume a stable, recognised identity. In modernity, identity, therefore, becomes 'both a personal and a theoretical problem. Certain tensions appear within and between theories of identity, as well as within the modern individual' (Kellner, 2003, p. 142).

According to anthropological folklore, in traditional societies, one's identity was fixed, solid and stable. Identity was a function of predefined social roles and a traditional system of myths that provided orientation and religious sanction to one's place in the world, while rigorously circumscribing the realm of thought and behaviour. One was born and died a member of one's clan, a member of a fixed kinship system and a member of one's tribe or group with one's life trajectory fixed in advance. In pre-modern societies, identity was unproblematic and not subject to reflection or discussion. 'Individuals did not undergo identity crises, or radically modify their identity. One was a hunter and a member of the tribe and that was that' (Kellner, 2003, p. 141).

City of Glass may be one of the main reasons why Paul Auster is considered one of the most influential writers of Postmodernism. The fact that the story has been the subject of many discussions and debates shows that postmodern detective fiction still fascinates both academics and 'ordinary' readers that's why the paper aims to show how the protagonists of *City of Glass* are more than confused characters in a detective story that does not seem to make sense; each one of them has a fragmented identity, even though the levels of fragmentation may vary; the level of fragmentation changes during the course of the story, and that the city interacts with them depending on how fragmented their identity is.

The main focus of this analysis is on the main characters in the story. It can be shown that the city changes its ways of interacting with Quinn as the story progresses. It is to be noted that there is hardly any interaction between Stillman Junior and the city, so he cannot be analysed with regard to the city.

The novel contains a jumble of identities; in fact, the identities are more numerous than the characters. In other words, characters, with the protagonist Daniel Quinn in the lead, have more than one identity. It can be suggested, most clearly in Daniel Quinn's case, that newer identities to a significant level replace his previous identity. With the help of poststructuralist theory, one can argue that the novel supports the view that all identities are constructed by outer factors. The case of Peter Stillman Jr. is also interesting in this respect, since his identity, the one he lives with as a grown man, has been given to (imposed on) him by outer sources. He had an identity that was reconstructed to fit into the society he has to live in. But is that identity more of a construction than his first? The question is: is there a hierarchical structure among identities, or are all identities equally original, or rather equally constructed?

Brian McHale (1992) claims that '*all* our cognitive operations, including (or especially) perception itself, are theory-dependent,' and subsequently that 'data do not exist independently of a theory that constitutes them *as* data' (92). In other words, as poststructuralist theory would conclude, reality is constructed by those who interpret reality, and the same is accordingly true for the concept of identity. In the case of *City of Glass*, that would mean that all of Daniel Quinn's created identities are constructions, as well as the Quinn identity, the seemingly original identity of the character. Consequently, the same is true for Peter Stillman Jr. and his old and new identities. This essay thus argues, by applying poststructuralist theory and mainly focusing on the cases of Daniel Quinn and Peter Stillman Jr., that the identities of the characters in *City of Glass* are constructed by various outer factors, factors such as language, cultural codes and chance. These three factors were selected because of their significance in the novel on the one hand and poststructuralist theory on the other hand. The essay analyzes how the three outer factors mentioned influence the shaping of the character's identities.

It is extremely important to point out that Stillman Junior does not consider himself 'real' but merely a 'puppet boy'. He wants to become real and, just like the other characters in the story, to find meaning in whatever is happening. Of course, it is rather difficult for paranoid subjects to find satisfying answers to their questions for meaning.

> Detached from any sense of what is real, true, or factual, these characters search for any sense of correlation between events. In Paul Auster's novel, *City of Glass*, the plot is initially driven by a deeply disturbed Peter Stillman Jr. who believes that his father, Stillman Sr. is coming to kill him. This paranoia drives Peter Jr. to hire a detective, Quinn, to protect him. Peter Jr.'s paranoia ends up being paralleled in Quinn's eventual fall into psychotic despair, a not-so-subtle hint that searching for an end meaning or Truth is ultimately a mortal quest. *(W. Lisa 2006: 23)*

Peter Stillman's paranoia does not only influence his own life but Quinn's as well. Peter simply connected the dots he could find and made up his own story—it could be called *his reading* of a text full of fragments. His desperate search for meaning, which turns out to be futile in the end, leaves Quinn with unanswered questions about everything, and Quinn leaves the reader with unanswered questions about his whereabouts. It seems there are simply no answers. The search for meaning is not successful, not even for the reader; there is simply no real, absolute meaning behind the story.

Review of Literature

The practice of psychoanalysis was developed and popularised by Sigmund Freud (1919), in which one's dreams, personalities and desires were analysed in order to best determine the unconscious wants of the mind. Central concepts related to Freud's (1923) approach to psychoanalysis involve the id, ego, and superego—a tripartite structure of the human psyche that serves different purposes. The id is in charge of our sexual and aggressive drives, as well as our primitive instincts; the superego acts as the moral conscience for an individual; and the ego mediates between these two opposites to create a nuanced, realistic personality.

Freud also discusses the idea of the Uncanny, or that which is real yet feels distinctly unreal. Freud referred to the uncanny as 'das unheimlich,' categorising it as uncomfortable and unfamiliar, yet completely concealed from our knowledge (punter, 2007, p. 137). In fiction, the uncanny is typically utilised to depict something that is decidedly out of its environment. With this concept of the Uncanny, as well as the *id, ego* and *superego,* a Freudian psychoanalysis can be applied to fictional works by evaluating these aspects in the characters created by the author.

In addition to the Freudian perspective, Jacques Lacan (2007) posited a theory of the human psyche that framed itself within a spectrum between need, demand and desire. Lacan posits that human beings demand things of others, based on their needs and desires, and this is what drives our attitudes and behaviours, however conscious or subconscious. According to Lacan, we are mostly driven by our desire to be recognised by an 'Other,' and/or to desire what the Other also desires or lacks (Lacan, 2007). Desire is what drives our need to be recognised and validated by others: 'Desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the very phenomenon of their splitting (Spaltung)' (Lacan 2007, p. 690–692). In essence, desire happens when demands exceed our needs; we may meet our needs in some way, but what we demand beyond that becomes our desire.

Furthermore, another approach focuses on texts that use more than one language in more complex, enriching, general and interactive ways (Zucca, 2022, p.7). It aims at viewing texts that move beyond bounded communities, as prescribed by monolingual ideals and standards, towards theorising language boundaries as fluid, dynamic, hybrid and mobile.

In the context of self and its positive role, Kirpal Singh (2022) believes that the absence of POSITIVITY can be highly debilitating. Thus, we yearn for the positive in our leaders. It cannot be denied that when and where positivity exists and works as the *operatus mundi* plentiful gains are expected as well as frequently obtained. The challenge here is how to properly ascertain and use positivity.

Research Methods

For this paper, I have conducted a close textual analysis of the *The New York Trilogy – City of Glass*. The primary focus of this analysis was to perform close readings of the characters of this work, examining the ways in which their behaviour, motivations and the way Auster created them to fit within the framework of Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalysis (the *id, ego, superego;* Lacanian notions of desire). Elements of poststructuralism and postmodernism were also used to investigate how these characters were utilised to facilitate Auster's commentary upon genre and narrative fiction itself.

Discussion

In trying to sort this issue out, one must, first of all, be aware of the fact that since *City of Glass* is a novel, all identities of the characters are constructed by the author. This is an important point. However, novels can be read as displaying real-life issues, as stated in Alford: "[w] hile they are obvious fictions, narrators' and characters' claims can be understood as arguments about the 'real' world, the world of lived experience" (1987, p. 65). That is one side of the argument which gives relevance to this analysis. On the other hand, the poststructuralist view is that all identities are constructs, fictional or non-fictional. Kristeva used the term "*sujet-en- procès*," translated into "subject-in-process" and "subject-on-trial" (Becker-Leckrone, 2005, p. 165). In other words, even the identities of non-fictional people are shaped and reshaped throughout our lives. This will be dealt with further later in this section, but first, however, arguments against a hierarchical structure among identities of the novel's characters will be presented. Daniel Quinn has numerous identities, identities which he, at times, changes as though they were his clothes. There is Daniel Quinn, William Wilson, Max Work, Paul Auster, and even, in encounters with Peter Stillman Sr., Henry Dark and Peter Stillman Jr. As stated earlier, Quinn's Daniel Quinn identity is a painful one to live with. That is not the only reason his other identities are constructed. Sometimes the Daniel Quinn identity is just not suitable for the tasks that he sets out on. Quinn is not a private detective, but Paul Auster is, and with that one can conclude that if nothing else, the Quinn identity is certainly not "better" than his other identities. In fact, one can argue that his many identities complement each other and create a wholeness of the character. Peter Stillman Jr. has fewer identities than Quinn, but still he has two, however, not simultaneously. His first identity has been reconstructed to become another, but nothing suggests one's superiority.

City of Glass, in classic Auster style, follows a detective novelist named Quinn, who is mistaken for a real detective (ironically named Paul Auster) and sent on a mission following a strange phone call. The most prominent female figure in the novel is, intriguingly enough, missing from the novel's narrative: Quinn's wife, who (along with his son) died under mysterious circumstances before the events of the novel (Auster, 1986, p. 17). Quinn, as befits the prototypical detective novel protagonist, carries that pain with him throughout the book, using his wife's memory as yet another symbol of his grief and the emptiness of his life: 'He had nothing, he knew nothing, he knew that he knew nothing' (Auster, 1986, p. 159). From a Lacanian perspective, Quinn carries the desire for a normal, everyday life that comes with having a wife and child; his wife's absence in that respect is what drives his desires.

To have a better picture of the postmodern self and identity, we need to look back at the stages that led to the so-called corrosion of identity in line with the industrial revolution. First urbanisation devalued the traditional community where identity was formed. Then the community was supplanted by fluid sets of relationships, and these changes led to a change in the family structure, which caused a gap between our idea of the private world and the public world. These changes in values (secularisation) concerning the self at the workplace were replaced by the value of efficiency and technique, a workplace that had no respect for the earlier values of self and called for an efficient self to meet its increasing needs. (Derrida, 1997, p. 197) In other words, the traditional values were spared for newly proposed values that were in absolute opposition to the previous ones. This reduced identity (including social, religion, tradition, heritage, etc.) to a private, leisure time activity and promoted the formerly secular activities to take on a new form of identity and caused questions such as: where does the identity originate? Does it originate in our mind and we determine it, or are there other factors at work?

Even though the author is a physical person and the others are fictional, one can argue that the answer is that since they are all constructed anyway, they are all Paul Auster. The same discussion can be held concerning Daniel Quinn's identities: are they all him, or is it the Daniel Quinn identity that is really him, following that the others are made up? From the viewpoint of poststructuralist theory, the Daniel Quinn identity is as much of a construct as any other. The consequence of that would be that there is in fact no hierarchical structure among identities. All of Daniel Quinn's identities are, to an equal extent, his identities. In the same way, all the Paul Auster-labelled identities, including that of the author, are to the same extent Paul Auster, and this is underpinned by the argument that they are all constructs. Paul Auster once said in an interview: 'The world is in my head. My body is in the world,' (Rydin) meaning that his world, or rather his perception of the world, is true only for himself, and thus that it is not the universal 'real world.' (Little & Auster, 1997, p. 59). It is a construction, and consequently, his identity is a construction. It is, as well as the identities of the novel's characters, in his head. (Little & Auster, 1997, p. 59)

Examining the myths and genres of American fiction writing in a postmodernist, poststructuralist way, Auster explores the inherent confusion and lack of purpose postmodernist thought lends its characters and readers. Along with the notion of personal mythology, Americans latch onto universal narratives specific to their culture in order to preserve a sense of normalcy (Walker, 2015, p. 52). Auster's works lean into this sense of unambiguous, causal storytelling, as noted by the protagonist of *The Locked Room*:

> To say that so and so was born here and went there, that he did this and did that, that he married this woman and had these children, that he lived, that he died, that he left behind these books or this battle or that bridge—none of that tells us very much. We all want to be told stories, and we listen to them in the same way we did when we were young. (Auster 1987, p. 242243)

These stories, then, reinforce social values, such as those that dictate gender norms like the typical roles of men and women. In presenting, then upending, these roles and values through the deconstruction of typical narrative structure, Auster challenges existing myths, empowering the readers to see through them to their problematic core.

Conclusion

Despite the unstable state of identity, which gets worse by entering the postmodern era distanced from the traditional stable state, we witness a definition that sets a contradictory mission before humans in terms of identity. Lacan argues that the self, born vulnerable, forms identity through identifying with 'images' on an unending quest for a unified, stable sense of self. It seems that Lacan is dissatisfied with the postmodern state of identity and prescribes a quest for a more unified and stable one, the same as the traditional one, at least in terms of stability.

A brief review of the origins of our identity types reveals a variety of perspectives. For example, Nietzsche argues that the ethical self must be shown, through 'genealogy', to be a historical construction. In other words, identity has no truth and is a product open to reconstruction over time. From a social vantage point, Marx in *Preface and Introduction to a Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy* argues, 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness' (1904, p. 122), an outlook echoing Nietzsche's notion, despite the apparent prioritising of social factors rather than historical ones as the formative factors that form and construct our identity. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Freud argues that identity is not stable or rational, but an ever-conflicted tension between id and ego, the conscious and the subconscious mind.

In this respect, a Freudian/Lacanian reading of Auster's works further contributes to the prevailing wisdom of most scholarly literature on Auster—that his works emphasise postmodernist, poststructuralist uncertainty of what actually constitutes the real. In creating deconstructive works that question the norms, values and structures of detective and dystopian fiction, Auster breaks apart the shared American mythology of the nuclear family and community-based social order to question its value and maintenance without the mitigating force of women. In the absence of women's nurturing practicality and *superego* on the macro level, a male-driven society would be torn apart by its own worst impulses—its *id.*

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Research on the Relationship Between Implicit Learning and Tennis Forehand Skill Acquisition Based on Flipped Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Background: The flipped classroom teaching mode has become the mainstream of modern education, and how to exercise the flipped classroom has become the research direction of scholars.

Methods: Using the "single-blind" group teaching experiment method, students from Xinxiang Medical College were used as experimental subjects to explore and reveal the internal relationship between the appearance and technical specifications of tennis forehand, as well as students' mastery of tennis forehand.

Results: The teaching experiments show that implicit learning can help students form a clear and correct representation of tennis forehand, establish a correct concept of tennis forehand, and enable students to master standard tennis forehand.

Conclusion: The application of implicit learning in tennis teaching can also effectively cultivate students' interest and motivate in learning tennis, mobilize students' learning enthusiasm and enhance learning confidence.

Keywords: Implicit learning; tennis forehand; flipped classroom; acquisition; relationship

INTRODUCTION

The earliest application of implicit learning to motor skills research was in the study of amnesia patients. Implicit learning positively affects the learning and maintenance of motor skills of amnesia patients. So far, implicit learning has been applied in studying normal people's motor skills acquisition (Ren & Zhang, 2000).

At present, tennis teaching is still based on teaching methods, focusing on the leading role of teachers and emphasizing explicit learning and practice. In the study, only the teacher's teaching is emphasized, whereas the students' study is ignored, leading to students' slow learning progress and even loss of interest in learning. In tennis teaching, teachers also have simplified and improved teaching methods in recent years, but have focused more on explicit and intuitive imitation exercises, ignoring the influence of tennis action appearance on skill acquisition.

This article attempts to introduce implicit learning methods into tennis teaching through experiments to explore the internal connection between implicit learning and tennis skills acquisition and provide a theoretical reference for enriching tennis teaching theories and methods.

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Objective and Methods

Research objective

Considering the students of Xinxiang Medical College as the experimental objects, the relationship between implicit learning and the acquisition of tennis forehand skills is the research subject of this research.

Research Methods

According to needs, read and consult related materials, such as pedagogy, sociology and physical education, organize the data to provide theoretical support for the text.

Questionnaire Survey Method

Design of the Questionnaire

The experimental research and the sports motivation scales are derived from the "Manual for the Evaluation of Sports Science Commonly Used Psychological Scales" (Zhang & Mao, 2004), and both subscales have good reliability and validity indicators.

Recycling of Questionnaires

A total of 48 copies were issued, and 48 copies were recovered, with a recovery rate of 100%, of which 48 were valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 100%.

Experimental Method

According to the requirements of the experiment, a "single-blind" experiment method that both the students and the teacher know is adopted. The first round selects small sample experiments to determine the reliability of the experimental design, and the second round conducts large-sample experimental teaching based on the completion of the first round of experiments. Using the experimental and the control groups, under the same basic conditions, the difference in tennis forehand dribbling skills after the end of the course can be seen. The inner connection between implicit learning and tennis forehand technique will also be explored.

Mathematical Statistics

Using SPSS11.5 statistical software, the effective data obtained from the survey are classified and processed according to the principles and methods of sports statistics and social science survey statistical methods.

Logical Analysis

Applying logical analysis methods, comparative analysis and induction and deductive reasoning of teaching experiment results reveal the logical relationship between implicit learning and volleyball skill acquisition.

Psychometrics

To understand the students' movement level representation, refer to Xu Songgao's simple measurement method on movement representation. Based on the principle of psychological projection and related ink detection methods, combined with the technical characteristics of tennis forehand drive, a measurement tool is designed to formulate scoring standards.

Test Content

Randomly draw a diagram of the tennis forehand technique, decompose the technical actions and arrange the tennis forehand technique in order within one minute. The test aims to explore the students' cognitive level of the technical movements they have learned after teaching.

Test Reliability and Validity

The subjects were subjected to a second test three days after the test to verify the credibility of the test methods and results. Comparing the two test results before and after the inertia test, the correlation coefficient of the two sets of data is 0.72 (according to the 0.5 principle), which indicates that the test results can be used as the basis for statistical analysis.

Experimental Design

Purpose of Experimental Design

It reveals the inner connection between implicit learning and the acquisition of tennis forehand skills and provides more teaching methods for the teaching of tennis skills.

Experimental Group Design

Total 48 students in the first grade of Xinxiang Medical College are the subjects of the experiment (the students selected are all male due to the limitations of the experimental conditions). Before the experiment, according to the principle of statistics, they were randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group with 10 people in each group. There was no significant difference in indicators between the two groups. Both groups of students have taught by themselves, and the teaching content and progress are consistent.

Experimental Operation Program Design

According to the teaching characteristics of implicit learning and explicit teaching, the progress frame of tennis forehand kick teaching is designed. The operation and implementation procedures are shown in the figure below.

Experimental Procedure

Experimental Group Design

1. Before the start of the experiment, test and investigate the height and physical fitness of the two groups of students. The specific test items are: height, standing long jump and plank support. Use SPSS16.0 to analyse the obtained data to ensure no significant difference between the two groups of students.

2. Use the interest scale (learning) and motivation scale (learning) to test tennis students before teaching, and use SPSS11.0 to analyse the measurement results systematically.

3. Use the psychology scale specially designed for this experiment to measure the students' performance before and after the experiment. Use SPSS11.0 for system analysis of the measurement results.

4. After completing the experimental grouping, use the implicit teaching method for the experimental group students and the traditional teaching method for the control group students.

5. After the experiment is completed, the two groups of students will use the 'double-blind' method to evaluate the performance of the students' tennis forehand dribbling skills and the technical performance of the tennis forehand dribbling skills. The measured data will be systematically analysed using SPSS11.0.

6. At the end of the training, the student's interest in learning and motivation to participate in learning sports are tested through the scale, and the data obtained is analysed using SPSS11.0.

Time	Impose conditions	Purpose
Lesson 1	Watch tennis forehand kick tennis video, multimedia graphic teaching materials and "inner feeling and appearance" discussion.	Preliminary establishment of the appearance of tennis forehand technique.
Lessons 2 and 3	Adopt wall chart teaching, use graphic teaching materials, error correction, discussion and suggestion (language, action and self-suggestion).	Understand the decomposition of tennis forehand strokes and establish a clear representation of the action.
Lessons 4 and 5	Recalling tennis forehand technique moves, error correction discussions, hints and watching the tennis forehand kick match video.	In the study, correct and improve the technique of tennis forehand tick, prevent abnormal appearance and deepen the understanding of movement concept.
Lessons 6 and 7	Multimedia graphic teaching materials, error correction, recall teaching materials, discussion, suggestions and watching tennis forehand kick video game.	Deeply understand the concept of action and form a correct and clear action representation.
Lessons 8 and 9	Free and relaxing environment, discussion, tennis forehand match.	Consolidate a clear presentation of tennis forehand strokes
Lessons 10	Watch your own tennis video and self-suggestion.	Establish a correct and clear movement representation, better grasp the concepts and principles of technical movement and enable students to use tennis forehand technique to achieve automation.

Timing of the Experiment

August 30, 2018–October 30, 2018, at the tennis court of Xinxiang Medical College; teaching tennis forehand kick for a total of 12 hours.

The Effect Index of Tennis Forehand Technique Movement Skills

Consult relevant literature and interviews with experts to determine the effect indicators of this experiment. The final effect index is: tennis forehand technical performance, tennis forehand skill description and sports motivation and interest (Yang, 1991).

Experimental Results and Analysis

Experimental Results

Preliminary Experiment Results and Analysis

It can be seen from Table 1 that, before the experiment, the concomitant probability of the two groups of students in the three basic quality tests of height, standing long jump, and plank support was P ≥ 0.05, which is not a small probability event Therefore, it is believed that the basic conditions of the experimental and the control groups, such as physical fitness before the experiment, did not have a significant difference.

Tables 2 and 3 show that after the experiment, the two groups and students' tennis forehand scores are accompanied by a probability P=0.021<0.05, which is a small probability. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the tennis scores of the two groups of students after the experiment. At the same time, it can be seen from Table 3 that the average score of tennis forehand in the experimental group is higher than that in the control group. Therefore, we can think that the implicit teaching method s have a significant impact on the learning of tennis forehand skills. A large sample experiment was conducted to compare further the internal connection between implicit learning and the acquisition of tennis forehand skills through experiments.

Formal Experimental Results and Analysis

Data Analysis of the Two Groups of Students Before the Experiment

Before the start of the formal experiment, the three indexes of the two groups of trainees' height, standing long jump and plank support were tested separately, and the data obtained were systematically analysed using SPSS11.0 as shown in the table below:

Table 4 shows that before the experiment, the basic conditions of the two groups of students used an independent sample t-test, and the statistical test showed no significant difference in the basic physical conditions of the two groups of students. Table 5 shows no significant difference in the evaluation of sports appearance, sports interest and sports motivation between the two groups of students.

Data Analysis of the Two Groups of Students After the Experiment

After the experiment, the tennis forehand technique evaluation scores of the two groups of students were tested (other tennis coaches evaluated the scores),

Table 1. Statistics of the basic situation of students before the experiment

Class	Test group	Control group	*t*	*P*
Height	1.7350±0.03655	1.7300±0.03783	0.088	≥0.05
Standing long jump	1.9340±0.02577	1.9325±0.03198	0.642	≥0.05
Plank	25.0231±0.05089	25.0312±0.0683	0.709	≥0.05

Table 2. Statistics of independent samples of tennis forehand technique of the two groups of trainees after the experiment

	Class	No of people	Average value	Standard deviation	Standard error
Tennis forehand technique	Test group	24	78.0000	4.56042	2.09762
	Control group	24	69.8000	4.38178	1.95959

Table 3. The independent sample t-test of tennis forehand technique of the two groups of students after the experiment

	Test for homogeneity of variance					*t*-test for equal means				
	F-test test statistics	*F*-tested *P*	Test statistics	df	*P*	Average difference	Standard error	95% confidence interval difference		
									Lower bound	Upper bound
Tennis forehand technique	**Assuming equal variances**	0.117	0.742	2.857	8	0.021	8.20000	2.87054	1.58052	14.81948
	Assuming unequal variances			2.857	7.963	0.021	8.20000	2.87054	1.57520	14.82480

Table 4. Independent sample inspection of trainees' physical fitness before the experiment

	Class	Number of people	Average value	Standard deviation	Standard error
Height	Test group	10	1.5248	0.05010	0.01016
	Control group	10	1.5348	0.04810	0.01079
Standing long jump	Test group	10	1.8786	0.20537	0.03867
	Control group	10	1.8179	0.18530	0.03070
Plank	Test group	10	25.7548	0.84661	0.17578
	Control group	10	25.6079	0.73925	0.15584

Table 5 Significant test of the difference between the two groups of trainees' movement appearance and movement motivation before the experiment

	Test group (N = 24)	Control group (N = 24)	t	P
Motor appearance	65.63±3.31	66.25±2.79	1.12	0.089≥0.05
Sports motivation	13.26±1.48	13.09±2.88	0.36	0.782≥0.05
Participation tendency	8.08±1.43	8.57±1.63	0.43	0.653≥0.05
Avoidance tendency	5.56±2.17	6.35±1.95	1.08	0.059≥0.05

Table 6 Significant test of the difference in tennis forehand technique performance between the two groups of students after the experiment

Project	Group	Average score	*F*-tested *P*	*t*-tested *P*
Tennis forehand score	Test group	72.4483±.88305	0.272≥0.05	0.026<0.05
	Control group	69.2759±1.06546		
Tennis forehand stroke description	Test group	74.3448±0.88679	2.147	0.036>0.05
	Control group	71.3793±1.05911		

and the scores obtained were systematically analysed using SPSS11.0. The results are shown in the following table:

After the experiment, the test results of the tennis forehand technique of the experimental and the control groups were performed by independent sample t-test. Table 6 shows a significant difference in the performance description of the hand stroke.

Analysis and Discussion of the Relationship Between Implicit Learning and Skill Acquisition

Implicit learning can help students form correct and standardized action representations, establish correct action concepts and improve tennis skills.

The implicit reaction is the impression of the stimulus once felt when the sensory perception is absent, while the appearance is a more complicated psychological phenomenon than the feeling (Huang et al., 2017).

In the experiment, through various implicit teaching methods, such as "suggestive teaching method, multimedia teaching method, discussion and analysis method" and other methods combined with traditional teaching methods, by forming tennis skills and teaching sequence, the systematic implicit learning method is divided into two parts. The learning method is implemented in stages into the traditional teaching method. In the teaching process, students should form correct movement representations in their brains, combined with the coach's demonstration and explanation, so that students can form correct preliminary movement representations. Students should frequently perform representation detections during the learning process, conducive to technical corrections and establish the correct representation to deepen the understanding of the concept of tennis forehand. Beginners will encounter negative and fearful emotions in the learning process of tennis, thereby easily losing interest in learning tennis skills. Using implicit learning methods can stimulate students' learning enthusiasm and enhance the relationship between students and teachers. The communication distance between them makes the students go from fear and resistance to acceptance and love the sport. The teaching method of implicit learning enhances students' interest in learning tennis and their imagination of technical movements, and enables students to realize their advantages and disadvantages, which has played a substantial role in promoting students' mastery of tennis skills.

Implicit learning is conducive to the formation of normative behaviour in students

The teachers let students perform imitation exercises through explanations and demonstrations in the traditional teaching method of tennis, improving the standard level of the teacher's movement skills. In the current tennis teaching and training market, tennis has become more of people's leisure sports due to improved living standards, and many people have also seen the business opportunities in it.. Therefore, most tennis coaches without professional skills appraisal qualifications have emerged in the market. This has led to uneven coaching skills and various movements. Some coaches cannot explain the correct technical actions to the students. Instead, they adopt a teaching method that combines implicit and explicit learning to present clear and correct actions to students through multimedia and other equipment, decomposition and completeness. Teaching methods such as repetition can make up for the teacher's lack of teaching ability. In this way, students can establish correct representational actions. In the teaching process, teachers can use hints, language, prompts, etc., to assist in teaching so that corrective actions are repeatedly presented in front of students, giving full play to the students' subjective initiative, and rooting in the students' minds for actions. This also promotes the improvement of students' tennis skills.

During tennis learning, the teacher uses multimedia and other teaching aids through demonstrations and explanations so that students have a preliminary understanding of learning tennis forehand technique, and implicit learning can inspire students to establish correct action representations. The muscle movement is more perfect, and he has mastered the tennis forehand technique unconsciously. Implicit learning can have an overall grasp of the strength and rhythm of tennis forehand technique so that tennis forehand technique can be improved and developed. After the unconscious motivation is finalized, students undergo repeated imitation exercises, and their movements will be more vivid and clearer than the original, and more coordinated and coherent. The teaching methods in implicit learning have stimulated the imagination of students and deepened their understanding of movements. In tennis teaching, the teacher used hints, etc., to a great extent to stimulate students' initiative in learning.

Implicit learning can improve students' sports interest, motivation and intelligence

Implicit learning is through changing teaching methods, the teaching environment and traditional technical models, which can easily stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, enhance their self-confidence and the courage to challenge difficulties, and gradually find a sense of accomplishment in the learning process. Implicit learning can also help students to develop their skills. In the tennis forehand teaching competition held in the ninth class, it was found that the correct behaviour of students before the game can enhance self-confidence and overcome self-negative psychology. Make the most of your skills and tactics in the game. Implicit learning and other methods arouse students' interest in active learning, thereby improving sports motivation, and the increase in sports interest also affects students' sports motivation during exercise.

Implicit learning can promote the growth of teachers' teaching ability

Through the learning theory of implicit learning-related knowledge, we can realize that implicit learning can help students quickly master new technical actions and but also help teachers improve their teaching level. The traditional teaching method is that the teacher explains too much and students blindly imitate the exercises. In the experiment, the teacher first allows the students to observe the learning actions of the teaching video and does not know how to ask the teacher again. This makes the students change their learning attitudes during the learning process. Teachers' teaching thinking will also be changed. Most of the traditional teaching mode uses instillation teaching, and the teacher is the guide in the learning process instead of letting the students passively accept new knowledge, which will only reduce the students' interest in tennis and reduce the teaching effect. Implicit learning integrates teaching content and methods into the teaching process and tries to let students be the masters of the classroom. Teachers can also discover their own shortcomings in the classroom and will actively learn how to solve the problems encountered by students in the classroom.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

The teaching combination strategy of implicit learning and explicit learning has been obtained. Through implicit learning, students can form correct representations of motor skills in their minds and establish complete motor concepts to acquire standardized and standard tennis forehand technical action.

Implicit learning is automatic, while explicit learning requires conscious effort to control. Implicit learning is stable and not easily affected by the outside world and other aspects, while explicit learning is affected by age, physical condition and personality. Explicit learning sometimes hinders implicit learning and promotes implicit learning. The learning of any skill is a combination of implicit learning and …' explicit learning and a product of the connection between implicit learning and explicit learning.

Implicit learning can improve students' clarity of movement representation, help students form movement automation dynamic stereotypes, and improve sports skills. Implicit learning can help students increase their interest in learning the sport of tennis forehand, improve learning motivation, enhance self-confidence and overcome fear.

In tennis forehand kicking teaching, the teacher can improve the classroom efficiency through the implicit learning method in the teaching process, make up for the teacher's inability to express clearly in the classroom and also allow students to participate in the classroom actively.

Suggestions

Implicit learning can affect the mastery of students' motor skills. School teachers can add some representational learning and contact methods in ordinary physical education classes so that students' sports representation levels can be improved, improve students' motor skills, and deepen their sports skills and understanding of concepts and principles.

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Research on Internet Education and Teaching in Higher Vocational Schools of China

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, the Internet is developing at an alarming rate, affecting all aspects of people, a large part of which is education. At China's 12th National People's Congress in 2015, Premier Li Keqiang proposed an "Internet Plus" action plan in a government report. "Internet + education" is one of the important categories, a new education model that combines Internet technology and education. The construction of Internet + education pilot colleges and universities can effectively solve the problems of insufficient educational resources and unbalanced allocation in underdeveloped areas and realise the "overtaking" of education. After the outbreak of the epidemic 20 years ago, Internet education has become the main medium and means of education in China. This article is intended to take the development of online classrooms in a pilot higher vocational college in Ningxia under the background of the new crown epidemic as an example, using the reviews software, through the changes in the grades of 1798 students; it is deeply proved that "Internet + education" has a positive impact on students' grades. Using factor analysis to comprehensively evaluate the performance of 347 students who have received Internet education, we put forward relevant suggestions for promoting and regulating the sustainable development of Internet education.

Keywords: Comprehensive evaluation; education equity; education model; factor analysis; Internet education; resource allocation.

Introduction

In December 2019, a case of COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, Hubei, China. Due to the long incubation period of the virus and the characteristics of human-to-human transmission, the new coronavirus pneumonia rapidly developed into a large-scale nationwide epidemic (Tiejun, 2021). On January 29, 2020, the Ministry of Education of China issued a notice of "suspending classes but not learning", calling on all schools to conduct online teaching (Tiejun, 2021). It is also the first time online teaching has been carried out on a large-scale and universally throughout China. Through this epidemic, we find that the transformation of the education and teaching model is destined to happen. However, the large-scale and template-based education centred on the class teaching system in industrial civilization is no longer respected by people in today's educational situation. Education has gradually transformed into a personalised and diversified way, and blended learning based on online and offline will inevitably become the development trend of future education. In the 21st century, human society has gradually entered an information society. Computer technology, communication technology and multimedia technology, as the basis for supporting information technology, are all developing at an unprecedented speed. Today, online education is a new form of education spawned by the development of modern information technology. It is an important means to build a lifelong learning system for people in the era of the knowledge

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economy (Hislop, 2009). Using various technical media, it can contact teachers and students, carry course content and provide two-way information exchange. Individual students can also utilise various learning media to achieve their learning goals throughout their study period. Online education is not limited by time, space, region and ethnicity, and the education target is for the whole society (Yang & Yuan, 2021).

Whether or not online education is effective in this context is of particular concern to me, so I decided to use models to design and calculate the effectiveness of online education. In this way, schools and teachers can re-examine the opportunities and challenges faced by online education and analyse the current situation and existing problems. I implemented correct design targeted teaching strategies, hoping to provide some experience and strategies for the quality of all online teaching.

Literature Review

The Development of Online Education Abroad

According to the meaning of the Second Theorem of Welfare Economics, if the government can achieve education equity for the people through various policies, it can theoretically achieve effective economic efficiency (Xiong et al., 2014). Germany specifically formulated a distance education law to ensure the fairness of educational resources years ago. Germany vigorously promotes digital construction, and its Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) education can be traced back to 2011. In April 2011, Germany's first MOOC OPCO11 was launched at the University of Frankfurt, marking the official landing of MOOC in Germany (Yan, 2021). At present, German educational MOOCs generally feature seven platforms and four main bodies. The seven MOOC platforms include OpenHPI, Mooin-Oncampus, Leuphana Digital School, Mooc.tu9, and OPEN vhb, five independently operated platforms by universities and two major operator platforms, Iversity and Open Course World (Daniela et al., 2016). According to Daniela et al. (2016), the main body of the operating technology platform can be divided into four main bodies: the independent operation of universities or scientific research institutions, the cooperative operation between universities, the subordinate operators of universities and the pure operator platform. Each platform has different orientations according to the nature of its subjects, and the course categories have their emphasis (Daniela et al., 2016). The optional courses range from undergraduate and master courses to vocational education, from high-tech to literary creation. Other MOOC platforms in the education field include the non-profit Amateur University Alliance (VHS), which only provides continuing education courses, and MOOC House, which is aimed at middle school students (Yan, 2021). Up to now, around 85% of German universities already run their own learning management system. Therefore, German MOOCs generally reflect the characteristics of diversity, starting from Germany and facing the world.

Since 1990, the British government has attached great importance to the development of online education and invested a lot of money in this field. This makes the United Kingdom one of the earliest countries in the development of high-level online education, and it has become one of the main types of modern education (Ran, 2013). The quality of online education is also considered to be equivalent to that of face-to-face education, and tuition fees are the same as on-campus courses. MyTutorWeb, a well-known British online tutoring service website, was founded in January 2013 to provide personalised online education services: each online course is one-to-one and tailored for each student. It is worth mentioning that the site also attracts students from countries other than the UK (Ran, 2013). Currently, the UK's School Jotter is the UK's #1 school website builder and online learning platform. It started its operations in 2003 by providing online platforms and software construction for thousands of schools in the UK (Sun & Chen, 2016). In primary and secondary schools and universities dominated by traditional teaching models, online education has long been applied to the normal teaching process of schools.

As the birthplace of the Internet, the United States has formulated the "Internet 2" plan to ensure the priority use of online education by institutions of higher learning and scientific research institutions (Yu, 2012). Now it has undergone many developments and iterations and has entered the segmentation era. The famous Khan Academy is the most typical MOOC classes. The students who take courses at Khan Academy can watch instructional videos, do online exercises and have Q&A tutoring (ŞAn & Aykaç, 2020). The site also offers free digital textbooks covering multiple areas (Chova et al., 2013). The practice system has students' complete practice records for each question, which can be tracked and referenced by teachers and taught according to students' abilities (ŞAn & Aykaç, 2020). This kind of teaching mode is more suitable for people at university or above. During the 2020 epidemic, various online education platforms flourished in Silicon Valley at the forefront of technological development (Internet education). For example, Harvard University provides 900 online courses, for non-school students and school students, which has become a new way of education and teaching. In fact, online education has become an important part of American universities running schools around the world, which indirectly increases the penetration rate and global influence of American education (Chova et al., 2013). Therefore, from the perspective of international effect, online education is likely to become an effective way of international higher education and preparatory education in the future.

Differences in Educational Levels in China

With the gradual acceleration of development, it is difficult for economic benefits to be shared equally by all strata, and inequity in education has begun to show a trend of class solidification, institutionalisation and generation-to-generation transmission (Xiong et al., 2014). There are also various comments in society, such as “carps are difficult to leap over the dragon gate” and “poor families are difficult to produce noble children” (Zhang et al., 2020). The economic differences in most regions of our country are very significant, especially the obvious gap between developed areas and poor and remote areas and urban and rural areas (Xiong et al., 2014). In rural, poor or remote areas, although China’s investment in education increases every year, due to the low level of social and economic development in the area itself, the basic conditions for running some schools have not been guaranteed (Golley & Kong, 2018). Many inadequate school facilities cannot properly meet the needs of schools for teaching and student learning. In addition, due to the lack of functional supervision in the education system, some families do not pay enough attention to student learning, resulting in a high dropout rate (Xiong et al., 2014). Most of the outstanding young people or key schools’ teachers have also lost a lot of money because of poverty, remoteness or lack of emphasis on teaching (Zhang et al., 2020). For this reason, it is difficult to improve teaching quality in remote schools, directly restricting the development of schools in remote areas and the guarantee of teaching quality.

Every ordinary family often thinks that improving academic qualifications is the most important task for students because of China’s special test-oriented education background. Teachers cannot teach students according to their aptitude, even when faced with students who are very different and have different needs. Every child of different individuals is treated in the same way of education, regardless of individual differences, but in the pursuit of uniformity (Golley & Kong, 2018). Over time, the lack of individuality and diversification of children has resulted in a very weak sense of independence and self-determination of students, and children’s creative thinking has also been limited. This is also one of the reasons that lead to the inequity of education in different regions and the imbalance of education in different regions.

In order to improve the social phenomenon of inequity in education, the state has introduced a series of national policies and measures. To promote “Internet + education” is essentially to combine the Internet platform and related technologies with traditional educational concepts to realise the education reform, create a new education format, achieve higher quality education and return to the essence of education. Internet + education is a new form of the information age (Guan, in press). It is the reintegration of various resources between Internet technology and Internet thinking to achieve a more efficient allocation of resources.

The Development of Online Education in China

Education is the most important part of a country, and inequality in education is a global issue. There are still unbalanced and unreasonable distribution of educational resources in global education (Dhawan, 2020). Especially for a country like China, where human resources are over-distributed and unevenly distributed, improving inequality in basic education is a huge challenge.

Internet education takes the Internet as a channel and platform, gives full play to the advantages of Internet education resources, and uses various information technology means and forms of expression. In order to achieve the purpose of disseminating digital education content for users with different needs and providing high-quality education services anytime and anywhere (Mao, 2020). Since the rapid development of the Internet in 1998, China has successively issued several policies and regulations to promote the development of Internet education (Yi et al., 2017). In the “Ninth Five-Year Plan”, “Tenth Five-Year Plan” and “Eleventh Five-Year Plan” period, computer network facilities and digital libraries closely related to Internet education are vigorously developed (Yang & Liu, 2017).

China’s online education industry began to flourish in 2013, driven by capital, but compared with the European and American markets, it is still in its infancy, and social training institutions are relatively bold in innovation and experimentation (Mao, 2020). In 2014, the

"Zhongguancun Internet Education Innovation Center" was officially listed. It is a platform for the integration of the Internet education resources. The goal is to aggregate the Internet education industry and provide services for the industry. In 2017, China realised the scale of online education with the help of live broadcast and gradually matured. At present, the online education industry has formed various subdivisions, and the industry has shown a trend of refined development (Mao, 2020). Compared with traditional education, Internet + education can cross the dimensions of campus, region, country, etc., break the imbalance of resources and make the equal sharing of high-quality educational resources extremely convenient (Zhang, 2016). Secondly, Internet + education evaluation will also bring about many changes. Research at this stage shows that Internet plus education overcomes the difficulty of collecting and one-sided problems in traditional education evaluation (Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009). According to Yi et al. (2017), it can also collect emotional influences beyond test scores, expanding the connotation and function of educational evaluation. In recent years, the introduction of policies related to the Internet education has paved the way for its development and pointed out the direction and promoted the rapid development of China's Internet education industry (Bao, 2020).

According to the big data of Baidu search, the search index of the keywords "online teaching" and "online education" increased from 300 on January 17, 2020, to nearly 5000 on February 10. The number of corporate users of Baidu's online disk has increased in less than a month, ranking first in the education industry (Mao, 2020).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Learning

Students can watch replays repeatedly at any time while they study online. The students who cannot watch the live broadcast or take notes immediately or had difficulty understanding the lecture, can watch the live broadcast after class to deepen their understanding, which is impossible in ordinary classrooms (Guan, in press). Most platforms have online lecturers and time statistics, so teachers can easily understand the students' class status and make targeted arrangements after class. In the orderly development of education and teaching activities, there are also many problems in detail. For teachers, online teaching resources for students must be prepared in advance while preparing lessons and ensuring sufficient resources during class (Mao, 2020). Some older teachers are not able to teach online and do not have the conditions to study, which leads to the suspension of live broadcasts; some teachers lack experience in online live broadcasts and cannot handle some emergencies (Viner et al., 2020). Some students have poor self-awareness and self-control and do not listen to online lectures in time. Students are unsupervised, with live video streaming on their phones or computers but they are not watching (Ballantyne, 2003). Watching live online classes for a long time is also a test for students' eyesight and energy. Individual students brush expressions and texts casually in class, which affects the normal class order (Viner et al., 2020). There are also some objective factors, such as some children's home network resources are relatively poor and the hardware equipment is relatively poor, so they cannot watch the live broadcast normally. Online teaching network delay phenomenon is relatively serious (Mao, 2020). Online classes are less interactive, and some teachers reluctantly sing a one-man show, which greatly reduces the effectiveness of the class. Some problems in the classroom cannot be dealt with in time.

A Brief Introduction to a School in Ningxia

In 2018, the Ministry of Education approved the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region as an "Internet + Education" demonstration area. In order to actively implement the construction of "Internet + Education" pilot colleges, a higher vocational college in Ningxia stood up and was the first to try. The school has invested heavily to update network hardware facilities, carry out IPV6 network transformation, establish online learning platforms, online learning courses, online learning guidance and support, online teaching management and quality assurance systems, laying a solid foundation for the Internet education. At the same time, through supporting the development of education informatisation in poverty-stricken areas and carrying out inter-provincial school pairing assistance to obtain high-quality teacher resources and coordinate its own teacher team, design teaching methods, activities and evaluations ensured that the Internet + curriculum construction achieves the expected results. In mid-to-late October 2021, the "new crown" epidemic struck Yinchuan. In the face of the complex epidemic prevention and control situation, the college actively responded to the epidemic prevention policy of the autonomous region, carried out closed management as soon as possible and carried out online teaching in a planned way, including online practical training. High-quality development is a touchstone to test the effectiveness of the college's "Internet + education" construction. According to a third-party evaluation agency's teaching satisfaction survey on the college's online teaching caused by the epidemic in early 2020, the proportion of students who are satisfied with teaching resources and teaching organizations exceeds 70%, and some reach more than 90%. The students have basically recognised the first online teaching of the college. However, from the perspective of individual data differences, the proportion of people who are particularly satisfied is not more than 50%, and the lowest is only about 25%. This highlights the construction of high-quality teaching resources, and there is still room for further improvement in the effectiveness of teaching organisations. It can be specific to a one-way indicator of platform acceptance. Only 25.94% of the students were fully satisfied with whether the existing functions of the online teaching platform could meet the student's learning needs. Only 21.04% of the students strongly agree with recognising good classroom order. 31.04% of the students have detailed arrangements for teaching tasks and other aspects that meet their learning needs. This highlights the main problems existing in online teaching. To sum up, the support of the online training platform is insufficient and the online teaching resources are insufficient; the online teaching training organisation is not standardised enough, and the real training experience is lacking.

Research Designs

Research Design Using EViews

Based on the teaching plan of "suspending classes without stopping" using the Econometrics Views (EViews) software and the Logit model, the changes in the grades of 1798 students have thoroughly demonstrated the impact of "Internet + education" on students' grades by a vocational college in Ningxia, China. In order to measure whether students can also obtain good teaching results in online learning during the epidemic. Its original intention is to "observe" the quantitative laws of society and activities using metrology methods and technologies. The core of the research is to design models, collect data, estimate models, test models and apply models (structural analysis, forecasting and policy evaluation). EViews is an indispensable tool for accomplishing the above tasks.

Logit Model Assumptions

According to Greene and Hensher's (2010) case of new teaching methods, a logistic regression analysis was conducted on the scores of students who received Internet + education. Because the limitation of linear regression requires the dependent variable to be a quantitative variable, this paper studies the situation where the dependent variable is qualitative, so Logit regression analysis is used, which is the most widely used in sociology. The Logit model is a multiple regression model, assuming that the dependent variable y follows a two-point distribution. Combined with the Logit model's hypothesis, two factors affect the improvement of performance, namely, receiving Internet education, not receiving Internet education (PSI) and achievement test results (TUCE).

The formula is expressed as:

$$Y = C + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$$

Can be deduced

$$grade^* = C + \beta_1 \times tuce + \beta_2 \times psi$$

Variable Settings

In this paper, the explained variable GRADE (Y) represents whether the grades improve after receiving Internet + education. If the grades are improved, the explained variable y takes the value of 1. Otherwise, the grades of higher vocational students are not improved, and the value is 0. The explanatory variable PSI represents whether the Internet + education has been accepted, where the acceptance value is 1 and the non-acceptance value is 0. There are other explanatory variable test scores for Internet + education to analyse the effect of this new method.

Data Sources

This article uses the data of the Academic Affairs Office of this university in Ningxia. 1788 students (both male and female) from 6 different majors in the same department in two grades were selected. They were divided into two groups in equal numbers. One group was trained by the Internet + education method, and the other was one grade higher. Therefore, they did not receive training, selected their academic performance of the same basic course and compared their performance with the thorough test. Considering the diversity of samples, the following assumptions are made.

Suppose:

a) Assume that there is no difference in IQ among students.
b) Assume that every student has done their best to complete the exam without any unexpected situation.

c) Assume that major does not affect grades.
d) Assume that gender does not affect performance.

The data obtained is as follows:

It can be seen from the results (**Table 1)** that among 1798 students, 1357 students have improved their test scores and 764 of them have received the new teaching method of Internet + education.

The results are brought into the model for analysis, and the following data are obtained.

Simplified analysis of the table.

The specific estimated expression can be obtained as follows

$$\text{grade}^* = -141.79 + 1.91 \times \text{TUCE} + 16.06 \times \text{PSI}$$
$$Z = (-8.08) \quad (8.1) \qquad (7.85)$$

Table 1 Data summary

Sample serial number	TUCE	PSI	GRADE
1	94	0	1
2	92	0	1
3	92	0	1
4	92	0	1
5	93	0	1
6	90	0	1
7	90	0	1
8	90	0	1
9	92	0	1
10	91	0	1
11	91	0	1
12	91	0	1
13	93	0	1
14	98	0	1
……			
1789	60	1	0
1790	60	1	0
1791	60	1	0
1792	60	1	0
1793	60	1	0
1794	60	1	0
1795	49	1	0
1796	50	1	0
1797	0	1	0
1798	37	1	0

From Table 3, it can be seen that the z-statistics of the explanatory variables participating in the Internet + education (PSI) and Test Score (TUCE) parameter estimates are relatively large. Its corresponding probability value P is small, obviously less than 0.05, indicating that these two variables are statistically significant. At the 5% confidence level, the effect of receiving the Internet + education is the most significant (|16.06|>|1.09|) and has a positive effect, that is, students who have received Internet + education have the highest probability of improving their performance, which shows that Internet + education positively impacts performance.

Y = 1 grades are improved, that is, the probability of being improved is P(Y = 1) = P1

Y = 0 grades have not improved. The probability of not being improved is P(Y = 0) = P0 = 1 - P1

We can get

$$P(y=1\,|\,x) = \frac{\exp(x'\beta)}{1+\exp(x'\beta)}$$

This is the relationship between probability P and independent variable x

Bring in the formula to get

Table 2 EViews results

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
C	-141.7852	17.54962	-8.079100	0.0000
TUCE	1.907092	0.235517	8.097477	0.0000
PSI	16.06358	2.046501	7.849291	0.0000

McFadden R-squared	0.929398	Mean dependent var	0.754727
S.D. dependent var	0.430368	S.E. of regression	0.091148
Akaike info criterion	0.081999	Sum squared resid	14.91288
Schwarz criterion	0.091167	Log likelihood	-70.71753
Hannan-Quinn criter.	0.085384	Deviance	141.4351
Restr. deviance	2003.266	Restr. log likelihood	-1001.633
LR statistic	1861.830	Avg. log likelihood	-0.039331
Prob(LR statistic)	0.000000		
Obs with Dep=0	441	Total obs	1798
Obs with Dep=1	1357		

Table 3 Simplified analysis

Variable	Coefficient	*Z*-test	*P*
TUCE test scores	1.09	8.1	0.00
PSI Whether to participate in the teaching of new methods	16.06	7.85	0.00

$$P(grade=1|PSI,TUCE)=\frac{\exp(C+\beta_1 tuce+\beta_2 psi)}{1+\exp(C+\beta_1 tuce+\beta_2 psi)}$$

It can be seen from Table 2 that the LR statistic is relatively large (1861.83), and LR≈1861,83>X20.05(2) = 5.99, so at the given significance level a = 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that all selection coefficients in the selection model are not 0. And the corresponding probability *P* value is 0.000, indicating that the model is significant overall.

McFadden R-squared is similar to the coefficient of determination R2 in the linear regression model. When the role of the explanatory variable is significant, the McFadden R-squared tends to 1. It is now known that the McFadden R-squared is approximately equal to 0.93, which means that the explanatory variables TUCE and PSI can explain 93% of the variation in performance improvement.

Factor Analysis

Data Sources and Analysis Tools

Through some investigations, the author selects 327 students who receive Internet education, selects their grades in 11 compulsory courses a year as variables and conducts statistical analysis (data appendix 1). The SPSS software, a highly reputable analysis software, used in this analysis can perform data management, statistical analysis, chart analysis, output management, etc.

Factor Analysis

Academic achievement is an important basis for measuring students' mastery of knowledge and skills, and is also an important reflection of teaching quality and teaching effect. The data collection and analysis become difficult because of the plethora of indicators that affect student achievement (K, 2017). In order to reduce the difficulty of data collection and analysis and make the measurement dimensions more rigorous and reasonable, the author needs to use the factor analysis method to reduce the dimension of many dimension indicators.

Factor analysis is a commonly used statistical analysis method. It is mainly based on the idea of dimensionality reduction by exploring the correlation coefficient matrix between variables and grouping variables according to their correlation (Leirhaug, 2015). This results in higher correlations between variables within the same group, lower correlations between variables in different groups and new variables representing the basic structure of each group's data are common factors (K, 2017). That is to say, factor analysis is to aggregate intricately numerous variables into a few independent common factors without losing as much or as little original data information as possible (Leirhaug, 2015). These common factors can reflect the main information of the original many variables. While reducing the number of variables, also reflects the internal relationship between variables. Based on the test scores of 347 students who participated in the Internet education in higher vocational colleges in Ningxia, the author uses factor analysis to evaluate students' scores in various subjects comprehensively. Finally, the author hopes to discover the potential teaching rules or teaching problems behind the performance data.

Enter the data into SPSS, select dimensionality reduction factor analysis, select significance level, KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity, and generate the results.

(1) Suitability test.

It can be seen from the KMO and Bartley's test table that the value of the KMO statistic is equal to 0.674>0.5, indicating that it is barely suitable for factor analysis (Table 4). The Bartley test results show that Sig is less than 0.01, thus rejecting the null hypothesis that the

Table 4: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO Sampling Suitability Quantity		**.674**
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approx. chi-square	489.021
	Df	55
	Sig.	.000

Table 5 Communalities

	Initial	**Extraction**
Financial regulations	1.000	0.675
College student psychology	1.000	0.318
Higher vocational English 1	1.000	0.534
Basic accounting skills	1.000	0.748
Basic accounting	1.000	0.490
Computer foundation 1	1.000	0.584
Military theory	1.000	0.591
Management training	1.000	0.522
Ideological and moral 1	1.000	0.354
Sports 1	1.000	0.601
Situation and policy 1	1.000	0.724

Extraction Method: Maximum likelihood.

Table 6 Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sum of Squares Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.633	23.933	23.933	2.633	23.933	23.933	2.320	21.089	21.089
2	1.382	12.568	36.501	1.382	12.568	36.501	1.504	13.668	34.757
3	1.116	10.150	46.650	1.116	10.150	46.650	1.163	10.576	45.333
4	1.009	9.169	55.819	1.009	9.169	55.819	1.153	10.486	55.819
5	0.952	8.651	64.470						
6	0.844	7.674	72.144						
7	0.797	7.247	79.391						
8	0.697	6.339	85.730						
9	0.644	5.855	91.586						
10	0.570	5.184	96.770						
11	0.355	3.230	100.000						

Extraction Method: Maximum likelihood.

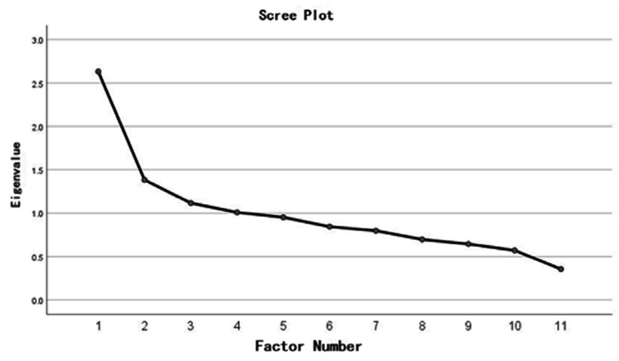

Chart 1

correlation matrix is a unit matrix; that is, it is considered that there is a significant correlation between the course variables, which is suitable for factor analysis.

(2) Selection and interpretation of common factors.

Common factor variance. The extraction of the variance of the initial variable by the common factor is given. Most of the variance extraction in this example is about 50%. It can be seen that the interpretation effect of the common factor on the variance of the variable is barely acceptable (Table 5).

It can be seen from the variance interpretation table and gravel diagram that the first four eigenvalues are relatively large, and the rest are relatively small. The eigenvalues of the common factors are all greater than 1, and the cumulative variance explained reaches 55.819%. That is to say, these four common factors can explain nearly 50% of the overall information. In this example, the first four common factors are taken for analysis.

Table 7 Factor matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Financial regulations	0.759	-0.161	0.159	-0.219
College student psychology	0.490	0.092	-0.060	0.256
Higher vocational English 1	0.608	0.248	0.002	-0.321
Basic accounting skills	0.211	0.355	-0.420	0.633
Basic accounting	0.604	0.010	-0.351	-0.043
Computer foundation 1	0.652	0.319	0.006	-0.239
Military theory	0.413	-0.466	0.202	0.404
Management training	-0.014	0.439	0.447	0.359
Ideological and moral 1	0.578	0.074	0.008	0.117
Sports1	0.131	0.201	0.735	0.063
Situation and policy 1	-0.301	0.777	-0.089	-0.152

Extraction Method: Maximum likelihood.

4 factors extracted.

The following table gives the component matrix of the four principal components, also known as factor loadings, which essentially refers to the correlation coefficients between the principal components and the original variables. The linear combination of the original indicator variables can be obtained through the factor loading matrix.

The above table (Table 7) is the rotated factor loading matrix, which calculates the performance of the sample on a single factor through the factor score expression. Taking the factor score result as the approximate value of the substitute indicator and the ratio of the factor variance contribution rate and the cumulative variance contribution rate as the weight of the substitute

Table 8 Rotated factor matrix[a]

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Financial regulations	0.717	0.379	-0.126	0.028
College student psychology	0.362	0.202	0.373	0.080
Higher vocational English 1	0.725	-0.084	-0.025	0.026
Basic accounting skills	0.041	-0.058	0.862	-0.015
Basic accounting	0.563	0.129	0.269	-0.290
Computer foundation 1	0.750	-0.092	0.073	0.085
Military theory	0.095	0.738	0.155	0.116
Management training	-0.049	-0.114	0.229	0.674
Ideological and moral 1	0.489	0.213	0.247	0.092
Sports 1	0.130	0.087	-0.185	0.737
Situation and policy 1	-0.017	-0.820	0.126	0.188

Extraction Method: Maximum likelihood
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

a. Rotation converged in five iteration

Table 9 Factor transformation matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Financial regulations	0.309	0.156	-0.209	0.017
College student psychology	0.086	0.104	0.290	0.065
Higher vocational English 1	0.371	-0.175	-0.134	-0.014
Basic accounting skills	-0.099	-0.022	0.773	-0.024
Basic accounting	0.228	-0.007	0.165	-0.272
Computer foundation 1	0.368	-0.178	-0.050	0.036
Military theory	-0.099	0.528	0.149	0.142
Management training	-0.069	-0.026	0.207	0.583
Ideological and moral 1	0.165	0.089	0.157	0.071
Sports1	0.045	0.082	-0.188	0.645
Situation and policy 1	0.095	-0.572	0.090	0.114

Extraction Method: Maximum likelihood.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

indicator, the comprehensive score of each sample can be calculated as the basis for evaluating the students' comprehensive performance.

Therefore, it can be seen from Table 8 that in the first factor variable, financial regulations, higher vocational English 1, basic accounting, computer foundation 1, ideological and moral cultivation and legal foundation 1 all have larger loads. It reflects the professional mathematics ability quality and ability level of students to solve practical problems, so it is defined as the ability factor to solve practical problems. The second military theory course is the basic theory course for higher vocational students, which can be defined as the educational quality factor. The third factor variable has a large load on college students' psychology and basic accounting skills, which can be a professional basic theoretical factor. The fourth factor variable defines the ability of enterprises to solve problems in reality by simulating sand table training, sports 1, situation and policy 1.

Table 9 is the component score coefficient matrix. For each factor, multiply the coefficient by the corresponding course name and then sum it up to get the final factor score formula, which can be used to score all cases.

Therefore:

The scoring formula for factor 1 is:

F1=0.309* financial regulations + 0.086* college student psychology +0.371* higher vocational English 1-0.099 * basic accounting skills + 0.228 * basic accounting + 0.368 * computer foundation 1-0.099 * military theory -0.069 * management training + 0.165 * Ideological and moral 1 + 0.045 * Sports + 0.095 * Situation and policy 1

(3) Comprehensive evaluation.

The factor score function is calculated using the factor score coefficient matrix, and the student's scores in each common factor are obtained. On this basis, the variance contribution rate of each common factor is used as a weight, and a linear combination is used to establish a comprehensive student achievement model (Table 6), whose model is as follows:

$$F = 0.2109*F1 + 0.1367*F2 + 0.1058*F3 + 0.1049*F4$$

The comprehensive score ranking of students can be obtained from the model, see Appendix. For example, some students rank high but have obvious disadvantages in the first factor. Teachers need to pay special attention to their professional grades. It can be seen that factor analysis has unique advantages, which can find students' personality characteristics and comprehensive ability, to teach students in accordance with their aptitude better and improve the quality of teaching. This is incomparable to the overall score ranking, and the evaluation results are more objective.

Discussion of the results

Through the Logit model, it is assumed that two factors affect the improvement of performance, that is, receiving Internet education, not receiving Internet education (PSI) and achievement test results (TUCE). The z-statistics of Internet + education (PSI) and test scores (TUCE) parameter estimates are relatively large, and the corresponding probability value *P* is small, indicating that these two variables are statistically significant. At the 5% confidence level, the effect of receiving Internet education is the most significant and positive. This shows that students who have received Internet + education have the highest probability of improving their performance, which shows that Internet + education has a good and positive impact on performance. The explanatory variables TUCE and PSI can explain 93% of the variation in performance improvement.

The comprehensive scores of vocational students play a great role in evaluating the quality of teaching, and the scores have a very important reference value for testing the quality of courses and measuring the rationality of talent training. At present, the scores of vocational students are generally ranked directly according to the total score of each subject. This method is simple and easy to implement, intuitive and easy to understand, and easy to operate. However, it is too one-sided and general and has obvious shortcomings. It cannot reflect the strengths and personality differences of all students and cannot see the practical ability of students. Therefore, this evaluation method has certain disadvantages.

The author provides another method for evaluating students' achievement—factor analysis. This method makes up for the above shortcomings. Starting from the internal structure of the data, by analysing the results, we can find out the factors that affect the student's grades and explain the factors that affect their grades more objectively and scientifically, which allows teachers to better teach and cultivate students on a daily basis.

Conclusions

If education is prosperous, the country will be prosperous, and if education is strong, the country will be strong. A higher vocational college in Ningxia, China, has become the first Internet + education pilot college in China and is expected to complete the 2018–2022 demonstration zone construction plan. Through the development of Internet + education, students in poverty-stricken areas can obtain good educational resources and cultivate more talents for the future talent market. This paper uses the Logit binary regression model as a framework and is based on the actual performance of 1798 students as microdata to measure the impact of the new education model of "Internet + education" on student performance.

Prospects and Advantages of Online Teaching Development

The epidemic will eventually pass, and traditional education cannot fully return to what it was before the new crown epidemic. The trend of the Internet information technology participating in education and teaching is unstoppable. Many schools have used the advantages of information technology to carry out various activities online, hold online academic lectures, open teaching resources for free and promote sharing high-quality resources. This series of measures has greatly broken through the limitations of time, space, location, identity, etc. It delivers high-quality teachers, excellent educational concepts, advanced educational ideas and interesting classrooms to the world, so the world sharing of high-quality resources has gradually changed from an idea to a reality. What follows is a major change in teaching mode, teaching environment, educational resources, evaluation and feedback methods, etc. The integration, innovation and development of the Internet information technology and education and teaching will be an inevitable trend.

Actions and Challenges for Online Teaching Development

One of the six major trends in global education reform is that "confidence in traditional education systems is being shaken". That is to say, traditional education does not provide more help for learners. Even without formal education and educational experience, it does not prevent learners from finding jobs and starting to choose other study paths besides higher education. As a young teacher, how to effectively ensure the quality of online teaching? This is the challenge each educators faces. I have come up with the following measures for your consideration:

a) Improve teachers' teaching design level. Good instructional design is the foundation of course quality. To do a good job in instructional design, the most important thing is to study, that is, to carry out a learner-centred instructional design based on "how people learn", rather than based on "what technology can do". Instructional design should start with "why to learn" and determine students' learning needs and learning goals; According to the learning objectives, it is further determined which specific teaching contents are used to improve students' knowledge and skills, processes and methods and emotional attitudes and values, to meet the needs of students, that is, to determine "what to learn" and to teach more accurately. The design of online courses in American colleges and universities is worthy of our reference. The development of online teaching resources in American colleges and universities, especially with a large number of online education students, requires teachers to cooperate with instructional designers rather than develop courses independently. Research shows that when a group develops a curriculum or when teachers and instructional designers collaborate to develop a curriculum, learners have richer learning activities and more effective learning.

b) Stimulate students' learning initiative. Interest is the best teacher. When learners have beliefs, ideas and ideals, they will know why they are learning, which can greatly stimulate students to change from passive learning to active learning. Teachers can stimulate students' interest through a series of competitions, awards, etc. Of course, teachers can also help students develop independent study habits through various methods such as after-school tutoring, homework feedback, rewriting comments on homework, exchanging more experiences with students and guiding online teaching methods. Self-disciplined living habits can help students to improve their learning efficiency. Teachers can use different teaching modes to design more activities for students to participate in the classroom and make students move. Teachers can also teach students in accordance with their aptitude based on the needs of students' independent learning, so that students can better adapt to online teaching and return the classroom to students.

In the Internet-based smart education environment, online classes, flipped classrooms, and modular teaching meets students' individual learning needs and truly teach students according to their aptitude, effectively improving the quality of teaching. However, as a national strategy, "Internet + education" is still in its initial stage. This environment teaches how to effectively integrate various educational models and conduct educational modules perfectly. Even a series of problems, such as random capture of assessment questions, intelligent correction of homework and scientific evaluation of courses, need to be constantly explored and solved in practice.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The data of this study is provided by Ningxia Finance and Technology Vocational School. This article and any organization do not produce any economic conflict, economic interests or competing interests. This article is the sole work of the author and has not been presented or published elsewhere.

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Research on the Application of Flow Experience in Popular Music Singing Teaching

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ABSTRACT

Flow is considered to be an optimal state associated with positive emotional, motivational, and cognitive experiences. When musical performers experience flow, their musical performance and sense of happiness are significantly improved. Previous studies have shown that when certain preconditions are met, individuals are more likely to have a strong flow experience. Based on the flow theory and relevant research, we summarized the four most important flow antecedents of musical performance: affection, challenge–skill balance, confidence, and clear goals. We designed a flow-facilitating procedure based on the flow antecedents and conducted a randomized controlled study among students majoring in pop singing. Results show that the flow-facilitating procedure can induce a stronger flow experience and beneficial effects (better test scores, less stage anxiety, etc.). This study shows that it is feasible to design a musical teaching process based on flow antecedent. It has good application value to improve students' musical performance ability and relieve performance anxiety.

Keywords: flow experience, flow antecedents, music performance, popular music teaching

Introduction

The concept of flow experience was first proposed by Csikszentmihalyi in 1975. It refers to the optimal experience of an individual during certain activities (such as sports, chess, etc.) (Csikszentmihalyi, 1989). When entering the flow experience, individuals forget themselves, the interference of the surrounding environment, and some of their own experiences (such as time, hunger, fatigue, etc.), and focus on the activities they are engaged in. Flow experience can make people have strong internal motivation pointing to the activity itself and show higher efficiency (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Flow experience itself, as a positive return given to individuals by activities, will improve their self-esteem and self-efficacy accompanied by a strong subjective happiness experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Flow experience is widely used in sports, human–computer interaction, game design, work, and other fields. A large number of studies have confirmed that people who experience flow experience more often tend to have better performance and higher happiness in their work field. Therefore, flow theory has been applied to education, sports, work, and even online shopping, games, and other fields to help objects get more involved in the activities they are engaged in and improve efficiency. (Jackson, 1996; Skadberg & Kimmel, 2004; Li & Chen, 2012; Lee & Chen, 2010).

Flow Experience in Music Activities

Flow experience also widely exists in music activities. Byrne et al. found that flow experience exists in activities such as composition, performance, and singing (Byrne,

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MacDonald, & Carlton, 2003). Wrigley and Emmerson also found the existence of flow experience in the live music performances of Strings, Piano, Woodwind, Brass, Voice, etc. Different players or different instruments experienced different levels of flow (Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013). Dewi and Saraya investigated two jazz performers using in-depth interviews. One of them was able to experience flow experience smoothly during the performance and get happiness from it; the other was unable to experience flow during the performance but was able to experience flow during composition (Dewi and Saraya, 2014). Sinnamon, Moran, & O'Connell (2012) investigated 205 music students, and the results showed that elite students often experienced flow experience more than amateur students (Sinnamon, Moran, & O'Connell, 2012). Marc David Jaros found that singers can experience flow experience in chorus and help them improve their confidence and happiness (Jaros, 2008). To sum up, flow experience widely exists in various musical activities, but not everyone at any time can experience flow experience, which is often related to better musical performance and stronger happiness.

Therefore, the concept of flow experience plays an important role in the field of positive psychology. Studies encourage maximum flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, M., 1990; Keller et al., 2011) to help individuals achieve better performance and maximize personal happiness. The same is true in the field of music teaching. By maximizing flow experience, music teaching can be improved.

Helping Individuals Improve the Flow Experience: Flow Antecedents and Its Controversies

After proposing the initial concept of flow, Csikszentmihalyi also identified nine dimensions of flow experience, including the challenge–skill balance and the corresponding nine antecedents, which are as follows (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990): (1) challenge–skill balance—task difficulty must be equal to person's ability, otherwise, feelings of anxiety/boredom will emerge; (2) action–awareness merging—actions feel automatic and little or no attentional resources are required for executing action sequences; (3) clear goals; (4) unambiguous feedback; (5) high concentration; (6) sense of control; (7) loss of self-consciousness—self-reflective thoughts and fear of social evaluation are absent; (8) transformation of time—time may seem to move faster or slower than usual; and (9) autotelic experience—an induced state of positive affect, which can make a task intrinsically rewarding. According to Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory, researchers divide flow experience into three stages—flow antecedents, flow state, and flow consequences. Studying and realizing various related conditions of flow antecedent stage can help objects to enter the flow state, and thus achieve good flow consequences (such as better performance and stronger happiness) (Stein, Kimiecik, Daniels & Jackson, 1995; Finneran & Zhang, 2003; Yongxia & Kimmel, 2004; Shin, 2006).

Theoretically, by satisfying the above antecedents of flow experience, individuals can be helped to improve

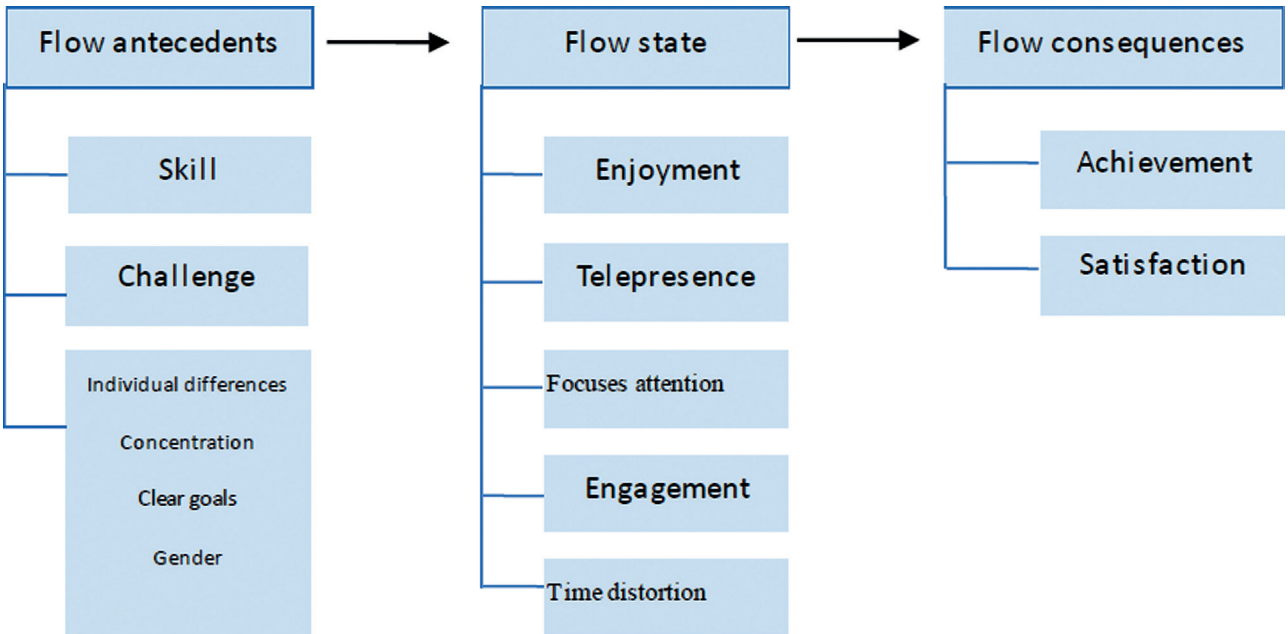

Figure 1. Conceptual model of online learner's flow experience (Shin, 2006).

their flow experience, thus achieving beneficial effects. Previous research has shown that challenge–skill balance plays a central role in the induction of flow experience (Keller & Blomann, 2008; Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Moneta and Csikszentmihalyi believe that the balance between challenge and skill is the best experience, and maintaining that balance is a reward in itself. So, getting participants to achieve a challenge–skill balance in some way before performing an activity can, in theory, help individuals improve their flow experience. Keller et al.(2011) support challenge skill balance by testing three conditions: the balance condition versus two high-challenge or low-challenge control conditions. Participants reported more positive subjective experiences and performed better in the balanced condition compared to the control condition. Thus, in theory, individuals will experience a more intense flow experience if the antecedent of flow experience is satisfied with the challenge–skill balance.

However, there is some debate about the definition and implementation of the antecedents of flow. For example, the concept of flow—challenge–skill balance and other prerequisite antecedents—has been difficult to accurately define and operationalize (Løvoll & Vittersø, 2014). Some research suggests that challenge–skill balance does not explain all flow experiences. Studies such as those of Løvoll and Vittersø show that challenge–skill balance can only explain part (less than 5%) of the difference in emotional experience (Løvoll & Vittersø, 2014; Voelkl, 1990). There are also experimental studies that support the idea that challenge and skill imbalance are more important than balance, for example, a study of chess players showed that when dealing with better opponents, players have the highest enjoyment and smoother experience (Abuhamdeh & Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). Essentially, a game is more fun when the perceived challenge is greater than the skill than when the challenge matches the skill.

Despite the above controversies, it is possible to induce or enhance flow experience in music teaching by satisfying the antecedents of flow experience. There are two key questions to answer in terms of antecedents for the flow experience in music performance compared to work, sports, games, etc.: (1) in addition to the challenge–skill balance, what other antecedents for flow experience are important in music performance? Are they important in any order? (2) What specific methods are used to achieve these flow antecedents in musical performances? Therefore, this study focuses on the flow experience in music performance, finds out the most relevant antecedents of flow experience in music performance activities by reviewing relevant literature, and designs implementation approaches. Through experimental research, it verifies whether the realization of these flow antecedents can enhance students' flow experience.

Antecedents of Flow Experience in Musical Performance and Their Realization Approaches

The antecedents for flow experience in music performance are different from those in games, sports, and work. Custodero conducted a series of empirical studies in the field of children's music learning. Based on Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory, Custodero observed and summarized the conditions that could help learners enter the flow state: (1) establishment and maintenance of appropriate challenges; (2) transforming teacher-delivered music materials into something meaningful—anticipation, expansion, and extension; (3) engagement—(i) opportunities for learners to contribute and (ii) prolonged, developmentally appropriate content and delivery; and (4) incorporation of physical involvement (Custodero, 2002). Bloom and Skutnick-Henley also, based on Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory combined with Green and Gallwey's 'Inner Game' theory, surveyed 90 classical music performers using a scale to analyse the factors that helped them enter the 'flow experience' (Bloom & Skutnick-Henley, 2005; Green and Gallwey, 1986). The scale survey shows that five factors are most relevant, among which the first two are the most prominent factors: (1) self-confidence and self-trust while playing; (2) desire to experience and express feelings through music; (3) having experience goals; (4) ability to maintain focus on the music; and (5) ability to play without self-criticism. Subjects were interviewed and told the main reasons leading them to flow experience. The following were mentioned most frequently: (1) love of music; (2) familiarity with the music; (3) emotionality; (4) letting go; (5) connection/rapport; and (6) concentration/focus. Mazzola and Cherlin (2008) found in their case study, on the production of Miles Davis' Bitches Brew and Geisser and Mazzola's Chronotomy album, that group flow can be encapsulated in the term 'Passion' (Mazzola & Cherlin, 2008).

As can be seen from Table 1 and related interview research, compared with flow experience in other fields (such as sports, human-computer interaction, etc.), flow antecedents of music activities are most important in that they require high emotional involvement and music learners need to resonate with works. At the same time, if learners have their inner understanding and processing of works, and have active participation, it will be easier to enter a flow state when performing.

Table 1. Flow antecedents of existing research works

Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory	Custodero's research	Bloom and Skutnick-Henley's research	
		Questionnaire Survey	*Interview Survey*
1. The task requires above-average concentration. 2. The activity stands out from daily life. 3. Challenge and skill levels are relatively matched, thus averting boredom from too little challenge and anxiety from too much challenge. 4. The task is freely chosen. 5. The task is totally absorbing, often leading one to lose track of time. 6. Goals are clear. 7. Means and methods are clear for reaching goals. 8. The experience provides immediate feedback.	1. Establishment and maintenance of appropriate challenges. 2. Transforming teacher-delivered music materials into something individually meaningful: anticipation, expansion, and extension. 3. Engagement: (1) Opportunities for learners to contribute; (2) prolonged duration; (3) developmentally appropriate content and delivery; (4) incorporation of physical involvement.	1. Self-confidence and self-trust while playing. 2. Desire to experience and express feelings through music. 3. Having experience goals. 4. Ability to maintain focus on the music. 5. Ability to play without self-criticism.	1. Love of music 2. Familiarity with the music 3. Emotionality 4. Letting go 5. Connection/rapport 6. Concentration/focus

Therefore, in combination with Csikszentmihalyi's flow basic theory and Bloom and Skutnick-Henley (2005), Custodero (2002), and other practical research in the field of music, this study believes that flow antecedents of musical performance are: (1) the music is the performer's affection and is freely chosen by him/her; (2) the difficulty of the track should match his/her performance level and be challenging; (3) practice the track repeatedly to make the performer familiar with and confident to complete the track (challenge–skill balance); (4) give them full affirmation and encouragement before the performance to help them avoid self-criticism during the performance; and (5) provide clear goals. Theoretically, when a musical performer performs under the condition of the flow antecedents mentioned above, he/she will have a great possibility to experience flow experience.

According to the above antecedents of smooth experience, the following induction process conditions are designed to meet the flow antecedents of musical performance: (1) students choose 5–6 favourite songs freely and write the reasons for their choice in short language with their emotional connection the songs; (2) among the above songs, the teacher selects two songs suitable for their timbres, range, and emotional expression with certain difficulty, and the students practice the two songs repeatedly for 4 weeks until they can master them; (3) students given sufficient affirmation and encouragement when students practice songs; and (4) informing the students that the songs they choose to perform will be counted towards their exam scores and may be given performance opportunities based on their scores.

Aims of the Present Investigation

1) To summarize flow antecedents of music performance according to existing studies and to verify if carrying out the flow-facilitating procedure based on the flow antecedents of music performance can facilitate a more intense flow experience.

2) To verify if a more intense flow experience can improve students' performance ability and reduce their stage anxiety.

Materials and Method

Participants and Procedure

Sixty freshmen and sophomores majoring in pop singing, including 38 females and 22 males, aged 18.50 ± 0.95 were selected. All students were asked to sing a song of their choice at the beginning of the semester, and at the end of the song, they were asked to perform the FSS-2 scale and the anxiety scale. And then they were randomly divided into two groups: Group A (flow-facilitating group) and Group B (control group). Group A received the flow-facilitating procedure for 4 weeks. Four weeks later, the FSS-2 and anxiety scale were tested again after the concert. The changes in flow experience and stage anxiety are observed. Group B received normal teaching instead of a flow-facilitating procedure. The rest of the learning process was identical to Group A. No flow-related teaching was facilitated to Group B. FSS-2 and anxiety scale were performed 4 weeks after the concert to understand the flow experience. At the end of the semester (a total of

18 weeks of study), the two groups were evaluated again in terms of academic performance, flow experience, and stage anxiety.

Materials

Flow State Scale-2: The measurement of the flow state was undertaken using the Flow State Scale-2 (FSS-2) questionnaire (Kawabata, Mallett, & Jackson, 2007; Jackson and Eklund, 2002). The FSS-2 consists of 36 items, with four items for each of the nine dimensions of flow. Each item is in the form of a statement that represents an element of the flow experience. These are Challenge–Skill Balance; Merging of Action and Awareness; Clear Goals; Unambiguous Feedback; Total Concentration; Sense of Control; Loss of Self-consciousness; Transformation of Time; and Autotelic Experience. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, to 5 = strongly agree. Several studies have confirmed that FSS-2 has high reliability and validity in the field of music (William, et al., 2011; de Manzano, Theorell, Harmat, & Ullén, 2010). The FSS-2 scale was completed within half an hour after the participants finished singing.

The revised Kenny Music Performance Anxiety Inventory (revised K-MPAI) was used. This 40-item inventory was developed to assess the emotion-based theory of anxiety proposed by Barlow (2000) as it applies to anxiety in the context of music performance. Questions are answered on a 7-point Likert scale [0 = Strongly disagree to 6 = Strongly agree]. The range of possible scores goes from 0 to 240. Higher scores indicate greater anxiety and psychological distress. This scale demonstrated excellent internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.94) and a stable factor structure across professional and student classical musicians (Kenny, 2011).

Statistical Analysis

SPSS 21.0 statistical analysis software was used for data processing and statistical analysis. All measurement data were expressed as M ± SD; independent sample t-test was used for comparison between groups and a value of $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results

Flow-Facilitating Procedure Can Effectively Improve Students' Flow Experience

Facilitating the flow procedure can facilitate a stronger flow experience for students. We first conducted FSS-2 test on all students (N = 60). All students were randomly and evenly divided into two groups. Group A (N = 30) was facilitating the flow-facilitating procedure for 4 weeks. After 4 weeks, FSS-2 test was performed again; the results are shown in Table 2. The scores of nine dimensions of flow were calculated, and the scores after induction were significantly higher than those before induction. Two-tailed sample t-test was conducted, and the result was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). The results showed that by implementing the flow-facilitating procedure for 4 weeks, students could benefit from a more intense flow experience.

Internal consistency checks for entries are determined by alpha coefficients. As shown in Table 2, the total α-value of flow before and after induction was 0.87 and

Table 2. FSS-2 means and standard deviations before and after flow-facilitating procedure

FSS-2 subscale	Before flow-facilitating procedure (N = 60)			After flow-facilitating procedure (N = 30)			p (Two-tailed)
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	
Challenge–Skill Balance	3.51	0.67	0.83	3.97	0.58	0.83	0.000
Merging of Action and Awareness	3.41	0.74	0.88	3.74	0.91	0.90	0.000
Clear Goals	4.03	0.88	0.89	4.27	0.66	0.84	0.008
Unambiguous Feedback	3.59	1.06	0.93	4.05	0.84	0.89	0.000
Total Concentration	3.34	0.88	0.90	4.20	0.79	0.88	0.000
Sense of Control	3.13	0.74	0.85	3.90	0.82	0.89	0.000
Loss of Self-Consciousness	2.88	0.99	0.90	3.82	0.87	0.91	0.000
Transformation of Time	3.35	1.10	0.91	4.03	0.75	0.88	0.000
Autotelic Experience	3.52	1.06	0.92	4.27	0.48	0.85	0.000

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 3. FSS-2 subscales frequencies and percentages of high flow groups

FSS-2 subscale	Before flow-facilitating procedure (N = 60)		After flow-facilitating procedure (N = 30)	
	N	%	N	%
Challenge–Skill Balance	22	36.67	23	76.67
Merging of Action and Awareness	24	40.00	19	63.33
Clear Goals	44	73.33	28	93.33
Unambiguous Feedback	32	53.33	24	80.00
Total Concentration	20	33.33	25	83.33
Sense of Control	10	16.67	22	73.33
Loss of Self-Consciousness	10	16.67	20	66.67
Transformation of Time	22	36.67	24	80.00
Autotelic Experience	28	46.67	27	90.00

Table 4. FSS-2 scores of flow-facilitating groups and no flow-facilitating group

FSS-2 Subscale	Flow-facilitating Group (N = 30)			No Flow-facilitating Group (N = 30)			p (Two-tailed)
	M	SD	α	M	SD	α	
Challenge–Skill Balance	3.91	0.73	0.87	3.57	0.79	0.89	0.000
Merging of Action and Awareness	3.83	0.83	0.88	3.33	0.94	0.90	0.000
Clear Goals	4.28	0.52	0.80	4.13	0.67	0.79	0.009
Unambiguous Feedback	3.95	0.71	0.84	3.76	0.84	0.88	0.021
Total Concentration	3.92	0.69	0.82	3.53	0.85	0.88	0.000
Sense of Control	3.73	0.78	0.90	3.36	0.91	0.90	0.000
Loss of Self-Consciousness	3.13	1.08	0.89	2.93	1.14	0.92	0.023
Transformation of Time	3.81	0.82	0.90	3.39	0.87	0.89	0.000
Autotelic Experience	4.03	0.55	0.85	3.90	0.83	0.86	0.141

Note: M = mean; SD = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

0.86, respectively (Cronbach, 1951). The measured values of FSS-2 of nine dimensions of flow before and after induction were calculated to be between 0.83 and 0.93, respectively. All exceeded the acceptable reliability standard value (0.70) proposed by Nunnally (1978).

We further analysed the changes in the number of students who experienced a strong flow experience. Meanwhile, we divided each dimension of flow into 'High flow' (Agree and Strongly agree) and 'Low or no flow' (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Neither Agree nor Disagree). Table 3 shows the number of students experiencing high flow in each flow dimension. After the induction process, the number of students who experienced high flow increased to varying degrees. At the beginning of the semester, only a small number of students could experience strong feelings in the dimensions of 'Sense of Control', 'Loss of Self-Consciousness', and 'Total Concentration', while the number of these students increased significantly after induction.

The Facilitated Flow Experience Can Last for A Long Time

In our design, the flow-facilitating procedure stops after 4 weeks, and there is no similar teaching process for the students. Eighteen weeks later, we conducted the FSS-2 scale survey on all students again after the final examination; the results are shown in Table 4. The score of the nine dimensions of flow was calculated separately. The score of the flow-facilitating procedure group was significantly higher in all six dimensions than that of the group without facilitating the flow-facilitating procedure (independent sample t-test; $p < 0.01$). In Unambiguous Feedback and Loss of Self-Consciousness, the scores of the induced group were higher than those of the non-induced group ($p < 0.05$). Only in the dimension of 'Autotelic experience', there was no significant difference in scores between the induced and non-induced groups ($p > 0.05$). The results showed that after 18 weeks, students who received flow-facilitation procedure still

Table 5. Comparison of FSS-2 scores between specific groups

	p (Two-tailed)	p (Two-tailed)
	Flow-facilitating group (2 weeks) with Flow-facilitating group (18 weeks)	Before flow-facilitating procedure with No flow-facilitating group (18 weeks)
Challenge–Skill Balance	0.495	0.464
Merging of Action and Awareness	0.417	0.358
Clear Goals	0.914	0.273
Unambiguous Feedback	0.323	0.135
Total Concentration	0.005	0.060
Sense of Control	0.092	0.007
Loss of Self-Consciousness	0.000	0.669
Transformation of Time	0.028	0.718
Autotelic Experience	0.000	0.001

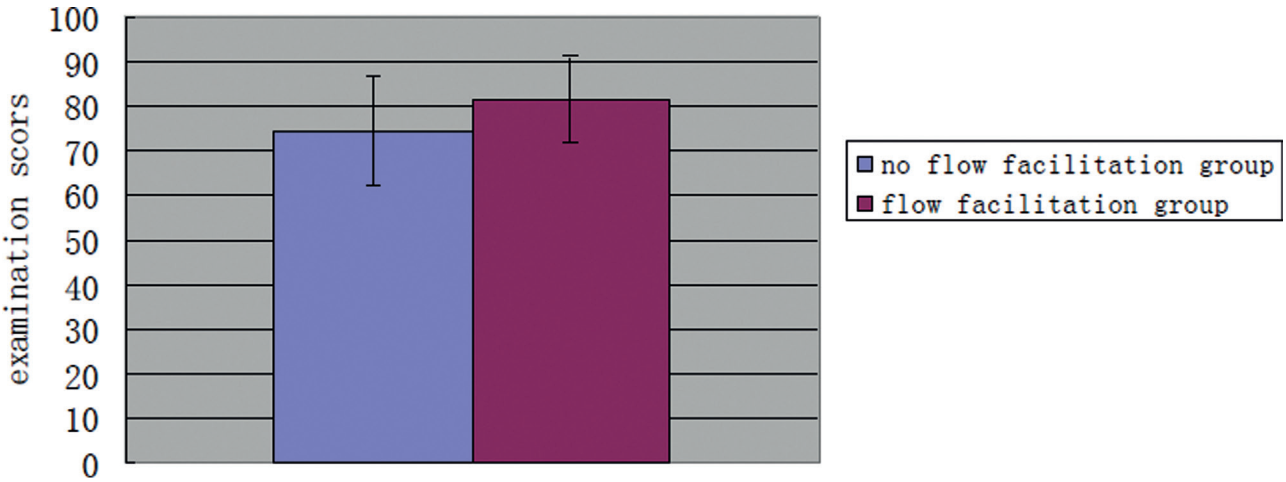

Figure 2. Examination scores of flow facilitation group and no flow facilitation group.

experienced more flow experience than students who did not receive the procedure.

We further compared the flow experience of the students after 18 weeks of flow-facilitating and immediately after the flow-facilitating procedure (Table 5). By independent sample t-test, the results show that we need to merge the concept of 'Challenge–Skill Balance', 'Action and Awareness', 'Clear Goals', 'Unambiguous Feedback', and 'Sense of Control'. There was no difference in the above five dimensions, but there were differences in the other four dimensions, 'Total Concentration', 'Loss of Self-Consciousness', 'Transformation of Time', and 'Autotelic Experience'. From the comparison of score values, there is not much difference in absolute values. This shows that the student facilitated a strong flow experience through 4 weeks of the flow-facilitating procedure and flow theory learning. Even after 18 weeks, the intensity of the experience did not decrease significantly. To verify whether such a strong flow experience is induced by goal-setting in the final exam, we compared the flow score of students without flow facilitation after the final exam with the flow score of all students at the beginning of flow facilitation. The results showed that there was no difference in the scores of the two in seven dimensions. Only 'Sense of Control' and 'Autotelic Experience' had statistical differences. This shows that students who do not receive flow-facilitation procedure do not feel more intense flow experience in the examination environment. This comparison further confirms that the induced strong flow experience can last for a long time, and it seems that it can be recalled during the later performance. Students without flow-facilitating procedures do not have this phenomenon.

Flow-Facilitating Procedure Benefits: Improved Academic Performance and Reduced Stage Anxiety

After 4 weeks of the flow-facilitating procedure, all students were exposed to the same level of instruction. At the end of the procedure, a professional examination is conducted. The score of the exam is graded by 100 points, and the average score is taken by five professional teachers (Figure 2). Facilitating the flow procedure: The score of the student facilitating the flow procedure was 81.63 ± 9.72 compared to that of the student without facilitating the flow procedure (74.43 ± 12.26). The difference was statistically significant (independent sample t-test, p = 0.014).

To assess the students' music performance anxiety state, a revised K-MPAI scale score was performed before and after the exam, and the result is shown in Figure 3. Facilitating students' anxiety score (71.43 ± 46.72) was significantly lower than that of students without the flow-facilitating procedure (90.80 ± 42.08). The difference was statistically significant (independent sample t-test, p = 0.001).

The results showed that the 4-week flow-facilitating procedure had a beneficial effect on the students, facilitating their music performance and reducing stage anxiety.

Discussion

Based on flow theory and existing research in the field of music, this study summarizes flow antecedents of musical performance. The flow-facilitating procedure is designed according to the flow antecedents. The results obtained after applying the flow-facilitating procedure to students of pop music singing confirm that a more intense flow experience of musical performance can be induced and has long-term beneficial effects (improved test scores, less stage anxiety). De Manzano made a similar study. He selected piano performance as a flow-inducing task, which allowed players to select music fragments freely (3~7 minutes) and repeatedly performed five times to induce flow experience, to study the relationship between flow and psychological and physiological reactions (de Manzano, et al., 2010). Baker and MacDonald (2013) select therapeutic songwriting as a flow-inducing task. He found that song creation experiences generated high levels of flow in young and old participants and the degree of flow achieved predicted how meaningful the artefacts will be post-creation. The flow-inducing task we set is the singing of a song, which is also freely selected and mastered after repeated practice (Baker and MacDonald, 2013). Furthermore, we design more sufficient flow-inducing antecedents: (1) Psychological environment: the emotional connection between songs and students is emphasized. In particular, the songs that students feel most touched are freely selected during the singing. When students have some internalized emotional processing of the songs, they are more likely to experience flow experience when singing the songs. Most of the interviewed students believed that it was easier for them to enter the flow state when they sang songs with emotional connection, which was consistent with the empirical study of Bloom and Skutnick-Henley (2005) and Custodero (2002). In the process of practice, positive evaluation and encouragement are constantly given to enhance their self-confidence, so that students can reduce self-doubt and criticism when singing, and focus more on singing itself; (2) Matching of ability and challenge: According to students' voice conditions, the teacher again selects songs suitable for their timbre, vocal range, and emotional expression and with certain difficulty from the songs freely selected by students and (3) External environment: given a certain external motivation to drive, the external motivation is not too strong (such as the key audition) to avoid over-stimulation, nor is it too weak, to avoid the object of contempt. Our flow-facilitating procedure fully meets the flow antecedents of musical performance. Students who receive the flow-facilitating procedure find it easier to enter flow states, thereby facilitating flow consequences.

In this study, we found that the flow score of the students who received the flow-facilitating procedure was still significantly higher after 18 weeks than that of the students who did not have this facilitating effect, but was only slightly lower than the score right after the flow-facilitating procedure was correct for our approach. This shows that the induced strong flow experience can last for a long time, and it seems that it can be recalled during the later performance. Students who did not receive the flow-facilitating procedure did experience this phenomenon. After in-depth interviews with the students, we believe that the main reason for this is that we are facilitating the flow-facilitating procedure by explaining the basic theory of flow to the students so that they can understand their psychological state and they were asked to recall the strong flow feeling in each subsequent performance. In the interview with the students, the students expressed that learning flow theory would enable them to more consciously recall and experience the flow experience in the later singing. This study does not have a further group study of this situation. In the future study, we can divide the students who receive the flow-facilitating procedure into two groups one of which learns flow theory and the other does not, and then we can observe the difference in flow experience after a while.

Existing studies suggest that flow experience cannot be directly taught or forcibly experienced, which seems to be inconsistent with our conclusion (Jackson &

Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). In fact, in this study, the teaching of flow theory did not have a direct effect on students' strong feelings of flow experience after a long time but played an indirect auxiliary awakening role. Compared with students who have not learned flow theory, these students can more consciously recall the previous strong flow experience before singing, so that they are more confident when singing and easier to enter into the song situation. At the same time, to avoid errors caused by students' understanding of flow theory in filling in the FSS-2 scale, we explicitly required students to follow their heart in filling in the FSS-2 scale after the first performance and complete it as quickly as possible (the scale is required to be completed within 6 minutes).

The design conditions of this study satisfy the antecedents of musical performance, induce a more intense flow experience, and verify the ensuing beneficial flow consequences (better musical performance and less stage anxiety). This study, therefore, provides definitive proof of the flow theory and the benefits that the flow-facilitating procedure can offer in music teaching. At the same time, this study can provide the following implications for music education: (1) In music education, flow theory can be used as teaching content to make students more focused on music learning and improve their academic performance more quickly; (2) Pay attention to the role of flow Antecedents in music education. The flow-facilitating procedure designed in this study fully meets the flow antecedents and induces a more intense flow experience. Studies show that satisfying flow antecedents can also achieve good teaching effects, such as goal setting, classroom environment setting, teachers' speech induction, etc. Therefore, teachers who understand flow antecedents of music performance and implement them in teaching can help students make faster progress; and (3) Attach importance to students' participation in teaching, especially psychological internalization, and give immediate positive feedback. Listening more to students' feelings in teaching and making them have an active emotional connection with music works can make students prone to flow experience and thus improve students' musical performance.

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Research on the Practical of Internal and External Integrated Teaching Mode in University's Public Physical Education Curriculum of China

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ABSTRACT

Based on teaching experiments, questionnaire surveys, literature materials and mathematical statistics research, guided by the goals of China's physical education curriculum and combined with the physical education curriculum practice in colleges or universities, this paper focuses on the practical exploration of internal and external integrated teaching mode. It aims to compare and analyse the effectiveness of college students in cultivating interest in sports participation and improving physical fitness and the ability of special skills. The survey results show that the internal and external integrated teaching mode is more effective in the above aspects, which is the key to promote China's physical education curriculum in the new era.

Keywords: China's university; internal and external integrated; public physical education curriculum; practical exploration; teaching mode

Introduction

China's Ministry of Education launched the *National General Universities Physical Education Curriculum Teaching Guidance Outline* in 2021. It proposed that in order to achieve the goals of physical education curriculum, it is required that school's physical education teaching and students' extracurricular physical activities should be organically integrated into a targeted, planned and organised way. The extracurricular physical training program is integrated into the school's physical education teaching to build an organic physical education teaching structure (Zhang, 2013). The practice has also proved that the physical education curriculum once a week, focusing on disseminating basic sports knowledge and sports skills, can improve the physical fitness of college students, enhance special skills and arouse students' interest in sports learning. But this is not enough to carry out the initiative of "anyone who can insist one-hour sports a day, fitness and happiness will accompany for a lifetime" (Weng, 2014; Yu, 2019). To achieve the curriculum goals, the physical education curriculum in colleges needs to break through the confinement of original teaching methods, strive to expand its time, space, content and expression manner and give full play to the teacher's role, thus establishing an integrated curriculum system dominated by classrooms and supplemented by extracurricular teaching (Sun & Yang,

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2017). This is not only a new development trend in reforming the physical education curriculum in China, but also a necessary choice for effectively realising physical education goals. This paper attempts to carry out internal and external integrated teaching modes among college or university students in a specific area. It also makes a comparative analysis of its effectiveness in improving college students' physical quality, cultivating special technical abilities and cultivating students' interest in sports participation and strive to make a scientific demonstration of the effectiveness of the teaching mode, which will provide a theoretical basis and practical evidence for the effective implementation of the teaching mode.

Methods

Research Object

The research takes Xinxiang Medical University's undergraduate male students in the table tennis option class as the main experimental objects. Based on students' self-declaration, we divided the students into the experimental and control groups, with a total of 60 students and 30 students in each group. The experimental group was guided by the internal and external integrated teaching mode, while the traditional teaching mode guided the control group.

Research Methods

Literature Method

According to the research purpose, the paper reviewed the relevant literature and materials on China's CNKI, Wanfang, Weipu and other websites. Related literature is sorted and summarised to fully understand the research status and trend.

Teaching Experiment Method

In order to verify the effectiveness of the internal and external integrated teaching mode in the public physical education courses in China's colleges or universities, the experimental group adopted the new teaching mode. In-class teaching activities are mainly carried out by teachers with reference to the teaching programme. Extracurricular sports activities adopt the form of "teacher+student assistants" (the student assistants mainly form school teams or communities) to carry out layered teaching, emphasising synchronous integration with in-class teaching activities. Based on the hardware conditions and the practical needs of students, the extracurricular education centre provides a special teaching place for the students in the experimental group. During training, professional trainers provide skills guidance with the principle of quality, skill, individual guidance and overall improvement. According to the experimental method, the students in the experimental group must have at least three extracurricular physical practices in a week, and the duration of one activity should not be less than 60 minutes.

To ensure the students in the experimental group carry out extracurricular sports activities on time, they must be informed in advance that their extracurricular sports learning is the main part of the total score, which will be counted in the overall evaluation results at a rate of 20%. Teachers and student assistants complete the attendance and assessment of extracurricular sports. Students in the control group were not asked to do extracurricular sports activities except to complete the physical education class once a week, and extracurricular sports activities were not calculated in the overall evaluation score.

Before and after the experiment (16 weeks), the physical fitness level and special technical level of each student were measured. The specific measurement indicators of the basic physical fitness test are height, weight, vital capacity, 50m running, standing long jump, sitting in front of the body, bending, 1000m running and pull-ups (Chen, Wang & Xiang, 2019).

Questionnaire Survey Method

In order to fully grasp the far-reaching impact of internal and external integrated teaching modes on college students' athletic ability and hobbies, based on the research of traditional educational practice, the university compiled the College Sports Participation Interests and Hobbies Questionnaire to investigate the subjective experience of each student. The questionnaire is compiled based on the research on the interest in modern university sports activities and has good reliability and validity after testing. A total of 60 questionnaires were issued for the experimental and the control groups, and 60 valid questionnaires were recovered, with an effective rate of 100%.

Mathematical Statistics

The research used Excel XP and SPSS19.0 to perform and analyse the experimental statistics.

Table 1 Differential analysis of the impact of internal and external integrated teaching modes on students' physical quality

Items	Difference in experimental groups	Difference in control group	*t*	*P*
Height/cm	0.30±0.47	0.27±0.45	-0.28187	0.779
Weight/kg	1.23±1.19	0.67±1.18	-1.8454	0.070
50m run/s	-0.07±0.03	-0.05±0.02	3.5658	<0.001
Pull-ups/pcs	2.43±0.86	1.23±0.73	-5.84	<0.001
Standing long jump/cm	7.53±1.72	4.30±1.06	-8.7882	<0.001
Vital capacity/ml	322.20±53.79	165.80±46.17	-12.084	<0.001
Sitting forward/cm	0.63±0.17	0.43±0.18	-4.3459	<0.001
1000m run/s	-0.14±0.14	-0.07±0.10	2.1681	0.034

Table 2 Differential analysis of the impact of internal and external integrated teaching modes on students' special skills

Group	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*P*
Experimental group	61.67	3.97	-5.6764	<0.001
Control group	55.73	4.13		

Table 3 Statistics of sports participation interests of students in the control group (%)

Group	Very interested	Interested	Interested generally	Not interested
Before the experiment	17.56	28.67	41.97	11.80
After the experiment	20.35	31.24	40.13	8.28

Table 4 Statistics of sports participation interests of experimental group students (%)

Group	Very interested	Interested	Interested generally	Not interested
Before the experiment	17.43	26.96	44.38	11.23
After the experiment	27.62	36.87	33.46	2.05

Results and Analysis

1) *Differential analysis of the impact of internal and external integrated teaching mode on students' physical quality*

The statistical results are shown in Table 1. In the 50m running (*P*<0.05), 1000m running (*P*<0.05), standing long jump (*P*<0.05), vital capacity (*P*<0.05), sitting forward flexion (*P*<0.05) and in the pull-up (*P*<0.05) items, the difference in physical fitness between the experimental group (30 people) and the control group (30 people) was statistically significant. It shows that after 16 weeks of internal and external integrated teaching mode, the physical quality of the students in the experimental group has improved significantly compared with the students in the control group.

2) Differential analysis of the impact of internal and external integrated teaching modes on students' special skills

The statistical results are shown in Table 2. The difference between the experimental and control group students has statistical significance (*P*<0.05). Compared with the students in the control group, the skill level of the experimental group was significantly improved.

3) Analysis of students' interest in participating in sports before and after the experiment

Before and after the experiment the data analysis was carried out in the interest of the experimental and control group students. The results showed that the students in the control group who were interested (including very interested) in joining sports before and after the experiment accounted for the ratios of 46.23% and 51.59%, respectively (Table 3). Compared with the control group, the students in the experimental group (64.49%) who were interested in sports participation (including very interested) increased by 20.1% after the experiment (44.39%), and the increase was more prominent (Table 4). It shows that compared with the traditional teaching mode, the internal and external integrated teaching mode can fully mobilize students' enthusiasm to learn sports activities and more effectively stimulate their interest in participating in sports.

Discussion

1. Analysis of the advantages of internal and external integrated teaching mode

Physical education teaching mode refers to the sports teaching system and structure that has certain educational ideas and completes certain special functions under certain educational conditions according to the educational requirements. The traditional physical education teaching model could not achieve the teaching goals, and the health of college students and the enthusiasm for sports have also been declining for a long time. The new teaching mode integrated internal and external class teaching has gradually been affirmed. Based on maintaining the traditional physical teaching, the new teaching mode integrates extracurricular sports into the college physical education curriculum system in a purposeful, demanding and planned way, which not only effectively expands the time limit of the physical education curriculum but also highlights the main role of the learner. The flexible and diverse participation methods and the strong activity atmosphere of the new teaching mode have greatly improved students' participation initiative. Students' physical quality and sports skills will also be well cultivated with teachers' help.

2. The impact of internal and external integrated teaching mode on students' physical quality

Interpretation of National Student Health Standards (Ministry of Education & General Administration of Sports of the People's Republic of China, 2007) is an evaluation index to measure the physical fitness of current college students and the effectiveness of actual physical exercise. It is mainly focused on the physical appearance (height, weight), human movement mechanism (lung capacity), physical strength (50m running, pull-up, sitting forward bend, 1000m running, standing long jump), etc., comprehensively measuring the physical fitness level of college students (Wu & Liu, 2017). The experimental results of this research show that the physical quality of experimental group students has been significantly improved after the experiment. Compared with the control group, the students in the experimental group, especially in terms of quality and physical function, all the indicators showed significant differences. This result shows that the internal and external integrated teaching mode has a prominent role in improving the physical quality of the students in the experimental group. The internal and external integrated teaching mode organically integrates the extracurricular sports projects and classroom teaching. A comprehensive, scientific and reasonable setting has been made from the teaching structure to the content, as well as all aspects of the teaching method. The training is scientific and reasonable, and it is guided and monitored by professional personnel, so the students' quality ability has significantly improved. The control group adopts the traditional teaching mode without supervision and guidance for the extracurricular sports activities, and the selection of students' load is also an unconscious arrangement. The amount and intensity of exercise cannot be guaranteed, so the students' improvement is not obvious enough.

3. The influence of internal and external integrated teaching modes on the students' special skills

Teaching and guiding students to master specific sporting skills is an essential purpose of physical education, and improving students' skills are also the most intuitive reflection. During the 16-week teaching and experimental activities, teachers conducted a double-blind assessment of each student's skills before and after the experiment. The results showed that all students' skills in the experimental group significantly improved after the experiment, and the difference is also very obvious compared with the control group. Compared with the conventional teaching mode, teachers can fully use the extracurricular skills knowledge to guide the students in mastering sports skills and related knowledge when adopting the internal and external integrated teaching mode to achieve mutual complementary. In addition, the internal and external integrated teaching mode allows students to exchange skills and knowledge. They can communicate with their peers in a timely manner during extracurricular sports activities to achieve the purpose of consolidation and improvement. However, due to the relatively simple extracurricular sports in the control group, lack of specialized skills training personnel and limited time for mutual assistance and communication with peers, the teaching effect of special skills was not ideal.

4. The influence of internal and external integrated teaching modes on students' interest in sports participation

Interests and hobbies are the emotional expressions of human beings when they recognise their own needs, and they usually have positive emotions and conscious tendencies (Xu, 2017). Interest in sports participation is a psychological tendency of individuals when they understand and choose some sports activities, and it has a critical significance for the enthusiasm, initiative and formation of good sports habits. Compared with the control group, the students in the experimental group had a greater interest in sports participation after the 16-week experimental teaching activities, indicating that the internal and external integrated teaching modes can cultivate students' interest in sports participation. The effect is significantly better than the traditional teaching mode. However, the traditional physical education teaching mode emphasizes routine teaching, primarily cultivating students' professional knowledge, while ignoring the cultivation of students' hobbies and lifelong sports and healthy habits, and its teaching form is relatively monotonous (Liu, 2019). The internal and external integrated teaching modes use the spare time to organize students to carry out extracurricular physical education activities in a purposeful, planned and guided way, and it creates a relaxed, harmonious and joyful teaching atmosphere for students. It helps students to maintain strong energy and desire for new knowledge or skills, which greatly mobilize the interest of college students to participate in sports.

The organic integration of physical education and extracurricular physical activities is not only a new development trend of college physical education reform in the new era but also an inevitable choice for effectively realising college physical education goals. The internal and external integrated teaching modes have more practical effects and a good promotion effect on the physical quality level, special technical ability and sports participation interest of college students. Therefore, implementing integrated education inside and outside the classroom is one of the major measures to effectively carry out the goal of college physical education in the new era.

Competitive Interest Statement

I declare that there are no competing interests.

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Research of Online Classes for Music Courses in Higher Education in China During Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

The spread of COVID-19 has prevented college students across the country from starting school as scheduled. Under the call of the Ministry of Education, ‘not to suspend teaching and learning’, universities around the country have widely broadcasted live online teaching. However, live teaching under the COVID-19 is different from traditional online teaching. In order to ensure the quality of undergraduate teaching, this study distinguishes the different characteristics of live undergraduate teaching courses and traditional undergraduate ‘online + offline’ mixed courses and online live teaching music courses under COVID-19, taking theoretical courses as an example.

Keywords: COVID-19, Online Class, Music Course, Higher Education, Traditional Teaching.

Introduction

Existing problem

With populations affected by the COVID-19 since spring of 2020, distance education has become important means of teaching to deal with special periods, and the education model has faced new challenges in unprepared and actual struggles. Moving the traditional teaching model to the internet for online teaching is both a change and an innovation. This study uses network software to analyse the use of modern universities and discern the differences between traditional teaching and network teaching.

Small teaching scale

The number of students in a single university course is less than 300, and the team of teachers is generally composed of about three instructors. Implementing strict classroom access and attendance systems is a typical single point of contact (SPOC) teaching paradigm, completely different from the massive open online courses (MOOC) and live broadcasting platform for paid training courses. Long teaching time: Compared with all online courses (such as micro courses), live teaching should strictly implement a class hour plan, so a single course is about 90 minutes long. The longer the teaching time, the more boring courses with theoretical content. The lack of the collectivism and interaction for collective classroom learning can easily lead to a high classroom attrition rate.

Learning interest: All kinds of public science and paid training broadcasts have stable demands, interest and self-control. Also, most ordinary college students generally lack learning initiative and urgency, especially

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in a distance-learning environment, under the absence of teachers' supervision. It is unavoidable: 'Live webcast, people do not listen to' online lack of management behaviour. Offline difficulty: With the effective control of COVID-19, fully hybrid online teaching will eventually return to physical classes. Some students in online classes cannot keep up with the progress of offline classroom teaching. Some teachers are not good at adjusting to online and offline transitional relationships, which leads to extreme irregularities, and some teachers even give up mixed teaching, resulting in students who cannot adapt. The experiment is difficult: The author's courses can still use a virtual simulation platform to carry out experimental teaching. However, a large number of practical courses cannot be carried out due to the lack of environment, instruments, equipment and collaboration, resulting in the separation of theory from practice.

Poor network environment: During the COVID-19 period, about 300 million online students nationwide participated in online learning. As of February 13, 2020, live streaming platforms, including Tencent Conference, Rain Classroom, MOOC and Super Erya, led to no access and affected the smooth progress of online teaching. The above particularity and differences more or less affected the quality of teaching, so it is particularly important to carry out targeted, careful teaching organization and design under COVID-19.

Classroom teaching organization and design when the COVID-19 situation was offline was due to the general lack of enthusiasm and self-control for active learning. Also, there was a lack of classroom collectivism and teacher supervision, as well as often an online mixed situation of 'live broadcast and people are not listening'. Also, 90 minutes of online teaching time is difficult to ensure students' efficient learning continuity. Therefore, ensuring the vividness and interactivity of 90-minute classroom teaching and designing organizational relationships before, during and after class have become the keys to the success or failure of the online flipped classroom and teaching quality assurance. This section employs a music-teaching course as an example. The three-paragraph classroom teaching method is designed to improve the classroom retention rate and teaching quality.

In order to ensure the stability and durability of online teaching, the main work of the teaching preparation stage is: First, select appropriate teaching materials and guidance materials. Integrate online quality resources, edit and organise and prepare materials for the formal development of the course. Secondly, considering the fluctuation of the network, choose more than one live broadcasting platform and teaching tool, be proficient in live broadcasting and interactive functions of the platform and prepare the standby teaching platform to ensure orderly and stable teaching progress and quality. Finally, focus on the key difficult points and practical courses, according to the classification and integration of pre-class previews, in-class teaching and testing, after-class exercises and reviews, knowledge and skill expansion and detailed explanation of the key and difficult points, to organically organise the relationship between classroom teaching and self-study after class.

Three-stage classroom teaching stages

The basic consideration of three-stage live classroom teaching is as follows: Due to the long interval, it does not conform to the fragmented and random characteristics of network teaching. Ninety-minute and long teaching often makes students feel audio-visual fatigue, resulting in low concentration and high classroom loss rates. The basic idea is to divide the 90 minutes of class time into three teaching time periods, which are set at about 25 minutes according to the Tomato working method. The interval is about 7 minutes of knowledge expansion and barrage communication. The display link increases the interaction and relaxes the mood, while its intuitive display is shown in Table1.

Due to the three-stage division, the original offline classroom content cannot be fully considered. Therefore,

Table 1. Three-stage classroom teaching stages

Preparation teaching	Before-class preview	Online class			After-school review
Selection of teaching materials	Basic concept push	Key 1	Key 2	Key 3	After-class exercises test and submission
Understand platform functions	MOOC video preview	Teach courses+ Online testing 25 min	Contribution and explanation +barrage communication 25 min	Teach courses+ Online testing 25 min	
Teaching material organization	Preview test feedback	Knowledge exchange 7 min	Science and technology knowledge sharing 7 min		

Source: Studied the flipped classroom teaching method based on online live streaming under the COVID-19 epidemic.

removing the course, redefining the classroom teaching content, and highlighting the emphasis are necessary. If multiple knowledge points are involved, the basic concepts and application promotion content should be pushed offline through MOOC study.

Review stage after class

After the online classroom teaching, teachers will release after-class exercises promptly and assign after-class expanded reading tasks through the Rain classroom to guide students to consolidate the key and difficult points in time. They should set up a research group at the same time for the group to complete a self-study research report, through contributing functions to realise each group's mutual rating, plus teachers define basic score way accounting group can review results; students can finish the review task after class that can be discussed in a Dingding group. It should facilitate teachers to, in a timely manner, help students geared towards gaining their level of knowledge and teach blind spots. For the experiment, the virtual simulation environment is generally adopted. The teacher puts forward the design requirements in the form of the task book. The task team completes the network design and configuration in the virtual environment, such as a Packet Tracer, and finally uploads the experimental process. They record and project documents through the Dingding group. The theory of the computer network curriculum is closely related to practice. Experimental phenomena should be introduced for the key contents, such as protocol and routing, and experimental questions should be arranged in advance after class to encourage students to observe the phenomenon. This is so that the teachers in the class are targeted to introduce the theory and answer questions (Cao, 1999).

Offline teaching that has resumed after the COVID-19

With the effective control of the COVID-19, it is inevitable to return to physical classes, with both online and offline recording. Live broadcasting leads to the teaching workload of teachers. Some teachers do not adapt well to the teaching method of facing cameras, are eager to get rid of it and even simply give up mixed teaching. This results in students who are unable to adapt, while some students with online mixed credit hours result in an inability to keep up with the progress of the offline classroom teaching. Therefore, in the teaching restoration of the physical classroom, SPOC flipped classroom teaching based on Rain classroom. Secondly, the teaching content organization before the adjustment is restored in a timely manner. Again, many questions left in the online classroom should be answered in the interactive environment of the classroom (Feng, 2018).

Research Methodology

This study used two research methods, an open questionnaire survey and online classroom observation. According to the identity of the sample object, the questionnaire was divided into student and teacher versions. Due to the small sample, the questionnaire was conducted by one-time dialogue through telephone and WeChat Voice. The classroom observation was done by the author, who participated in the online teaching as an auditor and observed the situation in the online teaching process. For this study, the researcher observed five courses, each lasting for 50 minutes. Taking the Department of Music Education of the Conservatory of Music as an example, the author briefly introduces the types of online courses and online teaching methods.

Results and Discussion

The modernization of education is not only the iterative development of science and technology but also the modernization of the teaching concept, quality and standards. International Chinese online teaching is also constantly innovating and improving its practice and exploration. In the post-COVID-19 era, to make good use of what teachers and teaching units should actively think about and explore, make good use of the WeChat public accounts that are easy to operate, cover the current shortcomings of the platform construction and improve the communication power of international Chinese.

Professional small courses

Professional minor courses mainly include piano performance, vocal music singing and other instrumental music performance courses. This operational, skilled 'one-to-one' course is usually taught face-to-face. During COVID-19, most teachers chose WeChat, QQ, Dingding and other convenient 'one-to-one' voice or video connection software for teaching. Many teachers chose to use the '"Practice Together' app for 'one-to-one' or 'one-to-three' group class teaching. Due to the particularity of music professional skills courses, the existing online teaching software technology cannot fully meet the needs, such as 100% restoration of sound quality, details when teachers demonstrate the key and sound synchronization when cooperation is needed between teachers and students. Therefore, teachers begin to think and try different teaching models from traditional classroom. The traditional classes of music majors pay great attention to the face-to-face teaching of performance and singing techniques, and teachers often spend much time demonstrating and explaining. In online teaching, teachers expand their teaching content from singing and performance skills to work analysis and music humanities.

First, the students send the practiced, good assignments to the teacher as sound or video recordings done before class. Then, in class, the teacher comments on and demonstrates the recording or video, analyses the assignment from the perspective of harmony and music style, and explains the assignment from the perspective of the composer's background and the style of the creation period. Finally, the corresponding homework is assigned to ask the students to conduct a more in-depth study on the work. In this way, students should not only practice their playing or singing skills frequently after class but also complete related learning tasks such as literature reading and work analysis (Rao, 2019).

Theoretical courses

Theoretical courses include music history, musical work appreciation and music education psychology. Most teachers use multiple online teaching platforms for mixed teaching. Superstar Learning Pass (referred to as 'Learning Pass') is an online teaching platform used by many major class teachers, which can conduct classroom sign-ins, live broadcasts, record teaching, assign teaching tasks, share teaching materials, teaching evaluation, issue notices and other teaching activities. Before the class, the teachers can edit the weekly teaching tasks, upload the teaching materials, assign this week's homework and set the release time under the course portal of the platform. Some teachers record teaching videos in advance, upload them to the Learning Pass platform, ask students to learn independently and then answer questions online through platforms such as Learning Pass or Dingding. Many teachers choose live teaching, with weekly designated classes. Although the learning pass platform has a live broadcast teaching function, the function only supports one-way picture output for teachers. Students cannot interact with teachers face-to-face via video and can only leave messages at the bottom of the screen. As a result, many teachers choose to switch between teaching between Learning Pass and other platforms. For example, in the face-to-face video conference hosted by Dingding or QQ class groups, teachers can simultaneously have video or voice dialogue with all students and play PPT, video or audio. Such live teaching is closer to the real classroom. Another popular platform is the boutique MOOC platform, where teachers can choose relevant MOOC, recommend them to students to watch their learning and then have online discussions on platforms such as Learning Tong or Dingding. For example, in music education psychology, the existing resources are not completely consistent with the name of the course. From the perspective of interdisciplinary teaching in the 'MOOC' platform, select two quality MOOC resources, 'Into the Children's Psychological World' (Zhejiang University) and 'Music Psychology' (Shanghai Normal University), for teaching (Su, 2015). When preparing the lessons, one studies the two MOOC courses by himself, selects the chapters related to his teaching content for the students to learn, and designs the teaching problems to discuss with the students. Before the class starts, the author publishes the teaching tasks, teaching materials (such as relevant articles, videos, audio, etc.) and homework on the Learning Pass platform. After all the staff learned the MOOC independently and simultaneously, they entered the Dingding video conference for face-to-face teaching between teachers and students. The process is divided into three levels: 1) Detailed interpretation of MOOC, 2) open questions that stimulate students to think actively and 3) derivative discussion of content and knowledge related to music education. After the discussion (i.e., after class), students can study independently and upload their homework according to the teaching materials shared by the teachers on the learning platform and then it is reviewed by the teacher. In the opinion, the hybrid teaching cloud classroom of 'Learning Through + Chinese University MOOC + Dingding' really opens up a new world for the major theoretical courses of music education (Tang, 2015).

Practice of major courses

Practical courses mainly include teaching methods, visual and singing ear training, chorus and conductor. Most of these courses adopt the same cloud classroom operation mode as the theory courses, that is, multiple online platforms for mixed teaching, among which learning is still necessary. What is relatively different is that practical courses pay attention to practical operations. Teachers' demonstrations, case analyses and students' practice account for a large part of the teaching content. Most teachers use the form of 'recording + live broadcast' for online teaching. The homework that the teacher assigns is for the students.

Analysis

Online teaching platforms mainly include resources such as Love Course (MOOC), Wisdom Tree and School Online, suitable for students' self-study and online teaching. Tencent Conference, Dingding and Enterprise WeChat are: 1) suitable for the current COVID-19 prevention and control situation, 2) easy for students to operate at home and 3) can meet the requirements of online classroom teaching, conduct online previews and assign and correct homework (especially in the Rain Classroom platform). Lastly, online teaching communication platforms, such as Enterprise WeChat, WeChat and QQ Online Layout, can answer questions and supervise and evaluate the students' independent learning in class.

The full ideological preparation for teachers and students is, firstly, to ensure the smooth progress of online teaching. However, there is no doubt that the online teaching conducted by teachers and students during this COVID-19 is a 'war of encounter' without sufficient ideological preparation. According to a study, nearly 80% of teachers had not conducted online teaching before COVID-19, and nearly 60% of students had not participated in online teaching before COVID-19. Specifically, according to the 5,443 teacher questionnaires collected as of March 17, 2020, the results of 118,191 student questionnaires showed that 1,112 teachers had conducted online teaching before the COVID-19, accounting for only 20.43% of 4,331 teachers. Thus, 79.57% teachers had not conducted online teaching before COVID-19, online classes had 51,674 students which is 44% and offline classes had 66,517 students which is 56%. However, more than 97% of teachers and students had experienced online teaching after the outbreak. Among them, 97.5% of teachers conducted online teaching, and 97.37% of students received online teaching. In order to further understand the proficiency of teachers using various platforms, the survey divided teachers' proficiencies into five levels: 'best', 'good', 'normal', 'generally', 'bad' and 'worst'. From the survey results, the mean for the teacher option was 3.75. Among them, 608 teachers chose 'best', accounting for 11.17%. Next, 3,027 teachers chose 'good', accounting for 55.61%. These two options accounted for 66.78%. Then, 1,678 teachers chose 'generally', accounting for 30.83% (Wang, 2019). It can be seen that most teachers have mastered the technology of various online teaching platforms between 'general' and 'skilled'. One can see whether teachers and students have accepted online teaching. Table 2 shows all kinds of functions network teaching platforms have played accordingly. Live video, live language, and other teaching methods have been widely used to solve the sudden major problems that occur when the students cannot learn questions, as shown in Figure 1, 2.

Choose the appropriate web learning software

Choose the appropriate web learning software questionnaire also investigated the online and offline teaching interaction, teaching effect and classroom activity comparison. The results show that 'completely offline' teaching is better than 'completely online' in terms of teaching interaction, teaching effect and classroom activity for teaching (see Table 2).

Through the public platform, learners can effectively and conveniently use the fragmented time to easily master the basic knowledge of the Chinese language, expand their cultural vision, improve their self-study ability and stimulate their interest in learning. Therefore, in terms of the platform aspect, the builders should combine the implementation conditions in two ways. First, they should reasonably plan the teaching objectives using the four

Option	Number	Ratio
Live streaming	120	45.63%
Voice live	65	24.71%
Network setting self-study	78	29.66%
Total number	263	

Figure 1. Online Classes.
Source: Stage characteristics of large-scale online teaching in Chinese universities is based on the empirical research on the questionnaire survey of students, teachers and academic administrators

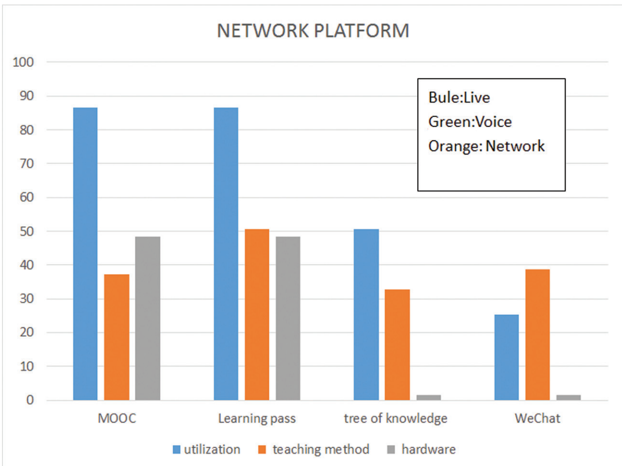

Figure 2. Network Platform data.
Source: Course Analysis of the current situation of online teaching in colleges and universities under the epidemic situation

Table 2. Online and offline effect comparison

	Best	Good	Normal	Bad	Worst
Online teaching interactivity	8.2%	21.6%	43.3%	20.2%	5.5%
Offline teaching interactivity	25.4%	48.5%	26.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Online teaching effect	0.0%	35.1%	38.8%	26.1%	0.0%
Offline teaching effect	35.1%	52.2%	12.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Online class activity	10.5%	26.1%	35.1%	26.7%	1.5%
Offline classroom activity	13.4%	24.3%	52.2%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Course Analysis of the current situation of online teaching in colleges and universities under the epidemic situation Course

levels of language knowledge, skills, culture and emotion. They should highlight the key points and systematically design the courses by themes and modules. Secondly, the builders should focus on designing the teaching content, strengthening the repetition rate of new words and sentence patterns and optimizing the publicity effect of input resources such as listening and reading. They should give play to the functional advantages of the public account platform through technological innovation and spatial imagination and use such input teaching funds.

In order to attract the readers, finally, they must speed up the frequency of updates, and highlight the convenience of mobile learning platforms and the importance of the construction of learning resources.

The network teaching platform, Blackboard LLC (Bb Platform), was born in 1997 (XL, 2020). After several years of trial, research and development, the Bb Platform was officially launched in various primary and secondary schools in the United States in 2005. Its main function was to build a fast platform for teachers and students to share teaching resources with the help of the internet. For example, before the beginning of each semester, college teachers can arrange teaching components, such as the teaching syllabus, teaching schedule and teaching content (including the teaching steps of each course, auxiliary teaching materials and related teaching materials, homework and requirements), measurement and evaluation (including homework assigning and collecting, scoring, tests and examinations) and other materials which are uploaded to the platform, which will be sent to students by email. In addition, teachers and students can also have online discussions on the platform. Today, such online platforms have become a necessary basis for teaching in China universities, including all art schools. Traditional music courses in colleges and universities are carried out more frequently with step-by-step procedures according to the teaching material and schedule. Now, more conventional things are broken, which is also a test of teachers' wisdom and ethics. What works are used to influence students, and what ways are chosen to influence students? Are they worth thinking about in current life education, love education and growth education? How can one overcome difficulties, and how can one be integrated into the music class? In this researcher's opinion, daily teaching requires more attention to the professionalism of music. Now, the internet makes teachers pay more attention to the ways and content of students they think are more attractive and that are more conducive to their future development. This cognitive improvement of education is also growth for teachers. First, set up the teaching plate and refine the teaching classification. Teachers can classify the teaching tasks through the function of the public account 'Topic Label', which can not only be summarised according to the language structure, function and culture of the language but also be planned and designed from language knowledge and skills. On the one hand, a reasonable setting allows learners to find teaching resources quickly. On the other hand, it also reflects the scientific and systematic teaching task arrangement. Second, it expands the communication form, enhancing the interest and readability of teaching. The WeChat public account material editing function includes components such as text, pictures, and audio, video and link insertions. Although the teaching method of 'text + pictures' in the existing platform construction statistics accounts for the vast majority, this is not the only form of communication. Teachers should expand the editing form and increase the sound and animation presentation proportion. Through the insertion of class, song playback, poetry recitation, film and television segments and other contents, one can improve readers' self-study interest, along with some obscure knowledge points through audio and video. In addition, it can be inserted into the outer chain of small program learning, as it can broaden the teaching methods and stimulate learners' interest in learning. Expanding teaching ways, while optimizing feedback. The circle functions and group functions of WeChat reflect the internet era (Xiang, 2017). The WeChat public platform is attached to WeChat, which can effectively use these two functions to optimise teaching feedback and services. Based on the single interactive communication method of slow reply and inconvenient operation in the comment area of the public account, the builders can establish a user WeChat group based on the public account through the WeChat group function to promote the communication between its users and other users. In view of users' learning problems, a builder's timely reply in the WeChat group uses the voice input function to correct students in a timely manner, and one can do a good job in teaching feedback and services. In addition, in the post-COVID-19 teaching era of networking, teachers should still maximise the creation of a language teaching environment. In addition to diversity in the content, which shows the Chinese teaching environment, teachers can also make full use of WeChat circle functions and encourage learners in Chinese to communicate information in time. Through friends who can give a dynamic thumbs up, provide comment interaction that increases language skills output frequency, can strengthen learning interaction between individuals, intermediaries and other individuals; and finally create a real language-use environment. Finally, the data's statistics are used to promote the quantitative analysis of teaching reflection. The WeChat official account has the function of background data statistics, which can analyse users, content, menus, messages and other data. The content analysis part can create statistics on the reading times, sharing times and reading completion rate of a single or multimedia push, while the user analysis part can summarise the users' gender, age, growth and regional attribution. Timely data statistics is conducive to teachers for observing the characteristics of teaching objects, understanding the attention and effect of teaching content, and in a timely manner, improving and updating the teaching design. Universities began to value teaching. Currently, in the platform construction of international Chinese WeChat public accounts, the proportion of individuals as the development subjects far exceeds that of enterprises, universities and institutions. However, from the overall planning, time management, content editing, scientific, professionalism, and accuracy perspective, the international Chinese teachers or volunteers as the main public account still have many deficiencies. As occupying the main position of international Chinese teaching, universities should give full play to their comprehensive strength in the post-COVID-19 era and support and guarantee the platform construction in terms of human, material and financial resources. Based on the students, volunteers are collected to maintain the platform, improve the update frequency and ensure stability. At the same time, the background comment area and group chat function are used to enhance the timeliness and accuracy of readers' feedback and reply and to improve the interaction and evaluation of teaching.

For another example, Universities start from the international colleges, organise the platform to create a team, teachers and students work together using cross-professional cooperation, connect theory to practice and use the various functions and group advantages of the WeChat public account to strengthen the optimization and construction of the international Chinese teaching official public platform. Finally, colleges and universities regularly hold teacher training to effectively cultivate teachers' online teaching skills and improve the professional quality of teaching resource builders. Through multi-party cooperation, the government will enrich and improve the construction and use of the teaching resources and database of the internet platform and improve the quantity and quality of international Chinese teaching platforms based on WeChat public accounts (Zhou, 2020).

The advantages of online education

The advantages of online live broadcast teaching include the freedom of time and space and the strong interaction of live broadcast teaching. These can well stimulate students'' interest. Live broadcast teaching can be preserved, and knowledge acquisition can have a 'maintenance' effect.

With the freedom of time and space and the transformation of online live broadcast teaching forms, many problems in the past face-to-face teaching and recording have begun to be solved. Compared with traditional face-to-face teaching, online courses have greater freedom in time and space and are no longer confined to one small, fixed space. As long as the network is covered, students can listen to lectures online through their mobile phones, iPads, computers and other tools. In the past, students in remote areas had no access to excellent educational resources in big cities, but now they receive the same quality of teaching wherever they are. Live broadcasts that stimulate interest in learning has strong interactivity. The interactive function of video forms a more intuitive interface. Rich text and text content can effectively promote students' interest, encourage students to have a desire to learn and thus form a learning motivation. Sound and the picture's impact allow students to keep their attention focused, and they can acquire knowledge more efficiently. Psychologist Chertra testified that 83% of information comes from vision and 11% from hearing. Online live broadcasting builds an ideal teaching environment of audio-visual integration and interactive communication, leaving a deep impression on students. This mode is more conducive to students acquiring and digesting the key points of knowledge.

Teacher-student interaction is fuller. The one-way live broadcast mode can provide a more relaxed environment for students. The so-called one-way visual is a class where only the students can see the teacher, and the teacher cannot see the students. In such a case, the state of the students is more relaxed. When there is a problem, they need not interrupt the teacher in the eyes of the public or stand up to ask questions. In the discussion or question area, they can type questions, with teachers or class teachers on duty replying, thus greatly reducing the threshold for students to ask questions. This provides teachers and students with more smooth communication. In traditional face-to-face teaching, teachers and students often ask one-to-one questions, and communication is limited. However, in the live broadcast mode, students can ask their questions, and teachers can have an overall understanding of the students' status and explain it intensively, guaranteeing each student's right to ask questions.

The key to online education

No matter how online teaching resources develop, teachers cannot supervise students as they do in the classroom directly. The key question to understand is that teaching through the internet and live streaming systems is not about moving offline classes directly to online.

This is not an understanding of the essence of online education, but such online teaching does not have offline advantages. Therefore, one should change the teachers' thinking habits of controlling all things in the classroom. Teachers should make full use of the convenience of online teaching, provide personalised guidance to students and parents, and enrich the form and content of home-school cooperation.

Conclusion

Strengthen teachers' teaching literacy

Strengthening teachers' teaching literacy is the key to this network teaching. Through research, the teachers' teaching concept is only held back at the ideological level and not fully implemented in the actual network teaching. Teachers need to constantly implement the correct teaching view in practice as helpers and facilitators for students to construct the knowledge system, be the organiser and instructor of classroom teaching, and help students to acquire knowledge systems better and more solidly to achieve the "student-centred" implementation of teaching activities truly. Secondly, teachers should adopt various forms of teaching methods in the teaching process to attract students' attention and promote students' classroom participation. They should not only focus on teaching methods, but adopt more mature ones under the constructivist teaching mode. Finally, teachers should continue to learn and train, as teaching oneself is a 'teaching and learning' process so that teachers pursue 'life-long learning' careers. Strengthening information technology training and learning is an important part of the construction of network teaching for teachers. Therefore, the school can arrange for teachers to systematically learn network knowledge to be more skilled in operating the teaching platform, and avoid low efficiency due unfamiliarity with the platform in the teaching process.

Cultivate students' independent learning ability

Students learning motivation, the state of learning and information literacy play an important role in network teaching. In order to enable students to absorb and construct their knowledge system in network learning efficiently, teachers and schools must intervene in students' independent learning properly. First, the students need to guide the external learning motivation into the internal learning motivation under the teacher's hand. Teachers need to be student-centred to meet the problem of students' poor states, and schools and teachers need to monitor students to regulate their learning status externally. Teachers, students and parents can jointly participate in independent learning monitoring as external monitoring, building a diversified autonomous learning monitoring system, and gradually standardising the students' independent learning attitude. At the same time, communication with classmates, teachers and parents can also cultivate their spirit of cooperation in self-learning. Finally, the school can arrange a lecture series such as 'How to Choose Information in the Information Age' to teach students the skills of how to choose information. Meanwhile, teachers can also demonstrate and screen information for students in the network teaching process, cultivate students' information selection literacy and improve their ability to screen information.

The school can establish long-term cooperative relations with several stable curriculum platforms in terms of the teaching platform. First, it can provide later technical support for school teachers and students. Second, when one platform has problems, other teaching platforms can be used as alternatives. At the same time, school teachers and students can also be encouraged to freely plan the course schedule and study at different peak times. In terms of teaching software, schools can collectively purchase some of the teaching resources or electronic textbooks offered by the platform to provide solid and rich teaching resources guaranteed by this network teaching. Constructivist learning theory points out that the teaching environment restricts knowledge construction. Different teaching environments should make different teaching plans, affected by the proliferation of network teaching, which are different from teaching in school. Thus, it cannot directly relate to school learning schedules without modification and is applied to network teaching. Otherwise, it will cause emotional anxiety for teachers and students, while some practical classes may not apply to network teaching. This is because network teaching cannot provide the music courses' required conditions and environments. In this view, the school can appropriately optimise the curriculum in COVID-19, shorten class hours and optimise online courses.

Online Classes, MOOC, SPOC and other teaching methods have become the main models of educational reform in China and has achieved remarkable results. However, under the pandemic outbreak, while being fully isolated from physical classes, the live broadcast modes based on the MOOC and multimedia teaching tools for online interactive teaching have become a pressing task for all teachers. According to this researcher's own access to the relevant information, and as of this writing, for the first time, this paper clarifies the difference between the COVID-19 live undergraduate teaching courses, traditional undergraduate 'online + offline' hybrid courses and online live teaching courses. It also gives the design idea and design process of the typical online live classroom teaching of science and engineering courses taking the computer network as an example under the COVID-19 situation. It is of important reference value for teaching managers to carry out live teaching under the COVID-19 situation.

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Chinese Tai Chi Culture: Curriculum Development to Improve International Students' Performance Achievement

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum itself is culture, which contains rich cultural connotation and can transmit, inherit and carry forward culture. The main purpose of this thesis is to study the curriculum design of international students from the perspective of cultural analysis and to highlight the importance of culture in the curriculum of foreign students. The thesis is based on the cultural analysis foreign student Tai Chi Chuan curriculum design principle and the characteristic, use the content analysis, the questionnaire and interview, to design Tai Chi curriculum programs, assessments for the foreign students. On this basis, the author summarizes aspects that should be paid attention to in the course design of foreign students.

Keywords: Curriculum Design; Cultural Analysis; International Students; Tai Chi

Introduction

Tai Chi is an ancient and mysterious symbol of Chinese culture, which is closely related to traditional Chinese culture such as Taoism, health preserving, traditional Chinese medicine, religion, boxing and aesthetics. Moreover, as a kind of body language, Tai Chi Chuan is easy to be accepted and studied by foreign students because of its conciseness and directness which other cultural elements do not possess. Li Jie (former president of the Chinese Martial Arts Association) once said "Tai Chi Chuan is a medium for Westerners to understand China"(Hanban, 2002). Tai Chi Chuan can be used as a key for foreigners to understand and learn Chinese culture.

Therefore, colleges and universities can take Tai Chi Chuan as a teaching element, teach Tai Chi Chuan and Tai Chi culture, and provide a platform for the dissemination of Chinese traditional culture. At the same time, it also meets the needs of foreign students to learn Tai Chi Chuan.

Chinese Martial Arts gradually spread abroad after the Tang and Song dynasties. There are many martial art practitioners in Japan, Korea and southeast Asian countries, forming some martial arts schools. In European and American countries, the influence of Chinese Martial Arts, known as 'Kung Fu', is also very far-reaching. Many Westerners got to know Chinese culture only from the beginning of Chinese Martial Arts. Chinese Tai Chi is an

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important contribution of the Chinese people to the world culture.

Martial arts moral education implies profound national spirit, and advocates military worship moGames, which is a complex process of transforming work projects into teaching services. The dialectical concept of Yin and Yang in traditional Chinese Confucianism and Taoism is its core. It integrates the functions of maintaining one's temperament and strengthening one's body. It combines the changes of Yin and Yang and the five elements of Yi Learning, and the theory of meridian and Luo of Traditional Chinese medicine. The ancient Daoyin and Tuanshu form a kind of internal and external repair, soft, slow, light, hard and soft combination of traditional Chinese boxing. It is also an important process of organic connection between industry analysis and teaching analysis. Improper setting of work items will affect the teaching effect. This paper studies the development and implementation of Tai Chi project curriculum, and puts forward specific practices and methods.

Materials and Methods

Research Object

The research was done on 60 university students from undergraduate programs from Korea, Pakistan, India, America, etc. with Tai Chi option class. We divided the students into the experimental group and the control group, with 30 students in each group. The experimental

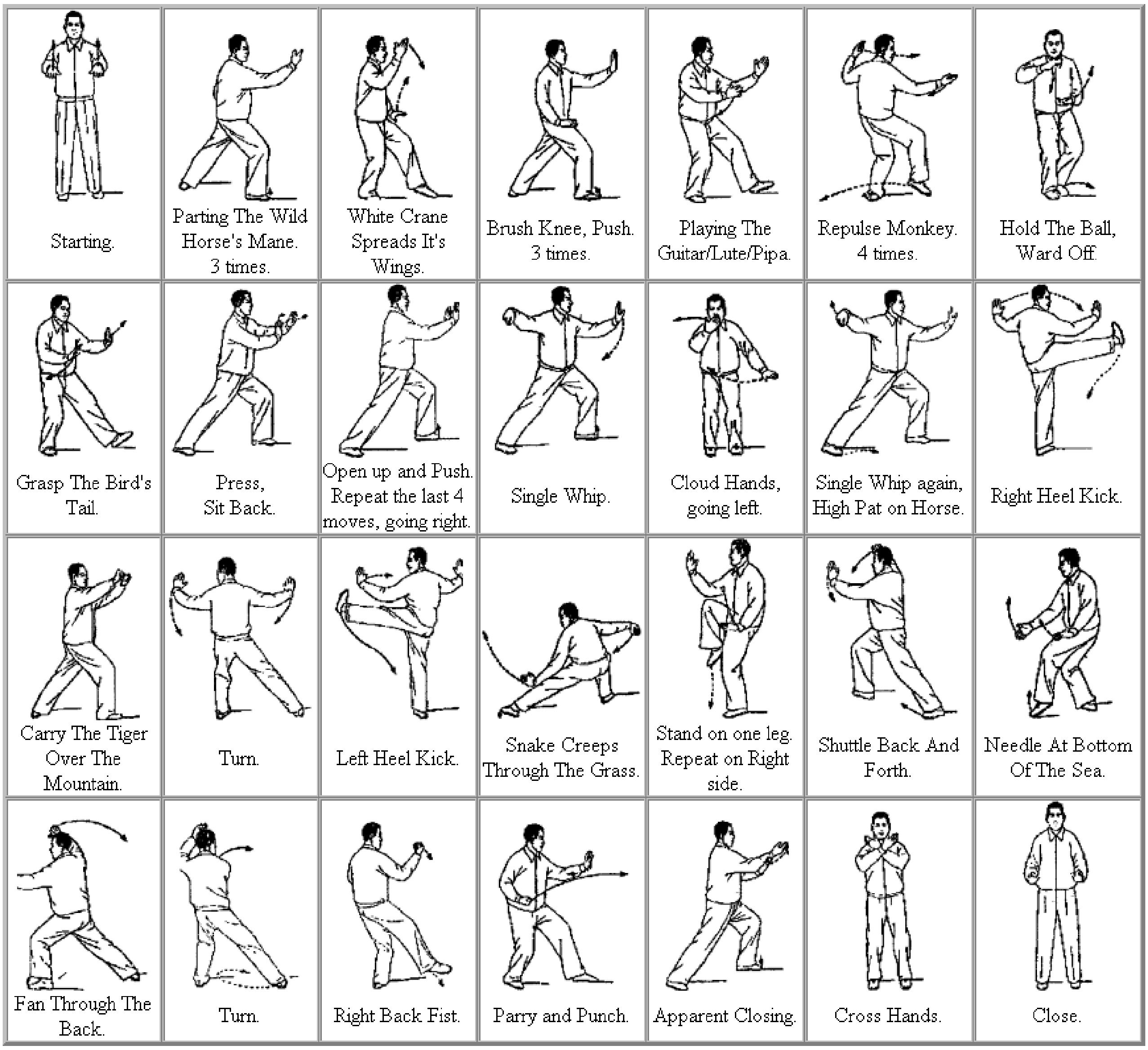

Figure 1. Twenty-eight Forms of Tai Chi.

group was guided by the internal and external integrated teaching mode, while the control group was guided by the traditional teaching mode.

Research Methods

There are five research methods in this paper: literature method, comparative analysis method, interview method, questionnaire method and example method.

Mathematical Statistics

The research use Excel XP and SPSS22.0 to perform and analyze experimental statistics.

Results

International students' performance achievements in Tai Chi was abruptly improved after fulfilling the experimental teaching mode. Their postures are more appreciating and normal, their understanding of Tai Chi is much deeper and their exploration of Chinese culture is more fruitful.

Discussion

Research was done on the current situation of university public physical education curriculum and physical education teaching.

Development Status of University Public Physical Education Courses

Physical education courses are the main channel for students to receive physical education. Through scientific and reasonable physical education and physical exercise, the purpose of physical fitness, physical and mental pleasure and health improvement can be achieved. One of the compulsory courses in colleges and universities is the core link of college sports work. It is difficult to improve students' Tai Chi skills and health level only through 80 to 100 min of classroom teaching per week. In a physical education class, just gathering the whole team, warming up, explaining and demonstrating organizational arrangements takes up a lot of time. There is thus not much time left for students to practice alone. In addition to the classes that were dropped due to the weather, the real practice time for students in each semester is less than 20 h. It is only through such a short period of time that students can master a few techniques, to achieve the goal of physical fitness the results can thus be imagined. The improvement of Tai Chi skills and the enhancement of physical fitness are obviously impossible to achieve only by relying on physical education classes.

Research on the Current Situation of College Physical Education Teaching

The most important task of school physical education in our country is to strengthen the student system, improve the health level of students, and develop the habit of participating in physical exercise for life. However, the physical health level of modern students in our country is declining day by day. How to improve the health of students in college sports and find a realistic development path are new topics of discussion faced by every sports worker.

Researchers pointed out that most colleges and universities no longer regard competitive sports as physical education content, and some schools completely reject competitive sports from the college physical education teaching programs (Zhang, 2009).

Li Bing pointed out that based on modern teaching theory, combining traditional teaching methods with modern teaching methods, one can construct a new teaching mode suitable for contemporary school physical education. In terms of cultivating students, we should focus on the cultivation of students' physical activity ability and Tai Chi skills, improve the teaching mode, enrich the content of teaching materials and form a teaching environment that promotes students' development (Li, 2007).

Research on the Reform of Tai Chi Courses

Chen Zequan believes that there are many technical courses in the optional.

Tai Chi course, and the lack of theoretical courses seriously hinders students' learning of Tai Chi theoretical knowledge; the teaching content is too simple, the assessment and evaluation methods are single, and the course structure is unreasonable. At the same time, three-level indicators are proposed in the paper: (1) increase in the teaching hours of Tai Chi theory, deepening of students' mastery and understanding of theoretical knowledge. (2) The assessment and evaluation methods are diversified. The usual classroom performance is included in the final exam, and students' self-evaluation, mutual evaluation and teacher evaluation are combined. (3) Extracurricular sports activities must be vigorously carried out so that students can apply what they have learned and further increase their interest in Tai Chi (Deng, 2010).

A course design should explain the nature of the course, specify the course time, content and object, etc. These factors in the course of Tai Chi Chuan for foreign students are set in the nature of the course. Tai Chi Chuan for foreign students belongs to the category of Public Physical Education classes in colleges and universities, the teaching object is a compulsory elective course for foreign students majoring in Chinese language, which is an indispensable part of the four-year undergraduate teaching system for foreign students. Tai Chi Chuan, the Tai Chi Chuan Path and the Tai Chi Chuan culture are the research object, mainly teaches the student 24 forms to simplify the Tai Chi Chuan style routine, the Tangtang Tai Chi Chuan cultural essence and the inseparable connection between the Tai Chi Culture and the Chinese culture. The 24 style simplified Tai Chi Chuan draws on the essence of the Yang-style Tai Chi Chuan, with simple and generous movements, solid standards and concise content; more than traditional Tai Chi Chuan can embody the movement characteristics of Tai Chi Chuan as the selection of Chinese Wushu Neijia Quan. Because of its health and philosophical, aesthetic, health preserving and economic principles, its movement makes it possible to carry out liberal education to foreign students, an important way to train excellent overseas students with all-round development. At the same time, the course of Tai Chi Chuan for overseas students also shoulders the mission of carrying forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture, and contributes to the international sports and cultural exchanges (Shi, 2011).

Research on the Value of Tai Chi

According to the National Syllabus for foreign students majoring in Chinese, foreign students can schedule two classes a week: A total of 16,32 h of class, including 14 teaching weeks, two examination weeks. The course is divided into two credits. In the 14 teaching groups, Tai Chi Chuan knowledge theory is presented in the form of media teaching, which requires taking up one teaching guest, other class time and action learning, but must be interspersed with explaining Tai Chi Chuan culture in the course of class, and pay attention to the last teaching action review suggestions. The learning level of the course object directly affects the teaching effect and the realization of the course target. In this study, the teaching object of Tai Chi Chuan Course for foreign students is set as the second year of university. There are two reasons why foreign students majoring in Chinese language at grade level are mainly from the West: (1) The style of Tai Chi Chuan is a traditional Chinese martial art, that is, it has Chinese characteristics. In the course of teaching foreign students will use a large number of specialized terms. It may be difficult for them to understand it. (2) The foreign students majoring in Chinese language in colleges and universities have a certain basis in Chinese language. According to the syllabus for foreign students majoring in Chinese language in colleges and universities, foreign students in grade two of Chinese language major have mastered nearly 1000 Chinese characters and new words (Sun, 2009).

Conclusion

With the trend of globalization of economy and culture, the high proficiency in cross-cultural communication has been an indispensable element for successful international trading, for working and living in a foreign country. Without enough contact with the alien culture, one will never really know the way the people think, speak or behave. Tai Chi, one of the most essential parts of traditional Chinese culture, has attracted an increasing amount of attention from the world for its unique features.

It is widely accepted that Tai Chi, originated from the ancient China, is one of the most essential parts of the traditional Chinese culture. In the contemporary society, Tai Chi is not supposed to be viewed only as a type of Chinese martial arts, but it also has philosophical, medical and even interpersonal connotations. Besides, it is beneficial to give people enlightenment about how to protect our planet environment and how to live a peaceful harmonious life in the present world. In addition, Tai Chi not only belongs to Chinese people, but to all people in the world. More efforts should be made to promote the international communication of Tai Chi culture. It is firmly believed that the internationalization of Tai Chi culture will be universally rewarding.

Competitive Interest Statement

I declare that there are no competing interests.

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BOOK REVIEW
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Fake News and Fact-Checking

Simplified Edition by Renu Nauriyal

Reviewed by: Brij Mohan, Mira K. Desai and Preethi Rao
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review

Introduction

This book provides a simplified yet vital understanding of the threat of fake news to democracies worldwide and has been designed especially for first-generation English learners.

The term fake news means "news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false" to manipulate people's perceptions of real facts, events, and statements. It is "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but lacks the news media's editorial norms and processes for ensuring the accuracy and credibility of information".

This is a quick read on one of society's biggest threats: Fake News. Fake News and Artificial Intelligence is a lethal combination. Fake News is majorly responsible for dangerously tilting the world's power dynamics. A microscopic minority is getting control over the rest.

Yes, dictatorship is fast sweeping the world. Our freedom is under threat.

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Prior to this, she worked for over a decade as a Feature Journalist in leading publications like The Indian Express and The Free Press Journal. Her emphasis has always been on viewing politics through the lens of social justice.

BOOK AUTHOR: Renu Nauriyal

In her spare time, she enjoys arm-chair travelling by watching YouTube vlogs and planning her next food outing.

Book Review by Brij Mohan, Dean Emeritus, LSU School of Social Work, Editor: Social Development Issues, Santa Barbara, CA 93105; **e**: brijmohan128@gmail.com (June 6, 2023)

Ashwatthama was an invincible warrior in Kurukshetra war[1]. Since he couldn't be defeated, Lord Krishna had an eponymous elephant killed. Distortion of reality is not a new scourge. Conscious misrepresentation, morbid lying, unabashed denial, and rejection of inconvenient truth have existed ever since *Homo Sapiens* found of *Neanderthals* conveniently inferior. This may have been the dark dawn of slavery. An inherent lust for power and neurosis of retaining it by hook and crook has given a bad name for politics. When the players of this soulless game weaponize their lies, *Fake News* is born. Falsification of unpalatable truth is ubiquitous in politics. The 45th President of the United States could not accept his loss of election; every fact that legitimized his defeat became *Fake News* and 'witch-hunt.' On January 6, 2022, Donald Trump exploded a bomb of *white lies* that nearly demolished the foundation of American democracy. Insurrection became freedom; treasonous leaders became heroes. Narendra Modi, India's Prime Minister, lately inaugurated the new Parliament Building on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's birthday, deifying a nefarious nationalist. Unmindful of the colonially designed Great Game, India's balkanization is blamed on Nehru and Gandhi[2].

Fact-checking of Fake News is an inconsequential, feckless filter in a populist, increasingly authoritarian, culture. In this context and *background*, I accepted the offer to review Renu Nariyal's book. I don't know the author. She is a journalist impassioned to educate the "learners." The future of democracies largely depends on how and what we instruct our children. In Florida politically insensitive books have been banned. RSS' *Swayamsevak* gangs of *the Hindutva* movement are rewriting India's history as envisioned by Savarkar, Godsey and Modi. The lethal power of misinformation, falsification, and vitiation is a malignant curse.

The book is organized as a Quick Read. *Contents* includes a list of XV categories with headings and sub-headings unfolding bullet-like points which speakers use in power-point personations in class, public meetings, and professional conferences. These are helpful notes prompting a presenter. Each 'slide' opens with an inspirational quote by an eminent authority from Mahatma Gandhi (p. 5), Moshe Dayan (6), Albert Einstein (6, 11), Abraham Lincoln (7) to Jean J. Rousseau (8,9), John Locke (10), and Garry Kasparov (28).

Each tablet—chapter? —emphasizes and decodes concepts, constructs, and their offshoots that signify *freedom, democracy, truth, and post-truth.* These abstractions and their perversions are manifested in events and phenomena that illustrate a) falsification of reality; ii) weaponizing lies, and iii) annihilation of critical thinking. Trumpian lies and their assault on democracy highlight the vile methods of his *patriots'* anti-woke villainy to "make America great again." QAnons emerged to legitimize Trumpism by vilifying American leaders: *Hillary Clinton helms Evil*; *governmental officials are "sex-trafficking pedophiles*," etc. If one had tuned to Rush Lumba's regular radio rants, nothing would surprise in the muddy waters of spiteful nonsense which demonized Muslims, blacks, Mexicans, feminists, LGBT groups, and the liberals.

In her concluding notes, the author illustrates Global Freedom Status on a map showing free, partially free, and unfree regions in the world (77). It's a vaguely general depiction of freedom and unfreedom in three camps: the Western Euro-American, Latin American- Australian as free; much of North Asia (Russia, China, and Middle East as "areas of darkness", and India, Pakistan and other some other regions are "partly free." This is not a valid face of the diverse of humanity. South Africa is not a free country, for example. Ravaged by apartheid's nasty legacy, it may be shown as a failed state. The same can be said about Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan and many other co. Ask the poor, ill-equipped blacks in the violence ridden communities of the U.S.: *How free are they?* Murders of

[1] "Krishna hatches a plan for Bhima to kill an elephant by the name Ashwatthama while claiming to Drona it was Drona's son who was dead. Ultimately, the gambit works (though the details of it vary depending on the version of the Mahabharata), and Dhrishtadyumna beheads the grieving sage." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashwatthama (6/4/2023)

[2] *See* Narendra Singh Sarila's book *The Shadows of the Great Game: The Untold Story of the India's Partition*. New York: Carrol and Graph, 2006.

George Floyds and Jordan Neelys[3] will haunt conscience of a nation founded on the noble creed of equality and justice. The destiny Palestinians in Gaza and marginalized people in China is eclipsed by terror. The primordial free society, as Rousseau surmised, was destroyed by men who invented property.

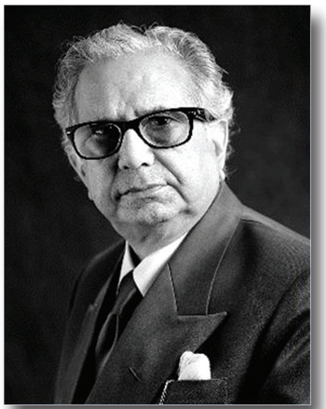
Poisoned views about freedom and oppression will distort reality. Phenomenologically, *subjective reality* is one's own internalized world. Fallacy of objective reality-- even though facts trump feelings—has demolished post-truth binaries of illusionary possibilities. In the age of AI, anger, and delusions, Trump is a metaphor for what he calls "American carnage." As Nietzsche would say, there is a difference between 'discovery' and 'invention.' Liars in these times have neither patience nor skills to *discover*, let alone *invent.* However, the Fake News industry perversely invents things that don't exist. Look at the scandalous state of Fox News. In a hostile world, the balance of power dictates short-cuts, propaganda tools, clichés of triumph, and above all the power of self-interest. In Afghanistan, the US invested nearly two trillion dollars which went back to the military-industrial establishment. Note how philosopher Amia Srinivasan observed:

> "...[w]hen I look to the U.S., I see a country that systematically enacts violence against its worst sponsored policies of discrimination, exploitation, and disentrancement, often while paying lip service to noble ideals of equality and freedom. On my view, the U.S. fails to achieve its liberal ideals not through mere inaction, but through an ongoing legacy of active, state-sponsored oppression" (Srinivasan quoted by Matar, 2022: 105).[4]

This reviewer did not find a single narrative in the entire 78-paged text which might qualify this *'book'* as a book. I made repeated attempts to locate flesh around the skeletal structure of its contents. When I noticed a 'Simplified Edition' label on the front cover, the reality unraveled itself: There was no beef.

This search for *rediscovery* continues. One can see how "image laundering cons" like —Noble Laureate Henery Kissinger and Supreme Cout Justice Clarence Thomas—employed lies and misinformation for their own ambitions—fueled by greed, undeserved ascendence, and pathetic impatience— at the expense of peace, truth, and justice. Shouldn't Kissinger be declared a war criminal[5]? Likewise, the art and ethics of fact-checking make a compelling case against Thomas's removal and impeachment. I doubt if this will ever occur in a corrupt and sick society. When Nauriyal quoted Locke, Lincoln, Gandhi, and Einstein, she ought to have thought of Hobbes, Marx, Foucault, and Piketty. Media that profits from chaos and *Fake News* would never let it happen.

About the Reviewer



BRIJ MOHAN: Dean Emeritus & Professor of Social Work, Louisiana State University, USA.

Brij Mohan Dean Emeritus & Professor of Social Work, Louisiana State University, USA, is an internationally renowned Scholar with expertise in social philosophy, social welfare, public policy and international social development.

He is the author of 24 books and over 400 articles, papers, and reviews. His most recent books include: *Development, Poverty of Culture and Social Policy* (Palgrave, 2011), *Climate, Economy and Justic* (Palgrave, 2015), *The Future of Social Work* (Sage, 2018) and *Social Policy on the Cusp* (Nova, 2020). Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith honored him with a Doctor of Letters (*honoris causa*) and the National Association of Professional Social Workers in India awarded him the *Life-Time Achievement Award*.

Currently, he is working on two new books, including his memoirs.

Book Review by Mira K. Desai, Professor, Communication Technology, SNDT Women's University, Juhu Campus, Mumbai, India. Cell: +91 22-26613550;
e: mkdesai@extensionedu.sndt.ac.in (May 22, 2023)

[3] A hungry and thirsty Micael Jackson impersonator was choaked to death on train by another rider, a former Marine. Elie Mystal comments: "Jordan Neely's murder in the New York City subway is a horrifying symptom of our collective social rot," ('Our Sick Society,' *The Nation*, May 29-June 5, 2023: 6-7.

[4] Srinivasan, Amia, 'Political limits of compassion,' quoted by Anat Matar (2022) *The Poverty of Ethics*. New York: Verso.

[5] Henery Kissinger will be remembered as a mastermind behind genocides to mass murders. He sabotaged Paris Peace Talks and had Cambodia bombarded as an anti-communist crusader. Watergate and its infamous Plumbers, it may be argued, were precursors of January 6, 2022. Wearing the mask of a senior foreign policy expert, he misled President Johnson and won a Noble for stopping the Vietnam war. The harrowing tales of murderous regime change have left scars from Vietnam to Chile. He founded a lucrative firm that delivered influence for its rich clients, inclusive of notorious Union Carbide which was responsible for unspeakable mass killing of four thousand people (and 1.5 million injured in Bhopal, India). *See* Greg Grandin, 'Kissinger Still at Large at 100," *The Nation*, May 20-June 5, 2023: 16-19?

Twenty first century society has been challenged with misinformation, disinformation and 'fake' news. This book is a refreshing piece of work, lovingly put together, by a teacher for her students. But in the times and age that one lives, everyone is a student as far as fact check and fake 'news' are concerned. The book opens with an interesting remark about its potential readers, "my precious first-generation English learners like Sumit who attends college lectures from 7.30 to 11 a.m. and then does a 10-hour duty in a game- zone at a mall.."; as noted by the author. The last page profiles the author who has seen media from close quarters as a journalist and now as a media teacher. The volume corresponds with her experience and insights. Published by KDP, Seattle, Washington, USA in March 2023 as 'Quick Read' it is actually a quick journey into myrid concepts of post-truth realities impacting diverse spheres of human existence.

Designed into 15 chapters including Preface the work takes the reader through concepts, English meanings of words, history and geography of world events and snippets like "the distinction between Truth and Falsehood, Right and Wrong was never as blurred as it is now" giving the complex concept of post-truth in brief. There are stories, told using facts, making the reader travel across the world and helping one see historical context in Germany, present processes in United States and Russia and future implications on democracy and freedom. The quotations and length of sentences does not allow the reader to deviate because it is crisp and clear and written to keep attention in the current attention deficit economy.

Usually, academic concepts and books talking about academic concepts are written in a certain way. Here is a volume of 80 pages that talks about the most contemporary threat of the present times- fake news, a term widely debated by few scholars who think that if it is 'fake' than it cannot be 'news'. But it illustrates and explains the menace of disinformation and misinformation for readers who may not be students of media and communication. It addresses the territory of the concept, explains the nuances of the ideas of freedom and democracy in simple words taking case stories largely from West. That may make Asian reader believe that they are not being part of global narrative of 'fake news' which is actually a false notion.

Another challenge with any academic work at times is, lack of solution. Most academic texts provide expanded view to the reader about the problem, but at times they fail to provide answers to the questions. Here, the author has taken upon herself to introduce the readers with global attempts to fight the 'fake news'. She provides lists of tools, techniques, resource guides, and 'to do ideas' for anyone to recognise, understand, expose the 'fake news' using fact checking.

The only missing link that this book has is to elaborate few examples for 'local contexts' especially if it claims to have been written for Indian students. Another area that the book could do well is to guide readers to institutions and groups working in the area of fact checking. Google News Initiative is one such example. Though it does talk about MIL efforts and MIL landscape from Unesco. Interestingly enough after talking about verification tools and global attempts of fact checking, the volume brings to the fore few theories and explains them in simple words yet very briefly. It ends with visual of Global Freedom Index, taking the reader to identify and examine his/her local reality.

It is a must 'quick read' for anyone interested in life in and around social media. The book will help one not only recognise implication of 'fake news' that one has read/heard/watched but ignored casually but understand the consequences and costs of spontaneous forward that one may do on their social media walls. It helps the reader see connection between online processes and offline realities and responsibilities of digital/social media users of verifying and checking information. It empowers the reader with tools and resource material listed in bibliography.

About the Reviewer

MIRA K DESAI: Professor, Communication Tech., SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, India.

Mira has 30+ years of experience in social science research, content creation, audience reception research, higher education teaching, curriculum planning, assessment and evaluations.

She has professional experience in mainstream print (newspaper), television (researcher, scriptwriter and anchor), Internet (content provider), alternate media (newsletter editor and documentary filmmaker) environments besides working for *Mahila Samakhya* Gujarat for rural women's education for empowerment programme for four and half years. She entered the academia in 1997 with prior seven and half years research and communication experience.

She is at SNDT Women's University since 1997 and has been part of varied facets of public institution imparting higher education in Mumbai India. She is connected from local to global networks of media and communication education and research.

She also has print media, television production (researcher, scriptwriter and anchor), Newsletter editor and documentary filmmaker experiences behind her. Her interests are in Academia, Research, Teacher-Trainer, Writer.....open to opportunities to LEARN and UNLEARN.

Book Review by Preethi Rao, Coordinator & Placement Officer, Nagindas Khandwala College, Bhavishya Bharat Campus, Malad West, Mumbai, India.
Cell: +91 9892823456; **e**: preethi@nkc.ac.in (June 6, 2023)

We live in challenging times. There is an explosion of information and this is now being delivered into the palm of our hands by a mere flick of a finger. As the world is getting busier the number of vetted and trained journalists are getting fewer. What goes viral and unverified but shared without much thought on social media is often called news. Decisions based on misinformation or deliberate falsehood is dangerous. There is an urgent requirement to bring home this point and the book under review attempts sincerely to do just that.

The author Ms Renu Nauriyal has brought to her writing her experience as a journalist who has wielded the pen for publications like the Indian Express for over a decade. Her love for teaching and making it easy for her students is seen in the content of the book which holds within its page's events told in a student friendly manner.

"Fake News & Fact Checking", Simplified Edition is true to its title. It makes a quick read and presents nuggets of news that made headlines from across the world -news that manipulated people's minds and in certain cases changed the course of history. The author also recommends methods that help in verification of information received.

The narrative is rendered in a conversational style. The language is willfully kept simple for final year learners of journalism for whom English is not native or spoken at home. Word meanings are given which is useful not only to help in understanding the context but I am sure will go a long way in expanding the vocabulary of the reader. An interesting approach of the author which this reviewer finds refreshing is that at the start of every page there is a thought-provoking quote or an idea that kickstarts a range of ideas. The author appears to gently steer the reader towards the contents of the page through them. We are taken us on a journey of realization -of the emerging dangers to democracy in the form of uncontrolled use of social media complicated by the emergence of AI.

The reader is introduced to several forms of fake news and terminologies such as User generated Content, post truth and the role of Q Anons in the Insurrection post the loss of Trump in the presidential elections of America. Very contemporary in approach, the author delves into how troll farms sponsored by Russia sold a false narrative about the war with Ukraine. The author places before the readers fake news that led to Brexit and warns the readers of China's 50 Cent brigade. The anecdotes come with the headlines of the day that surely drive home the outage caused by such manipulation.

The suggestions to identify fake news and prevent its spread is neatly explained and readers will find these steps useful which is a great take away.

What could have been a brilliant book suffers from improper usage of tenses in the initial few pages with the present tense and past tense getting alternatively used while analysing events. Thus, in some sections the storytelling appears uneven and distracting. In text citation of news headlines and the map that explains the Global Freedom Status would surely enhance the usefulness of this handbook for learners of journalism. An unversed reader may have to do independent reading to understand the context and meaning of certain words such as post truth and events such as what led to the insurrection that was sponsored by the unruly supporters of Trump. Hitler and his propaganda methods find space between the covers.

Those who pick up this book to read will surely find that the pages are filled with information that informs, warns, and educates. A must read for those who are concerned about the truth of the world that we live in.

About the Reviewer

Preethi Rao has both corporate and academic experience. She started her career as a Public Relations Officer with a leading electronics firm. Currently she is the Coordinator of the Department of Multi Media and Mass Communication at Nagindas Khandwala College, Mumbai, India, and is its Placement Officer.

PREETHI RAO: Nagindas Khandwala College, Mumbai, India.

She has authored a book for media learners, ''20TH Century World and India through the Lens of Reporters and Photo Journalists-A Mass Media Perspective." ISBN: 978-93-5596-687-2

She received the AKS Education Award of the Outstanding Coordinator of the year 2022, and has received other awards at national conferences for her research presentations.

Acknowledgement of

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JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH
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December 2022 – July 2023

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Note

This issue of the JHSSR has been reviewed by experts in Business, Finance, Economics, Literature, Management, Music, Psychology, Religion, Sociology, Social Studies, and Urban Studies.

These experts provided candid and critical comments, which helped our editorial team pinpoint the specific comments and improved the papers' quality. The JHSSR editorial board is very grateful for the invaluable contributions from all reviewers listed above *(in alphabetical order by first name)*.

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JHSSR

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JHSSR is the official journal supported by academics from various educational institutions from **35 countries across the globe**. This remarkable statistic clearly shows that this journal is truly an international journal with diverse authorship as well as editorship. It is published by B.P. Publishing which is backed by various universities across the world.

JHSSR aims to promote **interdisciplinary studies** in humanities and social science and become a recognised leading journal in the world. Our objective is to unite researchers undertaking comparative projects. The journal is concerned with showcasing new and diverse international and innovative research that uses rigorous methodology that focuses on theory, policy, practice, critical analysis, and development analysis of issues that influence humanities and social sciences education.

JHSSR has as its core principles: a) **innovative research**; b) **engagement with theory**; and c) **diverse voices in terms of authorship**.

The journal publishes research papers in the fields of humanities and social science such as *anthropology, business studies, communication studies, corporate governance, cross-cultural studies, development studies, economics, education, ethics, history, industrial relations, information science, international relations, law, linguistics, library science, media studies, methodology, philosophy, political science, population Studies, psychology, public administration, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature, paralegal, performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies and so on.*

Our journal aims to provide a platform for researchers and technical experts to publish **original research, reviews, systematic literature reviews, opinion, conceptual framework, case studies** and **book-reviews** on all aspects of humanities and the social sciences research. It also seeks to broaden the realm of interdisciplinary fields of humanities and social sciences by publishing essays that investigate topics, texts, and controversies that have not typically been included in the canon of these areas.

We strive to maintain a high standard of scientific objectivity, and we ensure that all submitted articles undergo a rigorous peer-review process. Alongside a mission-driven Editor-in-chief, the globally diverse Editorial Board works with prominent scientific community to create a fast moving and rigorous editorial review process by delivering robust decisions in the shortest possible time using double blind peer review.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

(Manuscript Preparation & Submission Guide)

Revised: June 2023

Please read the guidelines below and follow the instructions carefully. **Manuscripts that do not adhere to the Journal's guidelines will not be put into the peer-review process until requirements are met.**

MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

A well-formatted manuscript follows all journal instruction. All elements of the manuscript are printed in English with 1-inch margins at top, bottom, and sides. Right margins are unjustified. Horizon journals accept manuscript submissions which uses any consistent text— Format-free Submission! This saves you time and ensures you can focus on your priority: the research.

However, citations/ references must be formatted by you as per APA format.

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- ✓ The submission represents an original work that has not been published elsewhere nor submitted to another journal in any language for publication;
- ✓ The submission cites current theoretical and empirically-based literature, including relevant articles published in the Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research;
- ✓ The submission is written in language that is engaging, lively, and direct, using active voice whenever possible;
- ✓ The submission includes a maximum of four tables and figures uploaded as separate files, if applicable;
- ✓ The submission adheres to word count and APA 7 stylistic and bibliographic requirements; and
- ✓ All identifying information has been removed from all documents and file names.

Checklist for Manuscript Submission

- Cover letter
- Declaration form
- Referral form
- Manuscript structure

(Title, Author details and affiliation, Abstract, Keywords, etc. using the **IMRAD** style). See below explanation.

Manuscript Types

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1. **Regular Article**

   Regular articles are full-length original empirical investigations, consisting of introduction, materials and methods, results and discussion, conclusions. Original work must provide references and an explanation on research findings that contain new and significant findings.

   Size: Generally, these are expected to be **around 6,000** words (excluding the abstract, references, tables and/or figures), a maximum of 80 references, and an abstract of 100–150 words.

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   These report critical evaluation of materials about current research that has already been published by organizing, integrating, and evaluating previously published materials. It summarizes the status of knowledge and outline future directions of research within the journal scope. Review articles should aim to provide systemic overviews, evaluations and interpretations of research in a given field. Re-analyses as meta-analysis and systemic reviews are encouraged. The manuscript title must start with "Review Article".

Size: These articles do not have an expected page limit or maximum number of references, should include appropriate figures and/or tables, and an abstract of 100–150 words. Ideally, a review article should be **around 3,000 words**.

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   They are timely, peer-reviewed and brief. These are suitable for the publication of significant technical advances and may be used to:

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   (b) Report/discuss on significant matters of policy and perspective related to the science of the journal, including 'personal' commentary;
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   The manuscript title must start with "*Brief Communication*".

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4. **Others**
   Book reviews, Brief reports, case studies, comments, concept papers, Letters to the Editor, and replies on previously published articles may be considered subject to the discretion of the journal editors.

   PLEASE NOTE: NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE FOR PAGE LENGTH.

Manuscript Format

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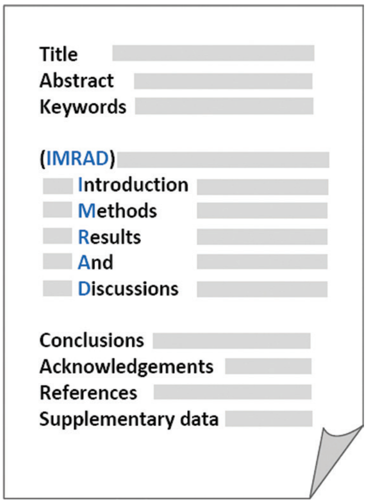

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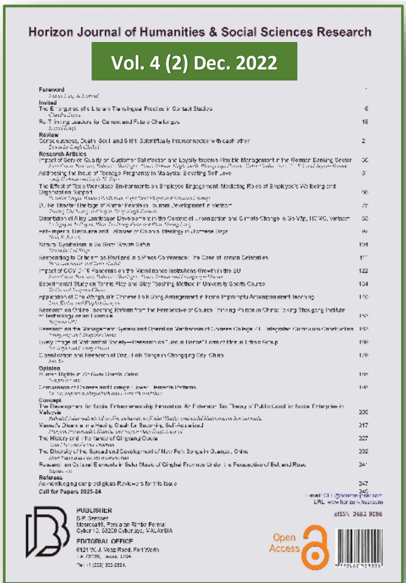

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