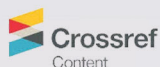
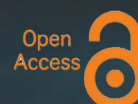


HORIZON JOURNALS

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**HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES
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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 contributions 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 yet relatively rapid **double-blind peer-review process**, which translates to benefits such as timeliness of publication, widespread dissemination, high visibility, and likelihood of high citations and broader impacts. JHSSR 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. We seek to present the cutting-edge innovations and/or latest insights and strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence for JHSSR. The journal publishes on a non-profitable basis and does not have any income from subscription or other sources. It 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.

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 continue to do their best for this journal to be included in the top abstracting and bibliographic databases around the world; 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.

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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.

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Code of Conduct

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 USD50 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.

Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research: **e-ISSN 2682-9096.**

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-preparation.php>



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 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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FOREWORD

Editor's Foreword and Introduction to Vol. 5 (2) Dec. 2023

I would like to welcome you to *Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research's* **concluding 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.

Welcome to the latest issue of the Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (JHSSR), Volume 5, Issue 2. This edition comprises a diverse collection of 16 articles, encapsulating a broad spectrum of topics and research methodologies.

The issue kicks off with a compelling Letter to the Editor, which champions the idea that principled protests and conscientious dissents are indispensable pillars of democracy. In an era marked by the rise of authoritarianism and religious nationalism, the author argues for the urgent need to challenge policies and laws that stifle progressive voices, emphasizing the role of intellectuals and citizens in upholding freedom of expression. This author has used Letter to the Editor as a veritable tool to VOICE against oppression. *Only a live fish swims against the current.*

Professor Nayan Kanwal, Chief Executive Editor, provides a thought-provoking editorial on the Impact of ChatGPT on the Transformation of Research. This piece delves into the revolutionary influence of ChatGPT, powered by OpenAI's GPT-3.5 architecture, in reshaping research practices across various disciplines. While acknowledging the transformative potential of ChatGPT, the editorial also highlights the ethical considerations, biases, and data privacy concerns associated with its adoption.

Further enriching this issue are two invited articles from our esteemed International Advisory Board members. Dr. Rosenna Bakari explores the effectiveness of a social media support page, Talking Trees, in engaging adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This research challenges conventional approaches by offering

a solution-oriented perspective, contributing to the journal's aim of showcasing innovative research that advances critical analysis.

Distinguished Professor Dr. Kirpal Singh's article delves into the intricate interplay between language and society, shedding light on the risks associated with weaponizing language. This discussion expands the scope to consider language as an equally potent force, emphasizing the need for responsible linguistic practices.

In addition to these thought-provoking pieces, the issue features nine research articles, two opinion pieces, and a concept article. Authors hailing from 12 different countries, including *Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Iran, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Singapore, Thailand, the USA, and Vietnam*, have contributed to this truly international journal.

This remarkable statistic of varied geographical background clearly shows that this journal is truly an international journal with diverse authorship as well as editorship.

Of particular note is a research article addressing the transformation of opium poppy cultivation to Arabica coffee production in Thailand. This study offers a balanced narrative, moving beyond a one-sided perspective to explore the economic rationality of farmers in transitioning to coffee cultivation, shedding light on the social implications of this shift.

Another significant article focuses on teacher turnover intention and the Two-factor Theory in the context of a private university in China. With the private educational sector expanding globally, this research contributes to understanding factors influencing teacher job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, offering insights into education management and organizational behaviour.

A study examining multidimensional foreign language anxiety among Chinese EFL tertiary students provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of language anxiety. The findings underscore the interrelatedness of skill-specific anxieties and suggest the need for differentiated instruction to sustain quality EFL instruction in China.

An analysis of rhetorical strategies in job application letters by Indigenous People and Cebuano applicants in Mindanao, Philippines, sheds light on unique communication styles and cultural nuances. This research contributes to the discourse on cross-cultural communication and offers practical implications for improving recruitment processes.

This article by Kirti Saxena's Research on COVID-19's Impact on Mental Health explores the impact of COVID-19 on the intolerance of uncertainty and cognitive flexibility among undergraduate dental and medical students. The findings provide valuable insights that universities and related agencies can leverage to implement interventions, nurturing the mental health of students preparing to become health professionals.

Investigating environmental sustainability education in preschool through STEM project-based learning, this article details action research conducted in a Chengdu, China preschool. Employing Lilian Katz's Project Approach, the study underscores the importance of child-centered, inquiry-driven, and process-oriented STEM modules. The research demonstrates how such modules engage children in investigating, deepening their understanding of trees, fostering experimentation and innovation, and enhancing self-learning abilities.

This research by Ameer Ali et al.'s Study on Hate Speech as a Criminal Act postulates that hate speech should be legally addressed as a criminal act. Focusing on a minority community in Pakistan, the study rigorously explores the human rights situation and the role of social media platforms as tools for propagating hate speech. Readers will find this study insightful in understanding how speech can be criminalized and its impact on minority communities.

Gursimran Kaur Butalia's paper delves into the unique concept of *langar*, an act of charity with special reference to *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. Drawing on Sikh philosophy, the author explores the continuation of *langar* over 500 years, emphasizing the selfless nature of giving without expectation of reward. This piece is of interest to readers in the areas of religion, history, culture, management, and social studies.

The final research paper in this issue addresses critical aspects of AI, including pain points, IT risk, compliance budgets, staffing, and best practices for risk management. The study delves into the major risks and exposures associated with AI in the current digital landscape, offering strategic perspectives on ensuring complete compliance in business. Readers and practitioners in information and cyber security will find this paper highly relevant.

Devinder Pal Singh's opinion piece explores the concept of truthful living as depicted in the hymns of the holy Sikh scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. This paper is a significant contribution to Humanities and Social Sciences research, particularly for those interested in Sikh philosophy or theological studies.

The second opinion piece by Trần Thị Vân Dung et al. focuses on the increasing trend of research publications among university students in Vietnam. The authors provide insights into the challenges, trends, and implications of student-driven research output in the Vietnamese higher education landscape. The article concludes with recommendations for fostering a culture of research publication, emphasizing its vital role in advancing knowledge dissemination and academic excellence in Vietnam.

We round off this edition with a concept paper conceptualizes the potential link between perceived job insecurity, workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behaviour, and innovative behaviours in educational enterprises after the impact of COVID-19 and the Double Reduction Policy in China.

In conclusion, this issue of JHSSR offers a wealth of knowledge and insights across various disciplines, reflecting the journal's commitment to fostering diverse and impactful research. We encourage you to explore these articles, engage in critical discussions, and share this valuable resource with your peers and students.

As we celebrate the journal's accomplishment of surpassing **1,209 submissions**, with only 223 accepted and published, we acknowledge the rigorous standards maintained in the review process. This high acceptance rate reflects our commitment to ensuring the publication of high-quality research that aligns with the journal's scope and contributes significantly to the academic community.

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 **first 2024 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.

JHSSR also invites call for proposals for 2024-25 Special Issues. Our journal aims to provide a platform for researchers and technical experts to publish original papers, reviews and communications on all aspects of humanities and social sciences research. We strive to maintain a high standard of scientific objectivity, and we ensure that all submitted articles undergo a stringent yet relatively rapid double-blind peer-review process, which translates to benefits such as timeliness of publication, widespread dissemination, high visibility, and likelihood of high citations and broader impacts. 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 reviews. JHSSR follows code of conduct stipulated by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Proposals can be submitted directly via email to cee.horizon@gmail.com

Let me conclude by saying that with the publication of this issue, we are now 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 with emphasis on A.I. If you are observing other scholarly publishing trends, please do share your thoughts with the [Chief Executive Editor](#)!

Thank you for your continued support. We hope you find these articles thought-provoking and valuable in your academic pursuits, and look forward to further enriching the scholarly discourse in future issues.

Chief Executive Editor

Nayan Deep S. KANWAL, [FRSA](#), [ABIM](#), [AMIS](#), [Ph.D.](#)

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Subjectivity and TruthBrij Mohan^{1*}

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**ABSTRACT**

Principled protests and conscientious dissents are magnificent pillars of democracy. The rise of authoritarianism and religious nationalism poses serious threats to civil society—a sociocultural abstraction that warrants secular norms and practices. Policies and laws that muffle this progressive process must be challenged by intellectuals and citizens who value freedom of expression. This author has used Letter to the Editor as a veritable tool to VOICE against oppression. Only a live fish swims against the current.

Keywords: Academic Corruption; Anti-Platonism; Balkanization; Dissent; Independence; Progress; Social Practice; and Workplace Toxicity

Marlon Brando refused to accept his Best Actor award at the 1973 ceremony². His protest is an iconic piece of history. Jean Paul Sartre declined the Nobel prize—which many a writer would kill for—in October 1964. He said he did not want to be “institutionalized.”³

I earned a Ph.D. degree in 1964 at Lucknow University. It was perhaps one of the first doctorates in Social Work. Ever since I gained command over my *consciousness*, Philosophy in action had begun to inspire me. *Social Work* appeared to be a gateway to enter the road for liberation. It’s almost three-quarters of a century that I have been in search of fragments of existential truth. This journey has been lonely, often painful. A profession that I

have served all my life has nearly sidelined me as a ‘Social Work Philosopher.’ Implied euphemism: I am no longer a Social Worker. Thanks to my students: I am touched for being known as ‘Sartre of Social Work.’ I would rather be known as myself, no ingratitude to Jean Paul Sartre—my ego ideal. Vonnie Hawkins, Director of *Social Work Institute*, branded me as Philosopher of Action, while awarding me The Lifetime Achievement Award (NASW, LA.).

The Others who neither understand my philosophy, let alone Sartre’s, continue to misrepresent the reality they don’t understand. I had to take early retirement because the State’s Licensing Board would not *License* me to teach Social Work even after 34 yrs. of my service at the Louisiana State University. I continue to believe that *Social Practice*—not Social Work—is a proper perspective to dialogically confront the hegemonic power which breeds racism and bigotry. The AI Revolution has changed the world we live in. When computers can teach themselves to develop better skills than humans, who cares about

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²Marlon Brando’s Protest against Hollywood - Google Search

³<https://www.google.com/search?q=When+and+WHY+Sartre+refused+the+Nobel+prize>

a helping profession that is both dated and inane? The “social” has been eclipsed by nihilism and narcissism of “work”⁴.

Discourse is one of the core principles unifying the art of dialogical social intercourse. It’s life: A passage marked by ‘responsibility’ and ‘authenticity.’ Dissent is a valid tool to protest. I have used *Letter to the Editor* as a credible source of everyman’s consequential *Voice* that must be heard. ***Principled protests and conscientious dissents are safeguards of democracy.*** I found this method painfully constructive to *Voice* against certain nefarious practices in the academic world⁵.

As a retired, reclusive professor, I enjoy reading and writing that serve as tranquilizers to overcome workplace toxicity that looms over my subconsciousness. I forgive my Frankenstein, but I can’t forget the wickedness I suffered.

The world beyond academia is no less unkind. Lately, I read about my native country in *The New York Times*. I was happy and sad. I drafted Letter to the *New York Times* which could was not accepted. Likewise, the three Letters that I wrote last month to *NYT*, *The Harper’s*, and *The Nation* died unborn. I have a feeling that certain structural filters masquerade as ‘editorial review’ to exclude an inconvenient truth. The *Letter* that I wrote to *The New York Times*, is cited below:

Dear Editor:

Mujib Mashal and Hari Kumar have a riveting analysis of chasms that threaten India’s solidarity as a free nation presiding over the G20 summit (NYT September 8, 2023: A4). India’s ‘tryst with destiny’ was inherently marred by her balkanized fate masquerading as Independence. I have assayed before about the unfreedoms that we inherited from the rapacious colonial rule. The saddest aspect of this paradoxical tale is India’s mimicking of her archenemy, Pakistan. Religious nationalism has been weaponized by the political party in power. The dynastic hegemony of Congress brought its own ruin from which RSS--and BJP--have monstrously benefited. The fact is: as a *State* India is stronger; as a *Society*, however, it’s getting weaker every time a communal frenzy bedevils Nuh. The rising skyline of Gurugram is a false indicator of New Delhi’s dubious show of power. If a Hindu Pakistan is what Mr. Narendra Modi and his government want, a

darker, regressive, authoritarian future is not that far. Hey, *Bharat*, wake up!

Respectfully,

Brij Mohan

Objectivity in science is the hallmark of solid research. There is no dearth of spurious and shoddy investigations. In humanities and social sciences subjectivity can neither be ignored nor ‘structured.’ Sartrean existentialism was mainly muffled by European post-modernists (and structuralists) who intellectually owed so much to Sartre. Uncompromising, he doubled down on responsibility and public engagement. Subconsciously, I emulate him with profound gratitude and respect. A student always stands on his *gurus’* shoulders, inclusive of Platonic ones.

The *Letter* in reference raises many concerns about the implications of extremism in politics. The seductive indicators of commercial success may not be true reflectors of social progress. Theocratic dominance does not secure civility essential to peaceful coexistence. By the time this essay appears, India may have been branded *Bharat*. This ‘silver bullet’ may retain the ruling party in the saddle at the expense of India’s diverse culture and marginalized people. Historical revisionism is not new. India was ‘balkanized’ by a rapacious colonial British rule⁶. The echoes of “Partition” still reverberate in Punjab on both sides of the border. A *Hindu Pakistan*? Oh, no! Religion is the Holy Grail of theocracy and the Third Rail of political discourse.

India’s current strides strengthen the *State* in the world, especially in the Global South. As a *Society*, however, her regression and repression are tragic. Civically secular existence is a constructive pathway to deconstruct a world riven by communal violence and terror.

When Sartre was protesting the Vietnam War, speaking, writing, and distributing pamphlets in the streets of Paris, many opponents appealed to the government for his arrest. General de Gaulle responded: “You can’t arrest a Voltaire.”

There are no Voltaires. Falsification of truth is the price for raving populism. I have taught Social Policy, Human Diversity, Oppression and Human Behavior during my academic career which spans over five decades. Issues that warrant social action involve varied strategic

⁴Cf. Mohan, Brij. 2018. *The Future of Social Work: Seven Pillars of Practice*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

⁵See Mohan, Brij. 2018. ‘George Will on target about academia,’ *The Advocate* (Opinion), September 18: 4B (theadvocate.com).

⁶Cf. Sarila, Narendra Singh. 2006. *The Shadows of the Great Game: The Untold Story of India’s Partition*. New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers.

interventions. A *Letter to the Editor* is a veritable instrument to refute, protest and participate in public discourse. My Letters have appeared in *Time*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Republic*, *The Morning Advocate* (now *The Advocate*), *Pioneer*, *The Hindustan Times*, and *The Journal of Social Work Education*⁷. A single step toward progress is much better than a thousand yards of success. "Success is not progress," famously wrote Sartre. Only a live fish can swim against the current.

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⁶https://www.academia.edu/8752705/Letter_to_the_Editor_JoSWE_CSWE (JoSWE, 50: 1-2, 2014); <https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2014.947167>

The Impact of ChatGPT on the Transformation of Research

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ABSTRACT

This editorial explores the profound impact of ChatGPT, powered by OpenAI's GPT-3.5 architecture, on the landscape of research across diverse fields (Smith & Johnson, 2021). ChatGPT has emerged as a transformative tool for researchers and scholars, offering unparalleled access to information, fostering collaboration, and enhancing communication skills (Brown & Davis, 2020). It accelerates literature reviews, aids in idea generation, and facilitates interdisciplinary research (Chen & Kim, 2019). However, the adoption of ChatGPT in research is not without its challenges (Johnson & White, 2018). Ethical considerations, biases in responses, and data privacy concerns require vigilant attention. Despite these limitations, ChatGPT represents a significant leap forward in human-machine collaboration, empowering researchers to explore new avenues and streamline various aspects of their work (OpenAI, 2023). The future of research lies in harnessing the capabilities of ChatGPT while remaining cognizant of its limitations and ensuring that its integration aligns with evolving research needs. Researchers and developers must collaborate to realize the full potential of this transformative technology in academia.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, ChatGPT, Data Bias, Ethical Considerations, Human-Machine Collaboration, Information Retrieval, Natural Language Processing, Research Transformation

Introduction

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and natural language processing have opened up new horizons in research and academia. Among the transformative technologies, ChatGPT, powered by OpenAI's GPT-3.5 architecture, has garnered significant attention for its potential to revolutionize the research landscape. This editorial explores the profound impact of ChatGPT on the transformation of research across various fields and underscores the opportunities and challenges it presents to researchers and scholars (Smith & Johnson, 2021).

Unprecedented Access to Information

One of the most immediate and noticeable effects of ChatGPT on research is its ability to provide unprecedented access to information. With its vast knowledge base and language proficiency, ChatGPT can swiftly retrieve relevant literature, summarize complex research papers, and even assist in generating citations. This accessibility to information allows researchers to streamline their literature reviews, saving time and effort that can be redirected toward more critical aspects of their work (Brown & Davis, 2020).

Enhanced Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

ChatGPT acts as a versatile collaborator, making interdisciplinary research more accessible and productive

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(Chen & Kim, 2019). It can facilitate communication between experts from diverse domains, helping bridge knowledge gaps and fostering innovation. Researchers can use ChatGPT as a tool for brainstorming, idea generation, and even as a co-author in the research process, thereby expanding the boundaries of collaboration in academia.

Improving Writing and Communication Skills

Researchers often find themselves grappling with the challenge of articulating complex ideas in a clear and concise manner. ChatGPT serves as an invaluable tool for honing writing and communication skills (Brown & Davis, 2020). By providing real-time feedback and suggestions, it can help researchers refine their manuscripts, grant proposals, and presentations, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of their work.

Accelerating Literature Review and Synthesis

Conducting literature reviews and synthesizing vast amounts of information is a time-consuming task for researchers. ChatGPT can expedite this process by summarizing research papers, identifying key findings, and highlighting knowledge gaps (Smith & Johnson, 2021). This acceleration enables researchers to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in their field and allocate more time to analysis and experimentation.

Exploring New Research Avenues

ChatGPT's ability to generate human-like text allows researchers to explore new research avenues and test hypotheses more efficiently (Chen & Kim, 2019). By simulating various scenarios and outcomes, researchers can use ChatGPT as a virtual research assistant to identify promising directions for their studies. This feature is particularly valuable in fields where experimentation is costly or time-consuming.

Ethical Considerations and Bias

While the potential of ChatGPT in research is undeniable, it is crucial to address ethical considerations and potential biases (Brown & Davis, 2020). ChatGPT can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in the training data, leading to biased recommendations or outputs (Johnson & White, 2018). Researchers must exercise caution when using

ChatGPT and be mindful of its limitations. It is essential to conduct thorough validation and verification of the information obtained through ChatGPT to ensure its accuracy and reliability.

Security and Privacy Concerns

The use of ChatGPT in research also raises security and privacy concerns (Johnson & White, 2018). Researchers must be vigilant about safeguarding sensitive data and research findings when using AI-powered chatbots. Encryption and secure communication channels are imperative to protect confidential information. Moreover, researchers should be aware of potential risks associated with data breaches and take necessary precautions.

Human-Machine Collaboration

ChatGPT is not a replacement for human researchers but rather a powerful tool for collaboration (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Researchers should view it as a complement to their work, enhancing efficiency and productivity. Human-machine collaboration offers a unique opportunity to leverage AI's strengths in information retrieval and analysis while harnessing human creativity, critical thinking, and ethical judgment.

Future Directions

As ChatGPT continues to evolve and improve, its impact on research is likely to grow exponentially (OpenAI, 2023). Future developments may include enhanced customization to cater to specific research domains, improved natural language understanding, and the integration of domain-specific knowledge bases. Researchers and developers must work collaboratively to ensure that AI technologies like ChatGPT are aligned with the evolving needs of the research community.

Conclusion

ChatGPT has ushered in a new era in research by significantly transforming the way scholars and researchers access information, collaborate, and communicate (Smith & Johnson, 2021). Its potential to streamline research processes, improve writing and communication skills, and accelerate knowledge synthesis cannot be overstated (Brown & Davis, 2020). However,

researchers must navigate ethical considerations, bias, security, and privacy concerns judiciously (Johnson & White, 2018). The future of research lies in embracing human-machine collaboration and harnessing the full potential of AI technologies like ChatGPT to drive innovation, address complex challenges, and expand the boundaries of human knowledge.

Limitations

1. **Data Biases:** ChatGPT's responses are based on the vast amount of data it has been trained on, which may contain biases present in the text. Researchers should critically evaluate the information retrieved and be aware of potential biases in the generated content (Smith & Johnson, 2021).
2. **Lack of Contextual Understanding:** While ChatGPT can generate coherent and contextually relevant text, it may struggle with nuanced or highly specialized topics. Researchers must exercise caution when relying on it for domain-specific inquiries (Chen & Kim, 2019).
3. **Data Privacy and Security:** Researchers must ensure that they do not inadvertently share sensitive or confidential data with ChatGPT, as it may not fully

understand or adhere to data privacy regulations (Johnson & White, 2018).

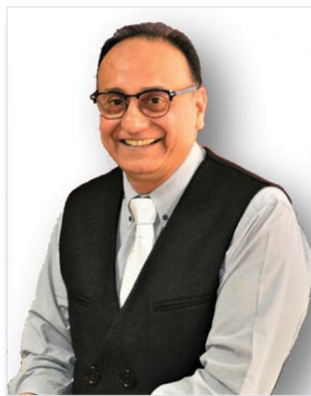
4. **Overreliance on Technology:** There is a risk of researchers becoming overly reliant on AI technologies like ChatGPT, potentially reducing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Researchers should strike a balance between using AI tools and developing their intellectual capabilities (Brown & Davis, 2020).

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Biographical Statement of Author

Nayan Deep S. Kanwal, born in 1958, earned his BAG and M.Sc. degrees from UPNG in 1982 and 1984, respectively. In 2005, he was awarded a French government scholarship to pursue his Ph.D. in France. His academic journey led him to University Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 1996, where he served as a Lecturer until 2018. During this time, he also held the role of Chief Executive Editor for several prestigious academic journals.



In 2018, he was invited to work as a visiting Professor at BINUS University in Indonesia. Currently, he is a consultant in research publications in the U.S., where

he is also actively involved in training and educating numerous students on a freelance basis. His primary research interests encompass environmental issues and English language studies.

Professor Kanwal holds esteemed memberships, including being a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA) in the United Kingdom, a Life Member of the British Institute of Management (BIM) in the United Kingdom, an Associate Member of the Marketing Institute of Singapore (AMIS), and an Associate Member of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology (AIAST).

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Exposure as Disclosure: Anonymity Versus Safe Space for Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

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ABSTRACT

Living in silence is a significant characteristic of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse that prevents them from seeking help. Lack of disclosure has been associated with long-term adverse effects. Yet, less than 50% of survivors ever disclose the abuse. This exploratory paper examines the willingness of adult survivors to participate in online discourse about childhood sexual abuse. The metrics of a social media support page, Talking Trees, were studied to determine adult survivors' willingness to seek help without anonymity. The "Talking Trees" Facebook page's objectives were to build community, remove isolation, and provide information to empower survivors to live openly. In addition to collecting engagement data on individual posts, page insights were collected. During a 24-month period, 889 "Talking Trees" posts came across Facebook members' pages 2,418,563 times. According to these descriptive statistics, the lack of anonymity in this support group did not deter engagement for 7,109 followers. Nearly 60% of the posts reached more than 1,000 people. The Facebook community engaged with Talking Trees' posts 146,126 times over the two years. The conclusion is that safely engaging adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse may override the need for anonymity.

Keywords: Adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Disclosure, Online help-seeking, Social media help-seeking, collective identity of adult survivors of childhood trauma

Introduction

There is no denying the epic number of 60 million adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) (Kloppen et al., 2016; Stoltenborgh et al., 2011; Sumner et al., 2016). Yet, survivors of CSA continue to conceal the abuse and live in isolation (Mansfield et al., 2017; Singh et al., 2014). Most survivors do not disclose their abuse before age 18, and nearly half of survivors never tell anyone (Hébert et al., 2009). Andalibi et al. (2018) researched the online disclosure of and responses to sexual abuse in the online community Reddit, and based on 2,139 identified and 234 anonymous accounts, they concluded that anonymity was essential in navigating online support. Investigations of help-seeking in other areas of mental health, such as suicide prevention, yielded similar conclusions about the

importance of anonymity (DeAndrea & Anthony, 2013; Notredame et al., 2018).

While no two survivors of CSA experience the exact same harm, there are patterns of victimization that influence the likelihood of disclosure. Numerous factors contribute to survivors' decisions to remain silent. 1) The age of onset affects memory. 2) The relationship to the violator impacts the likelihood of disclosure and being believed. 3) The level of physical contact provokes shame that elicits silence. 4) The genders of the violator and victim affect the willingness to identify as a survivor (Collin-Vézina et al., 2009; Jonzon & Lindblad, 2004; Marudan Sivagurunathana et al., 2019; Ogle et al., 2013). Research has identified psychological and physical disturbances among CSA survivors who live in silence, including PTSD

symptoms and autoimmune compromises (Ehring et al., 2014). Adult survivors who do not disclose during childhood typically have poorer health outcomes than those who do (Somer & Szwarcberg, 2001). Quality of life indicators are also compromised, including educational attainment (Hardner et al., 2018) and parenting success (Wright et al., 2012).

However, caution must prevail because in a study by Swingle et al. (2016), disclosure during childhood did not result in better outcomes for all survivors. Instead, the long-term benefits of disclosure were mitigated by the outcome of the disclosure. In cases where childhood disclosure led to the abuse stopping, long-term adverse effects were minimized. However, when the abuse continued after disclosure in childhood, these adults experienced more severe symptoms than adults who did not disclose in childhood. Unfortunately, of the adult survivors of CSA who disclosed as children, only 10% experienced an end to the abuse (Swingle et al., 2016). CSA survivors who disclose as adults may also experience more psychological distress than benefits (Farber et al., 2015). They share persistent fears of consequences and negative responses. Family rejection, strained personal relationships, and further shaming and blaming by the community have been documented (Andalibi et al., 2018; Farber et al., 2014; Fox, 2018; Tener & Murphy, 2015).

Jonzon and Lindblad (2004) reported that less than a third of survivors disclosed their abuse during childhood and that, on average, disclosure occurred 21 years after the abuse stopped. While disclosure takes up a significant portion of the literature on adult survivors of CSA, it has a notably limited impact on producing positive outcomes for survivors (Ahrens et al., 2012) and can put survivors at risk of emotional setbacks. Collin-Vézina et al., (2015) mapped several barriers to disclosure and categorized them as internal, relational, and societal. Internal barriers focused on self-blaming, relational barriers included family power dynamics and dysfunctional social networks, and societal barriers included inadequate services and cultural ignorance (Collin-Vézina et al., 2015). These barriers exist for both male and female survivors (Marudan Sivagurunathana et al., 2019; Romanoa et al., 2019). Given the barriers to disclosure, survivors may need support rather than anonymity (Lorenz et al., 2018; Parry & Simpson, 2016). Anonymity may be overvalued in help-seeking, and social support may be undervalued. This paper suggests that offering adult survivors of CSA a safe way to identify as survivors may be a gateway to disclosure and help-seeking (Parry & Simpson, 2016).

Talking Trees Platform

The “Talking Trees” Facebook group supported adults who wanted to address issues of CSA. This author created the page in 2010 as part of their nonprofit empowerment organization for adult survivors of CSA. Every post on Talking Trees’ page was written to and for adult survivors of CSA. All dialogue centered around survivors’ experiences. Support spaces outside of Talking Trees typically focused on adult sexual assault victims, child victims, or adult survivors of various adverse childhood experiences while scarcely addressing adult survivors of CSA. Sexual assault hotlines seemed untrained to address flashbacks and triggers of adult survivors of CSA who were not seeking protection or legal support.

The literature that influenced Talking Trees’ posts extended beyond CSA trauma and symptoms. Information disseminated on the page focused on wholistic healing, including human development, body image, sexuality, intersectionality, mindfulness, and well-being. A wholistic approach was used to support survivors, including the six elements of trauma-informed service identified by Bein (2011): safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural relevance. The page administrator wrote daily posts meant to strengthen survivors’ resilience. The posts validated emotional responses, offered information about healthy development, and encouraged risk-taking for healing. Validation posts assured survivors that their challenges and obstacles on the healing path were common and familiar. Information posts based on research focused on helping survivors understand the patterns of victimization and healing. Risk-taking posts drew attention to the areas of healing that survivors may have been less inclined to work on.

Since most survivors live in silence, they have few options for seeking help. The goal was to create a space to disseminate information that survivors could access without barriers. Most advocacy and support platforms require disclosure. By contrast, the Talking Trees platform was open access. Instead of disclosure, Talking Trees’ mission was to support survivors in “living openly,” a term and healing invitation for survivors of CSA coined by this author. Because all content was available to the public, including participants’ comments, any survivor who participated on the platform was considered to be living openly. No specific degree of openness was required or encouraged for participation. Survivors were neither encouraged nor expected to disclose details about their abuse or demonstrate that they were living openly in any way. While the page was closely monitored several times a day for inappropriate or insensitive comments,

no expectations about conduct were ever posted. Open access, the distinctive characteristic of the page, allowed survivors to find support.

The Talking Trees page invited survivors to engage in the healing journey alongside others. Living openly attempts to neutralize the effects of victimization through collective consciousness. Engagement with the page could be as passive as occasionally reading posts or as active as commenting daily. Participants were responsible for maintaining personal boundaries of privacy. They could take months or years to reveal their presence to others while still receiving support because no restrictions were placed on who could view posts or comments. Page followers found validation in their identity as survivors and used the exposure as disclosure. Passive disclosure by association offered a gateway to formal mental health care (Notredame et al., 2018).

Talking Trees offered a space to explore healing aspects without being required to identify a specific problem. Some participants hesitated to consider themselves survivors, uncertain if their childhood experience qualified as abuse. Where the literature frequently associates the word “trauma” with survivors, not all survivors identify their experience as traumatic (Anguelova, 2018). Talking Trees’ served survivors without needing them to identify with trauma. The platform was not associated with any clinical services or referrals. Survivors who wanted to support other survivors or were already seeking professional services were welcome. Others with no further access to service and survivors with multiple adverse experiences were also welcome to receive support.

While anyone could comment on posts, only the administrator could create posts. Irrelevant or insensitive comments were deleted to maintain safety and trust, including permanently banning authors of egregious comments. Members occasionally sent direct messages from the platform to the administrator, and those messages remained strictly confidential. Any responses from the administrator were offered as an informed peer and advocate. Scheduled and long-term help-seeking interactions were denied, and members were reminded that the platform did not serve any clinical purpose. The administrator had no control over members’ ability to message each other. However, if a member reported a user’s abuse of privilege through messaging, the reported participant was banned.

Descriptive data was exported from Facebook to assess the efficacy of Talking Trees in engaging survivors. Data

was drawn from posts between December 11, 2016, and December 12, 2018. Metrics included information about 889 original posts by the administrator. More than 85% of posts (759) were paragraphs of 25 – 250 words. The remaining posts included 13 announcements, 69 links, 24 images, and 24 videos as supplemental material to the daily posts.

Insights

Metrics provided by Facebook included “post reach” and “post engagement.” Post reach reported how many times a post came across a Facebook user’s page. Several factors contributed to posts’ reach, but the main factor was user engagement. The more users clicked “Like” or “Share,” or commented on a post, the more Facebook would show that post to other users. Page administrators also had the option to pay for Facebook to “boost” a post’s reach. Page metrics distinguished between the reach of boosted and unpaid posts. Facebook’s metrics also identified how often people gave negative feedback to posts. Negative feedback indicated that a Facebook member either reported a post as a scam, clicked to unlike the page, hid a single post, or hid all posts from the page.

Demographics

Facebook metrics reported that the 7,109 members resided in 45 countries, with 82.36% of members represented by only five countries. The United States represented 59.69% (4,244) of members. Four additional countries accounted for 22.67% of the members: the United Kingdom (530), Australia (408), India (351), and Canada (323). The remaining 17.67% were spread among an additional 40 countries. Consistent with the literature on CSA, 82% of members identified as female, and 15% identified as male. Forty-seven percent of members were over age 44. Fifty-two percent were between the ages of 18 and 44. Facebook allowed people to rate their preference for a page on a scale of 1 to 5. At the time of this writing, the page had been rated by 68 members with an average rating of 4.9.

Alignment

The content of the 100 most engaged posts was aggregated into a single file for study. All posts were ranked from the most engagement to the minor engagement. To substantiate that the Talking Trees content aligned with the literature on adult survivors of CSA, 109 recurring

words in the literature were identified. Each of the 109 words was searched for among the written posts using the Microsoft Word "Search in Document" tool. All forms of the word counted as the same word. Each word's appearance added to its frequency, even if it appeared in the same post more than once. All 109 identified words from the literature on adult survivors of CSA were found among the 100 top engaged posts.

Reach

Talking Trees posts came across Facebook members' feeds 2,418,563 times during the 24-months. Nearly 60% (519) of the posts reached more than 1,000 people; 134 posts reached more than 2000 people; 55 posts reached more than 3,000 people; and 37 posts reached 4,000 people. Seven posts reached 5,000-6,000 people; four posts reached 6,000-7,000 people; five posts reached 7,000-8,000 people. Thirteen posts, all boosted for \$5.00, reached over 8,000 people. The greatest reach for a \$5.00 boosted post was 9,390. It read as follows:

Too many survivors have lived their entire lives without anyone ever saying the kindest words a listener can offer, "I'm sorry." Instead, we are often peppered with curious questions about who, when and how. We are sometimes challenged in our perception of intent of the violator. We are advised on how to heal. Usually, none of these responses are helpful. So, for all the tears you never cried, I am sorry. For all the silence that you have endured, I am sorry. For the world that we live in that ignores your signs of pain and are intolerant of your occasional wince that sneaks out because you can no longer hold it, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that you were molested, assaulted, raped, coerced by a relative or stranger or date or authority figure. Whatever pain brought you to this page today, yesterday or seven years ago, I am sorry. And, I am so glad that you are here. (September 18, 2017)

The greatest reach for a post without being boosted was 7,526. It read as follows:

The experience of CSA leaves some survivors with a high tolerance for pain. Dysfunctional environments require endurance and thick skin. Child survivors sometimes have to commit to sticking things out in order to survive. This pattern of tolerance follows you into adulthood. Instead of using pain as a signal to evaluate and change direction, you may use pain as a signal to try harder. Try harder to please someone. Try harder to control your children. Try harder to be a good friend. Try harder to be successful at a job that you hate. You remain in survival mode that you picked up as a child. Your high tolerance for pain keeps you committed to dysfunctional experiences and relationships

that recycle pain from the past. Sometimes, the only way out of this cycle is time in isolation to learn what peace feels like. Sometimes you have to be willing to let go of everything in order to learn how to hold onto anything. (July 14, 2017)

The lowest reach for a post was 354 people. It read as follows:

Trust is internal, not external. When we keep our hearts open, we will hear the heart's whispers that tell us "do this." Fear closes the heart to avoid falling. Love, self-love, assures the heart that it has all it needs to survive. So, the only requirement to live our destiny is to go within. The work is simple; be the best that we can be today. If there is more for us to do, destiny will find us. (August 8, 2017)

Engagement

Members engaged 146,126 times with Talking Trees posts over the 24 months. To engage with a post, Facebook members had to click anywhere in the post for more information, select an emoji reaction, make a comment, or share the post. A member's response was counted as one engagement per post, no matter how many times an individual responded to the same post. The highest engagement on a single post was 3,821 clicks, comments, reactions, and shares. The least engagement on a written post was 32 clicks, comments, reactions, and shares. The average engagement for the 889 posts was 164 clicks, comments, reactions, and shares.

More than 100 engagements were reported for 548 of the 889 posts. Out of the 2,418,563 times a Talking Trees post came across a Facebook member's feed, 869 (less than half of one percent) engagements were negative feedback. The greatest negative feedback for a post was 12. Half of the posts received zero negative feedback, 440 of the 889 posts. Approximately 75% (667) of posts received one or no negative feedback.

Conclusions

Social media has revolutionized disclosures of sexual abuse in a way that challenges previous assumptions about the value of anonymity in help-seeking. With the top three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) each drawing over one billion monthly users, social media presents an unprecedented opportunity for help-seeking (Andalibi et al., 2018). The robust engagement of adult CSA survivors requires reconsidering the role of anonymity in disclosure and help-seeking.

Anonymity may be a safety net when there is a high potential for insensitivity (Leonard et al., 2015), but anonymity may also be a barrier to feeling accepted. Analysis of engagement offers a new understanding of survivors as support-seekers. Consistency of engagement and low attrition suggests that anonymity may be less important in help-seeking than previous research suggests. Moreover, disclosure does not have to be a telling (Moors & Webber, 2012). Survivors may be more likely to risk exposure than disclosure. Association with survivor activities may be the only disclosure some survivors are willing to experience. Future research should look at the benefits of exposure, or disclosure by association, compared to disclosing details of the abuse.

Researchers must consider how adult survivors of CSA choose to approach the healing journey, and the mental health community should offer options not bound by anonymity. Invitations to adult survivors of CSA to live openly have been marginal at best. The value of a collective identity is its potential to manifest collective change, although it does not negate individual needs.

The metrics for engagement on Talking Trees were limited, as posts shared outside the Talking Trees page could not be tracked. Each time a post was shared from the Talking Trees page, its metrics were available to the administrator. However, no tracking was available when someone outside the page saw and responded to the post because it was shared. Any subsequent metrics for the post were not associated with the Talking Trees page. Metrics were also unavailable for posts copied from the page and posted outside the page.

This descriptive inquiry was limited to reporting engagement and, therefore, cannot be used as evidence of any negative or positive outcome related to the engagement. No content of the participants' comments was considered. Moreover, the nature of open access meant that the exact number of participants who were survivors was unknown. However, given the content of the posts, the reasonable explanation for the consistent growth of the audience and engagement is that it reached its intended audience.

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Dangers of Weaponising Language**INVITED ARTICLE**

Open Access

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**ABSTRACT**

This article delves into the intricate interplay between language and society, shedding light on the risks associated with weaponizing language. While inspired by Harbhajan Singh's recent piece on the weaponization of race and religion, this discussion expands the scope to include language as an equally potent force. Language, despite being a remarkable blessing, can also become a curse when wielded recklessly or with partisan intent.

The Enduring Impact of Words

The author highlights the enduring impact of words on individuals, arguing that linguistic wounds often leave deep emotional scars (Singh, 2023). Unlike physical wounds, which tend to heal with time, the hurt inflicted by words lingers in memory, adding to a repository of negative experiences. The author recalls a time when certain derogatory terms, such as "bastard," were legally prohibited due to their implications about a person's legitimacy.

Evolution of Societal Norms

Over the years, societal norms have evolved, and pre-marital pregnancies, once stigmatized, are now more widely accepted as a prelude to marriage (Singh, 2023). This shift in perspective reflects the changing dynamics of human relationships, both in sexual conduct and other aspects of life.

The Role of Language in Conflicts

The article emphasizes that the trio of race, religion, and language requires meticulous handling and responsible discourse (Singh, 2023). Language, in particular, plays a significant role in conflicts, as its usage often labels and categorizes, necessitating careful monitoring. The term "weaponization," as used by Harbhajan Singh, serves as a critical reference, extending beyond race and religion. History is replete with examples of word-related disputes that have ignited quarrels, and even wars, due to the provocative use or misinterpretation of language.

Challenges in Pluralistic Societies

In pluralistic societies, where diverse values and beliefs coexist, these challenges are magnified. Disputes stemming from linguistic controversies are often protracted legal battles, leaving all parties dissatisfied. Politicians, in particular, face substantial risks when language is employed carelessly or with excessive seriousness, as this can trigger emotional reactions and strained relationships.

Responsibility in Language Usage

In conclusion, the article underscores the need for a sensitive and responsible approach to the use of language (Singh, 2023). It encourages thoughtful communication and the avoidance of casual or offensive language. In times of uncertainty, the author recommends turning to dictionaries as a guide for clear and respectful expression. The overarching message is clear: language is a powerful tool, and its impact, whether constructive or destructive, should not be underestimated.

Keywords: Language, weaponization, race, religion, society, linguistic conflicts

In an interesting article in the recent issue of *The Malaysian Review* (June 19-25), my friend Harbhajan Singh wrote tellingly of the risks and dangers associated with “weaponising” race and religion.

To this I should like to add language too.

From time immemorial language has both been a supreme blessing but also a damn curse in terms of what can result when words- even so-called simple words- are deliberately abused or when they become the subject of partisan utilisation.

Most of us have heard- or been told- that wound made by words are hard to heal. And they are because whereas a physical wound that hurts because someone slaps us or gives us a punch tends generally to go away (heal) after a while the hurt/s delivered by words tend to linger in memory- thus adding to the stored negatives which may already lie there just waiting for appropriate provocation.

When I was young in some countries it was against the law to call someone a “bastard” because doing so suggested/ implied that the person so-called was/is illegitimate.

These days many marry - or legalise their unions/ relationships- when they discover that there is a baby conceived. But it is also necessary to acknowledge that unlike in the past- even the recent past-when pregnancy before marriage was severely prohibited and scorned, these days this syndrome has become widespread and often serves as the prelude to marriage. By the same token because sexual activity is these days assumed to be a given among most adults in our communities- even rife among our university students-it is necessary to therefore allow for a kind(er) attitude and acceptance of “accidental” pregnancies- especially among students of tertiary institutions. This, however, does not suggest that pre-marital sex is condoned by all and many bear the serious consequences of bearing guilt and/or also the conceived child.

Societal norms and mores have always been subject to great upheavals even if the majority in any given context adamantly stuck to the “rules of engagement” so to speak. Whether in war or sexual conduct the understandings which underpin human relationships do tend to vary enormously leading, frequently, to a different basis of formal acceptance and/or rejection.

Thus, the attractive trinity of race, religion and language must not only be handled and treated with utmost care and responsibility but it also needs- nay, demands- that honest and scrupulous thinking through prior discussions before publication of any sort (written or verbal or even gestural). From time immemorial it is Language that has most markedly been the bane and basis of countless squabbles and quarrels and wars. This is simply because language labels and brands so its usage has to be carefully monitored.

Expanding the Notion of Weaponization

The reference to “weaponisation” by Harbhajan is absolutely crucial even if his immediate reference was to race and religion. The countless fights that history reveals pertaining to abuse and mis-use of words that connote - deliberately and provocatively or otherwise- is not only a gruesome witness to our human nature of frequently responding/reacting without thinking (hence why these days the need for so-called “due diligence” has become paramount) but also a timely reminder that words are dangerous. And this applies to ALL communications and All communities - much more so- obviously- in our plural societies where values are just one aspect of contentious debate among and between members of different races and religions and languages.

The presence of plurality always poses challenges; often these challenges cannot be resolved by fiat or even by simple legislation. Millions are spent by contending

parties in legal suits that drag sometimes for decades and even when final judgments are passed there is little or no satisfaction either to one party or both or all involved. Politicians expose themselves and their people to serious risks as well as imminent danger if and when people feel that words used have been taken too casually or even too seriously. And sometimes compromise in understanding is extremely difficult and this inevitably results in provoked emotional reactions.

The Role of Dictionaries

Thus the “weaponisation” of language- though not new by any means- must be abided by sensitively and through good disposition. When in doubt- as all my teachers used to advise-please resort to the dictionary.

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Dr. Kirpal is also the first non-American to be elected to the Board of Directors of the American Creativity Association (ACA) where he has served as the Vice-President and Chairman of ACA International since 2006. As the author of more than 150 articles and essays, Kirpal is an authority in several fields of literary endeavour. Currently, he is an esteemed Futurist invited to share his visions of the future with audiences worldwide.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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The Transformation from Opium Poppy to Arabica Coffee Bean growing in Northern Thailand – a triumph for Public Policy, Entrepreneurship or Market Forces?

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ABSTRACT

This article considers the transformation from opium poppy cash cropping in Northern Thailand to sustainable Arabica coffee bean farming. It reports on an empirical study of Akha ethnic farmers from the Chiang Rai area of the infamous Golden Triangle. The study's research questions asked of individual farmer's motivations to transition to Arabica and why they continue with Arabica production? Maybe that question is simply answered by enhanced income. Parts of Northern Thailand have excellent terroir for production of quality Arabica bean. However, factors have been involved that were neither commercial nor natural in origin. These were political factors. A God-King championed movement away from opium poppy cultivation. A philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy was developed and mobilised, giving a general development path for Thailand and one consistent with its Buddhist majority religion which could undergird planning and planting specifics. A political, military and judicial apparatus was operationalised to the same end, sometimes violently with forced resettlement of tribal minority peoples, and opium poppy cultivation was made illegal. In this mix it became reasonable to consider what part entrepreneurship has played in the rise of Northern Thai Arabica production. Ultimately the research pointed to straightforward market forces being the preponderant element in farmers' moves toward Arabica production and why they have stayed with Arabica production. However, farmers have not only considered current income but also longer-term sustainability of the business and, thereby, their ability to remain at their present location. Strong repudiation of the traditional Akha semi-nomadic lifestyle was an important finding of this study. Self-help, community action, has begun to find a role in the sustainability of a static lifestyle

Keywords: Akha, Arabica, coffee, community action, minority peoples, Northern Thailand, sufficiency economy, Thailand

Introduction

Both main types of coffee bean are grown in Thailand, Arabica and Robusta. Arabica growing is associated with high elevations in Northern Thailand, where the terrain is often mountainous, climate cool and crop values high. Robusta growing occurs in the less temperate South of Thailand. Robusta is a low value crop concentrated in the provinces of Chumphon, Ranong, Surat Thani, Phang

Na, Krabi and Nakhon Si Thammarat. Figure 1 below is, a map of the Thai provinces. This study considers Chiang Rai province, but other arabica producing provinces in the North of Thailand include Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Lamphun, Lampang, Phayao, Nan and Tak.

Historically the mountain areas of Northern Thailand were associated with opium poppy growing as the local cash crop. This meant slash and burn agricultural



Figure 1. Map of the Provinces of Thailand.

Source: d-maps.com (permitted use)

practice, swiddening. Unfortunately, swiddening is both environmentally harmful and of relatively low economic value against more sustainable agricultural practices in agroforestry (Rahman et al., 2017). Forest clearing is environmentally detrimental in many ways. A prime example is that tropical forests, through deforestation and forest degradation, are now a net carbon source

rather than carbon sink (Baccini et al., 2017). Soil erosion and landslides is another major issue. ("Soil Erosion and Its Effects", 2012). Nutrient depletion also occurs (e.g., Schuck et al., 2002).

Agriculture constantly debates how to persuade farmers away from slash and burn toward sustainable agricultural

practice, including in forest environments (e.g., Faminow & Klein, 2010). That may not only involve change in agricultural practice but even socio-cultural practices and structures, especially where the change implies moving away from semi-nomadic lives. The Akha in Thailand have achieved the last and this research showed them embedded with staying put, increased income the likely attraction and provider of the new stability. Farmer family migration has, mostly, been out of need to pursue increased family income (Kussumo et al., 2023).

Among early concerns of a solidifying Thai State was transitioning away from opium poppy growing. The Royal Project was born in 1969. King Rama IX offered effectively a mission statement at Chiang Mai University Faculty of Agriculture that year. It covered:

1. Humanitarianism in that people in remote areas should become self-supporting and prosperous.
2. That the problem of heroin would be tackled.
3. That the issue of slash and burn agriculture would be tackled.

In fact, much was achieved in practical terms speedily, particularly in agricultural transition training which began to be offered from 1970. The project gained pace through the 1970s and early 1980s. Between 1985 and 2015 opium poppy cultivation in Thailand fell by 97% (Gongsakdi, n.d.). Successes for development projects led the Royal Projects to spawn the Highland Research and Development Institute and a much geographically expanded programme with extended issues remit within Thailand. The Institute is publicly funded.

Looking specifically at transition to Arabica coffee bean production that was as an outcome of King Rama IX visiting Ban Nong Lom, Doi Ithanon in Chiang Mai Province in 1974. The King was shown coffee plants and given coffee beans. These plants showed that coffee plants could survive in this terroir (essentially climate, altitude and soil conditions) so cultivation might be possible. The Royal Project Foundation became involved, tested and started by distributing seed to ten Karen tribe villages on Doi Ithanon (Jaryasombat, 2017). How the plants were in the forest remains a mystery, but the project expanded from that, perhaps distribution of small plants becoming more usual.

Literature Review

Reviewing literature for this study, was to build understanding for the study's empirical work. It was

largely historical to understand the position highland farmers, and their minority groups, now find themselves in.

King Rama IX championed transformation to self-reliant, sustainable farming and away from slash and burn agricultural practice from the 1950s. By the 1970s he had come close to developing a full Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy. Basic propositions of the Philosophy were presented publicly at Kasetsart University in 1974. In 1994, the King presented The New Theory ("The New Theory") a very detailed development of the Sufficiency Economy, a road map to implementing the Sufficiency Economy on farm and in village, down to specific land use ratios. In the wake of the Asian financial crisis of 1997 King Rama IX spoke again to remind of the basic tenets of the Sufficiency Economy, which seemed to have been set aside in recent years. Even the Supreme Council of Theravada Buddhism had "raised concerns about the growing materialism of the working class" (Von Feigenblatt et al., 2021).

Basic tenets of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy are only threefold, Moderation, Reasonableness and Self-Immunity. Moderation simply involves avoiding excess, getting the balance right, maybe neither consuming nor producing too much ("Philosophy of Self Sufficiency Economy"). Reasonableness extols careful decision-making, with a full appreciation of outcomes. The implication is developing knowledge and applying it. Self-Immunity is often taken to mean resilience. At the time of the Asian financial crisis King Rama IX argued that "shocks" are inevitable, and you must take responsibly, preparing to cope with challenges. The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is infused with Theravada Buddhist concepts such as "moderation" and the "middle way" assert Von Feigenblatt et al., (2021). Song (2020) argues similarly, offering that a central concern of Buddhist Dharma is taking a middle path between the extremes on a spectrum.

Perhaps even more important is the Von Feigenblatt et al., (2021) contention that Theravada Buddhism is at the core of Thailand's national identity. Truthfully, this is along with the Monarchy. Both have high levels of authority in Thailand.

Jory (2017) holds that the Monarchy is built on Theravada Buddhist foundations. It has been argued that a cult of personality was built around King Rama IX (Connors, 2007). De Rooij (2015) spoke of Rama IX as a revered man and, holding considerable power and influence among the people.

The relevance here lies in the general proposition about Thai behaviour as submissive to superiors (Komin, 2007) and generally unassertive as a strong cultural value (e.g., Holmes & Tangtongtavy, 1997). Would the farmers simply do as they were told, uncritical of what they were being told to do, rather than being active and participative stakeholders? Here though it must be remembered (Tungittiakorn, 1995) that many Thai highlanders are not Buddhist which could have meant indifference to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy or hostility to it as a product of lowland Thai Buddhism.

In fact, it has been suggested that farmers' involvement in agricultural transition projects was not always whole-hearted, with them tactically offering impressions of involvement (Gilligly, 2008). Rossi (2012) quotes extensively from a personal communication from Mr A, in Santisuk district who spoke of farmers joining projects while funds were available but were otherwise at best indifferent but often resentful of experts from Bangkok telling them what to do. Both urban administrators and NGO workers could be regarded as unwelcome in the villages (Rossi, 2012).

It appears that there were failures in engaging local society, the system very much "top-down". Recently local action and capacity building has been more locally owned, local organisations, stakeholders, coming together around such issues as farmer training, including attracting newcomers to Arabica production. An example in Chiang Rai Province is the involvement of such organisations as Ethnic Community Coffee Institute, Life Centre Foundation and Doi Chang Agricultural Agency. Firdaus, et al., (2021) see stakeholder agency as critical as a driver in community capacity building.

Setting aside these negatives, increases in farm income with the move to Arabica are a simple objective indicator. Unfortunately, precise figures are hard to come upon, mountain farmers not the best for recording data or even having the equipment to record data. However, Meesaeng (n.d.) has reported for a Chiang Rai village, Pangkhon, covering average annual farming household incomes. In 2002 these were THB5,000 (US\$160.17), in 2012 THB167,046 (US\$5,351.12) and in 2020 THB280,000 (US\$8,967.47). These figures must be treated with caution in that it is not known what might have been earned from non-farming activity or what of farming income is attributable to Arabica. Nonetheless the figures are indicative. Indications from farmers on rising farm incomes with Arabica in this study were quite staggering. Figures for Vietnam reported by Azavedo (2021) are similarly remarkable.

That is important, but similarly pressure to conform to monarchical desires and to effective tenets of the Buddhist religion. While Rossi (2012) and Gilligly (2008) offer detail negatives, arguably the larger point lies in overall attitude of the farmers, whether they were passionate about coffee production and moving to it, passion often taken as a prime indicator of entrepreneurial character and entrepreneurship, with the elements of creativity and innovation following on. Many farmer attitudes and behaviours seem unaligned with notions of entrepreneurship as a story of passion, energy, drive and spirit (e.g., Cardon et al., 2005 and Bird, 1989). It could be that lethargic acceptance was often the most active emotion and resentment was also in the mix. Worth remembering is that there has been historic enmity between Highlands and Lowlands in Thailand and flash points have been water resources and agricultural practice. This point has been covered by Tungittiakorn (1995). Moving on, creativity has to be questioned if creativity derives from passion (e.g., Pringle, 2019).

A more balanced approach considers personal character traits of the individual but also other individual factors and considers externalities. Historically the concentration has been on personal character traits of the creative. For instance, Nakano and Wechsler (2018) suggest a number of possibilities, including tolerance toward different ideas, curiosity, autonomy, self-confidence, imagination, motivation and persistence. However, for example EstradaCruz et al., (2019) see the entrepreneur's social identity and cultural factors as particularly important.

In considering farmers in the two villages surveyed for this study the concentration was on individual characteristics of the farmers but inevitably externalities came into play, especially given that the survey locations are small closely-knit and somewhat isolated village communities, farmers advising and supporting each other in developing their businesses.

Amabile (1988) described creativity as the most important determining factor in innovation. Observation in this study would monitor for the Hasi and Rekonen (2018) range of characteristics of innovative people. One farmer was strong on continuous reflection and unattached exploration. Interestingly though he is very new to the agricultural industry.

Methodology

The research questions in this study were:

1. Why did some small farmers in the Chiang Rai area enter Arabica coffee production?
2. Why do those farmers continue in Arabica coffee production?

In explanation please note the generalised approach of the author informing this study. Following Dewey (Riga, 2020) the author is concerned with solving lived problems, albeit both lived now and in the recent, so contributory, past. If mobilising lived experience was a cornerstone focus then hermeneutic phenomenology (Ramsook, 2018) guided in all aspects of the qualitative data capture and analysis.

The research design for this study, outlining methods of data collection and analysis, is in table 1 below:

Table 1. Research Design

| Data Collection | Data Analysis |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Informal Discussion | Thematic Content Analysis |
| Formal semi-structured interviews | |
| Observation | |

Selection of participants was particularly guided by their having relevant life experience, albeit to varying degrees. They were instrumental in offering rich case study detail “bottom” up (Braun et al., 2018). For the formal interviews a translator was available to help record and relay that detail. Researcher intention was reporting descriptions as faithfully as possible to the raw data, including much direct quotation, letting the farmers speak for themselves as best practicable. No hypotheses were offered by the researcher. Plenty of time was offered for the farmers to speak their mind, perhaps even diverge from the question somewhat. It would be wrong, though, to overly concentrate on the formal interviews. Observation and informal discussion, about the villages, was aided by the researcher staying in the villages engaging with the local people, for instance through evening socialising in lengthy sessions over coffee. These informalities particularly aided understanding around sustainability and community action, lively topics of debate in the communities.

Participants were Arabica coffee farmers mostly from two small Arabica coffee villages in Chiang Rai Province, both villages Akha minority villages. Two participants were from other close by Chiang Rai Arabica-producing villages. All villages in the area are Akha minority villages and all participants were Akha people. There was a high degree of homogeneity in the sample through their specific ethnic minority heritage, but there were other

elements too, such as similar gender and age. However, to avoid an overly homogenous sample care was taken that participants were at different stages in their Arabica farming from one who had not yet had a commercial harvest to one who transitioned direct from heroin poppy to Arabica many years ago.

There was also a small amount of quantitative data captured from the farmers and subsequently analysed, albeit only descriptive statistics. This data was purely demographic and, importantly, only gathered from those who were formally interviewed. There were ten farmer participants, nine men and one woman, in the formal interviews. For the two-thirds of participants who gave age range was 33-64, mean age 49.67 and median age 48.5. These were not young people but were still moving between different cropping and even different agriculture types or having just entered agriculture. They sought best solutions, agriculturally and economically, for their home area. These were family people, not footloose young entrepreneurs, even the new recruits to agriculture.

Analysis

Formal Interview

The method now used to report the interactions with farmers in formal interview is to take the basic structure of the interviews and present in questionnaire format. It must be noted that this is purely a presentational device for this paper. The farmers were involved in semi-structured qualitative interviews with translator (Akhanese, Thai and English) present throughout. Farmers responses are presented, including in direct speech report, and analysed for the reader. Pertinent background information is also offered to aid understanding. In some cases, questions actually asked have been combined for brevity.

Questioning throughout was open-ended with little exception, following the ethnographic approach and aimed to spur on wide thought and contribution from life experience to suggest themes that would be noted and elaborated through thematic content analysis.

The participant farmers are listed in table 2 below overleaf and short biography of each provided:

1) What did you farm before now?

There were three outliers here in those two farmers had not previously been involved in agriculture, having

Table 2. Farmer participants in formal qualitative interviews (Song Ksue & Mae Can Luang)

| Farmer | Gender | Age | Biography |
|--------|--------|-----|--|
| A | Male | 49 | His family converted land directly from opium poppy to Arabica. Now he has a strong sense of marketing and wishes to market outside of Thailand. Is very aware of alternative income streams to Arabica, for instance high-earning macadamia cropping |
| B | Male | - | Started in the area planting peach and cherry. He talked of bear survival before Arabica and is now talking about diversifying risk through tea growing as well. Tea is another high-value crop. |
| C | Male | 42 | Is new to farming. He left a well-paid city job and reckons to earn 20% of his previous income. In Arabica his interest is to pursue quality improvement for higher income. He is a leader in his village (Song Ksue) and in the coffee industry of the wider area. |
| D | Male | 33 | He is the second generation of the family farm. Unusually for the area his growing previously included rice. |
| E | Male | 48 | He is new to Arabica growing and has not had a commercial harvest yet. He is very focused on learning, especially learning from experienced Arabica farmers in the locality. |
| F | Male | 64 | Unusually for the area he has been involved in raising cattle for meat and has recently transitioned to Arabica growing. |
| G | Male | - | Was involved in peach and cherry growing but has transitioned to Arabica growing. Interestingly he tried Robusta coffee varietal growing but it was a failure because of the high altitude and attendant cold climate. Very concerned about the future of his family. |
| H | Male | - | Was involved in peach, cherry and corn growing but has transitioned to Arabica growing. He is now interested in co-operative action and involved in co-operative marketing of Arabica bean. Interested in strong improvement in his Arabica to enable marketing internationally. |
| I | Male | - | Was involved in peach and cherry growing but has transitioned to Arabica growing. He is interested in multi-cropping to extend the seasons in the year. |
| J | Female | 62 | A newcomer to farming. She has started with Arabica production very much in interaction with the local Government Agent. |

recently come to farming and one had been involved in raising cattle for meat. Otherwise, the farmers had been involved in fruit-growing (that was mostly a succession crop to heroin). Important here is that in recent years cherries had become essentially valueless so a push factor in transitioning to Arabica bean growing. One farmer mentioned cutting down peach and cherry to grow Arabica (farmer H), but residual cherry trees can represent good shading for growth of Arabica.

2) Why do you farm Arabica coffee bean?

There were two main themes in participants' answers, income-related and concerning the terroir (the complete natural environment in the producing area, including factors such as the soil, topography, and climate). Soil, altitude and climate make Northern Thailand a wonderful Arabica-growing environment: "Arabica is good for that area" (farmer A), "Altitude good. Soil good too – black" (farmer G), "Altitude, soil, Doi Chang as a successful model" (farmer H), "Altitude, and soil connected to price" (farmer I).

The last comment reaches to the core issue, that good terroir produces coffee beans saleable for a good price: "I saw other people planting and making good money" (farmer E), "To increase income and have a better life" (farmer B).

One farmer mentioned that cherries are now unsaleable and another mentioned poor fruiting from peach and cherry trees. These were both push factors as opposed to the pull factors mentioned so far.

There were also some outliers, one mentioning the taste notes and texture of Arabica, another saying "cows are hard work" (farmer F). Finally, came an outlier that the researcher regards as honest and important: "Government suggested so I bought 6000 plants" (farmer J).

3) Has farming Arabica coffee bean improved your income? (Combined with question)

4) Any idea of what % increase in your income?

Six of the ten participants reported increased income, substantially increased income. Two of the farmers reported income increased by 80%. Another reported a 60% increase but stressed that his life was much easier than before, previously survival eating and worrying about school fees for his children. Of those not reporting increased income one had only just entered farming from a well-paid city job and another had only recently transitioned to Arabica and had not had a commercially saleable crop. One participant said that her plants were "still not yielding" (farmer J). She was selling, but little

and of low quality as yet. Finally, one participant withheld comment. Worthy of note is that the very high figures are borne out by another research study covering transition to Arabica growing in Chiang Rai Province (Meesaeng, 2022).

5) Do you plant other crops?

All farmer participants plant other crops as well as Arabica. Examples were cherry, mango, lemongrass, limes, pineapple, banana, macadamia, avocado, and durian. It is difficult to comment as motives are often mixed. In some cases, the presence will be mainly for income, others mainly for shade. Cherry is highly likely to be a residual presence for shade. Macadamia is excellent for both shade and high income. One farmer also mentioned he pursues macadamia because it is a very good fit with a brand he is developing (farmer A), so a personal motive. Some plants mentioned simply do not contribute to shade, but nevertheless contribute to biodiversity as well as income.

6) Do you interplant some other crops with coffee? (Combined with question)

7) If you interplant, what are the other crops?

Six participant farmers reported that they interplant, four reporting that they do not interplant. Crops mentioned by those who do interplant were mango, pineapple, durian, banana, avocado and tea. As can be seen from the crops this was often not true inter-planting but variants such as row-end planting, yet biodiversity is still increased and there can be biological control functions against parasites and weeds (van Driesche et al., 2008).

8) Do you plant the coffee plants under shade?

Nine of the ten farmer participants reported growing under shade, the tenth having removed his cherry trees. Interestingly, two farmers reported growing in the shade of the mountain rather than the usual tree shading. One farmer reported having edge-planted bamboo to help the mountain in its shading task.

Advantages of shade growing are exemplified by Bote and Struik (2011), Muschler (2001) and Alemu (2015). In summary shaded growing protects against high soil temperatures and low relative humidity. There is improved photosynthesis and increased leaf area index. Shade grown plants produce larger and heavier fruits of better bean quality (Muschler, 2001). Muschler (2001) shows that while large beans (diameter > 6.7

mm) accounted for 43% of the coffee from unshaded Catimor varietal plants this increased to 72% under dense permanent shade. Also growing under shade may allow the farmer other sources of income. The farmers in this study, for example, reported macadamia and avocado.

The shaded coffee plantation is more biodiverse than non-shaded, contributing to biodiversity and sustainability of the local environment (Alemu, 2015). Shaded plantations shelter a range of birds and other wildlife, often predators of pests. Longer-term maintenance of coffee yields is aided as is the longevity of the coffee plants. The latter simply die back more slowly.

Overall shade planting has enabled higher weight yields of higher quality beans so higher income to the farmer than from direct sunlight planting. The farmers are doing well in keeping informed of and actioning latest agricultural practice to generate higher income. An additional benefit is for all in that, in emulating a natural forest environment, a biodiverse, sustainable, habitat rich in wildlife is created.

9) How do you sell your Arabica coffee beans?

Answers were varied, but a pattern seems to be emerging around collective farmer action involving 50% of the farmer participants. Types of groups varied but in essence these were mostly informal social enterprises. The alternative seemed to be the farmer extending his or her business along the supply chain. One participant roasts, sells online and at coffee events (farmer A). Another participant roasts and sells, mainly as beverages, in his own coffee shop (farmer C).

At its simplest maximum commercial benefit is skewed toward the consumer end of the value chain, so roasters and retailers (MacGregor et al., 2017).

10) Do you sell only green coffee beans or do you add value by for instance roasting and selling roasted beans/?

This refers to incrementally moving along the supply chain but often the problem is access to finance to add elements to the business ("RISK AND FINANCE", 2015 and Gyllensten, 2022). A farmer might start roasting and that could ultimately be farmer, roaster and coffee shop owner. One farmer in the study covers all three elements (farmer C).

Another covers roasting and selling personally, such as at coffee events. Yet another farmer roasts and sells at

events and online (farmer A). This farmer also sells non-coffee items, such as macadamia, thereby making further use of his roasting equipment. A final farmer sells green bean and roasted bean but also sells un-processed coffee cherries (farmer H). Six of the participant farmers supply only as green bean.

11) What are your plans for the future for the farm?

There were quite a few different answers, but one major theme showed, mentioned by three participant farmers, which was to improve quality. "Greater care so the beans sell – move to quality" (farmer J). "Growing coffee bean to a higher standard, because high quality means good price" (farmer C). "To raise bean quality to go international, to increase income" (farmer H).

The quality turn (Goodman, 2003) has many potential meanings in reference to alternative agro-food networks. Goodman (2003) offers a simple set of indicators of the turn to quality concerning movement away from mass production of heavily standardised product to a less "industrialised world" less concerned with the highly processed and uniform and more concerned for locality, localised availabilities and localised traditions embedded in small scale of operation, perhaps focused in hand crafting. Artisanal speciality coffee is an example.

The Speciality Coffee Association introduced cupping scores. These range from 0 to 100, and only coffees scoring 80 points or above receive the "specialty coffee" epithet. Commercial-grade coffee scores anywhere from 60 to 80. A number of variables are covered, for instance flavour, aroma, taste, after-taste, acidity, body and balance. These attributes determine the value of the bean, along with mainly country of origin. Price determination is complex (Traore et al., 2018). Farmers manipulate the variables to get a high price.

One farmer wished to process and roast his beans, then open a coffee shop (farmer D), so gain incremental earnings at more points along the supply chain. Another farmer wished to introduce multi-cropping to multiply his cropping seasons (farmer I), and so raise income. One farmer was thinking of selling through franchising, selling at upscale locations and exporting (farmer A). He was particularly interested in exporting to Singapore, where sales would be high value. He was looking to increase per customer spend.

The researcher was surprised that only one farmer said "grow more and learn from others" (farmer E). Learning from others had often been mentioned in informal

discussion in the village and could be seen through observation. Another farmer wished to diversify by adding tea-growing (farmer B) to be less dependent on only the Arabica as a high-earning crop.

There were two outliers. One farmer simply said "I don't think about the future" (farmer F). The other became emotional and was difficult to understand. He would do whatever it takes to support his children staying on the farm (farmer G). That said he realised that educated people could help to grow a farm and that they can come back because of family. He was very openly running through his insecurities.

Informal Discussion

The researcher was staying in one of the two research villages, Mae Can Luang. Informal discussion was mostly there, though also happened limitedly in Song Ksue by day. The Mae Can Luang discussion was over dinner and, more particularly over prolonged coffee-taking into the night. These late discussions were serious and focused on two issues, business development and sustainability. The atmosphere was socially amicable but also purposeful, advising each other and taking decisions either as a group or as ones and twos. Simple coffee tasting also had a role, meaning tasting the produce of different farmers. Spoken language was Thai and a translator was available to help the researcher understand where necessary, though many in the village spoke English and were happy to help. Topics might be such issues as water use and conservation. Group size was always around eight people, sometimes larger as people came and went. The group was male, the women retiring to another room (as is the Akha way), where their discussion was more sociable. Nonetheless on occasion a woman would join the men.

Observation

Observation took place in both Song Ksue and Mae Can Luang, perhaps more Song Ksue in the daylight hours. The purpose of observation was largely to see social dynamics, the interactions about the village, their nature and content, but not content detail. What was apparent was that villagers were living co-operatively not competitively. Villagers clearly got on well but there was relatively little informal or humorous interaction. Interaction seemed to be very much task-orientated, specifically coffee-related. Farmers were helping each other with information and advice and also in physical labour, the latter in maybe ones and twos. There will, no

doubt, be group action, including physical labour say at harvest time, but not when the researcher was about the villages.

Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic Content Analysis was now undertaken using data gathered through all of the techniques mentioned, that is formal semi-structured qualitative interviews, informal discussion and observation about the two villages, Song Ksue and Mae Can Luang. As an approach thematic analysis seeks to cut across data searching for patterns and themes (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The researcher regards thematic content analysis as a superior analytic tool in that it considers both latent and manifest content in data, in plain English digs deeper in locating the expression of their lived experience articulated by participants, is less superficial and is less captivated by simple regard for frequency. The researcher would argue that Thematic Analysis, in finding deeper truths, is particularly true to the phenomenological proposition of elevating participants' expression of their life experience. This was easily seen in the current study an example being that whereas participants elevated maximising income it transpired they had a rider to that in that no relocation was to be involved. In Thailand that is particularly interesting in that so many do internally migrate, for instance from Isaan to Bangkok, to maximise income. The researcher found Akha participants very unkeen on their children making movements that are completely normalised elsewhere.

The Discussion section below expands upon the study's findings through Thematic Content Analysis as a main basis of discussion. A thematic flow is developed.

Discussion

When farmer participants were interviewed there were straightforward questions such as around income and longer-term commitment to Arabica growing. Other questions, particularly on farming technique, were looking for agricultural understanding, actions and plans that would be enablers of longer-term sustainability. The researcher was not satisfied with simple yes/no type answers on commitment to the business and its sustainability.

Coincidentally these plans would sustain the local forest environment beyond individual farms. The implication here is that subsequently when the thematic content

analysis was undertaken a number of themes would arise directly out of the questions asked at interview, for instance around income and sustainability. However, throughout the farmers themselves were suggesting new themes or at least sub-themes. Farmers brought up the collapse of the fruit industry and a trading theme developed, covering not just Arabica but the crops that went before its post-heroin poppy

Undertaking Thematic Content Analysis of data gathered it came as no surprise that income is a main theme. However, an element that came out of interviewing is that there is conditionality to maximising income. The participants only maximise income within the context of being static at their current location, an important discovery relative to recently semi-nomadic tribespeople.

The locational theme feeds into a sustainability theme. If the farmers are committed to the area this is the opposite of semi-nomadic swidden farming of slash, burn, crop and move-on. There comes a commitment to longer term sustainability, its crops and agricultural techniques. To the extent that the Thai authorities, Governmental and Monarchical, have been concerned with agricultural sustainability and broader sustainability of rural life since the 1950s inevitably there is a political theme:

Income

Inevitably the very high-income increases reported in this and other studies (e.g., Meesaeng, n.d.) with the transition to Arabica growing capture the eye. However, some farmers were as eager to talk about the demise of the fruit, particularly cherry, industry that immediately preceded Arabica.

Location

If location of family home and of family members have become fixed that represents a substantial limiting factor on family income of the farming families. Note here that there was worry about children moving away even for short periods and contributing to family income from afar. Static location seems, at this juncture, to have become a cultural given, semi-nomadic living something of the past. All this said Akha rights in Thailand can still be limited, including that those children of stateless workers who were born in Thailand often remain stateless themselves, limiting work and travel options, and ability to buy land. Access to education and welfare benefits will also be limited (e.g., Chandran, 2020).

Trading Conditions

Whatever the farmer grows his/her income is the outcome of the traded value on the day of trade and that is changeable. Cherries have become effectively worthless. Arabica coffee prices are buoyant. The question arises of what of the future and what, thereby, of new planting? There may be several seasons of fallow before commercial crop yields are produced. Unproductive land is a drag on income. Farmers seem to pay ever more attention to the income yield from shade planting. Macadamia is trading well and can add very substantially to farm income. Similarly, avocado is lucrative shade planting. Some farmers simply want to diversify, not be over-dependent on Arabica. One participant in this study mentioned moving to some tea.

Sustainability

Sustainability has multiple reference points. It can mean sustainability of the Arabica-producing environment of a farm. It can mean sustainability of the local environment in a general sense. It can mean sustainability of the farmer's business as distinct from only sustainability of his farm. There are, of course, touch points between all of these.

Farmer's agricultural practice has been a major focus. Examples are numerous. For instance, does farm practice minimise soil depletion and maximise the ongoing nutrient status of the soil? (e.g., Cruz et al., 1999, Amponsah-Doku et al., 2022). The example of shade growing was indicated in the interview questions. Another simple example is water conservation. If the bean is wet processed huge amounts of water are used, which is wasteful but additionally untreated effluents create pollution of local watercourses. For the Bolaven Plateau of Laos ("Sustainable participatory water") it is mentioned that 23 million litres of effluents are involved per year. For Vietnam Nguyen and Sarker (2018) report decreasing coffee bean quality amid growing sustainability issues of soil erosion and insufficient water supply.

Ultimately the aim is to produce a high-quality crop for maximum sales price, but not just for today but also going forward. Perhaps what has gone under-reported is farmer attitude. Attitude toward good agricultural practice is only part of that and similarly farmer environmental commitment but what of the farmers' attitude toward excellence? Bermeo-Andrade et al., (2022) see that very much in terms of farmer attitude toward their integration

into the international supply chain of high value-added speciality coffees (Bermeo-Andrade et al., 2022).

In terms of the general local environment positive adoption of contemporary agricultural practices will cause the local environment to improve, displaying and through increased biodiversity. Essentially, the diverse forest environment of complementary flora and fauna is being recreated (Udawatta et al., 2019).

Separating the family business from the farm, sustainability of the business can be easily considered, especially its contribution to the overall family enterprise. Farmers and farming families often seemed adept at monitoring this. Typical thoughts are of moving along the coffee supply chain to roasting, coffee shop ownership, supplying other coffee shops, selling bean online, etc.

Political Environment

The Akha were the last migrant tribal people to arrive in Thailand, in their case from Yunnan in South-Western China, though often after time spent in Burma. The Akha arrived stateless, which had little meaning at that time. Thailand in the 1950s was an easy-going place and specifically a place where migratory peoples could deliberately choose "disconnectedness" (Heering, 2013) from the then loose Thai State. Remote, unreachable, mountain environments became their home, as at other points in their journey from South-Western China. Specifically, forests were their home and swidden agriculture their means to a living, with the latter focused in heroin poppy cultivation. The position of the hill-tribes was physically on Siamese soil but neither as subjects of the King nor treated as though actually present (Shu, 2013).

This position started to change toward greater interventionism. Solid policy development began in the early 1960s, but particularly from 1969. Concern for conditions among the hill-tribes was now an issue, but whether welfarist or politically inclined is the question in that the Communist Party of Thailand was gaining traction among the hill-tribes, the "Red Meo Rebellion" of 1967 a major focus (Yangcheepsutjarit, 2019). The Royal Project began in 1969.

Policy developed to the point that in 1976 the Thai Government introduced the aim to integrate hill tribes within the Thai nation, this in a land of deepest prejudice unaddressed (Baffie, 1989) and with an extreme love of bureaucracy. Heering (2013) judged intentions in

assimilation a failure, that there was no gain, socially or economically through assimilation policy. Clearly the Thai Government disagreed or conveniently publicised virtues not difficult truths still regularly encountered by Akha and other tribespeople. Buadeng (2006) outlines how Government saw the hill-tribe problem by 2002 as solved, the hill tribes well-integrated, given the problems defined as opium poppy production and susceptibility to the communist message. If there were further problems these were seen as social welfare, seemingly in the generalised sense resultant from poverty and marginalisation, hence placement with the Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare thenceforward.

The problem appears to be that was never true. There are still issues for instance for Akha, in integrating with a lowland-dominated Thai State, most clearly shown (for culturally is another matter) by bureaucratic difficulties, on-the-day difficulties of simply not having the documents that bureaucracy demands. For example, Akha parents often lack documents to prove their child was born in Thailand, so the child is left stateless. Many Akha remain stateless, their freedom of movement, their job prospects and ability to own land title curtailed (e.g., Chandran, 2020). It might even be suggested that many Akha, as other highland people, may have converted to Christianity as an act of protest against the Thai State (Salemink, 2009).

As late as 2022 it was argued that the stateless population living in Thailand, especially along the border of Thailand and Myanmar, are treated as invisible (Kitchanapaibul et al., 2022). The authors' writing was particularly concerned with access to healthcare but participant comments also covered access to education and jobs and a general feeling of worthlessness. Effectively they argued that without a Thai ID card they had no future. Relating to business these stateless people cannot buy land in Thailand or register a business.

The question becomes in a still relatively difficult environment how much individual Akha people are poisoned in their relationship with the State of Thailand, protest it, suffer it, comply or work flexibly to navigate it as best possible. McKinnon talks of highlanders finding new ways to fit with the hegemony of the nation-state, discovering navigability (Mc Kinnon, 2005). Akha seem to exhibit remarkable flexibility, if, likely, age-dependent. Wu (2022) speaks of a young Akha participant in her primary research who felt her Akhaness derived from blood and all else was situationally dependent. Tooker (2004) very much talks about conceptual space and lived reality, whereby compartmentalisation is perfectly

acceptable between everyday life on the one hand and an "ethnic" component for special occasions and some social situations. Kammerer (1989) argues that flexibility is critical to Akha group survival.

Conclusions

For understanding business development in the villages, the researcher's informal observation was highly important, for instance accentuating something that came over only very limitedly in formal interview, farmers relying on each other for advice.

Small talk, more formal talk with each other and the formal interviews converged at the point of income. It was by far the most important variable in the farmers' minds. However, at no point across any of those did a sense of grabbing come over, more sufficiency economy rather than naked capitalism or passionate entrepreneurship. Whether the sufficiency economy philosophy or Tharavada Buddhism was being bought into in some way is a moot point. Moderation seemed a key, yet these are overwhelmingly Christian villages. Maybe the point was something made clear earlier in this article, that all business efforts are bounded by and find their *raison d'être* in farmers and their families staying put at their current location. If this is entrepreneurialism, even in the grandest projects, for instance touristic enterprises, it is an entrepreneurialism aimed at staying still sustainably. Moving away is simply unthinkable, whatever bounty that might bring.

Future researchers should consider whether Western notions of entrepreneurialism, based on the individual, conceived in highly atomised societies, are simply inapplicable. The researcher felt that some of the developmental aspects of entrepreneurial activity were held as community wisdom, wisdom of the village, not considered as individual property of a particular "entrepreneur".

This research project was highly targeted, focused on two small villages at the heart of the Chiang Rai Arabica planting area. The results must not be generalised or considered transferable. Future researchers might consider other villages or village clusters in Chiang Rai Province, might research in other relevant provinces such as Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son and perhaps above all work with different tribal groups that might prove attitudinally different from Akha people or simply have different growing or other experiences, for instance with Thai bureaucracy.

An aspect that future research must consider as fixed is timing of data-gathering. The Arabica growing and harvesting year is much the same across all Northern Thai Arabica growing areas and there is also not much year-to-year variation. This study was designed to fit into a lull in the farmers' yearly cycle. Weather is characterised by rain storms and flooding. Those must be anticipated in planning.

The aim of this study was to confirm:

1. Why did some small farmers in the Chiang Rai area enter Arabica coffee production?
2. Why do those farmers continue in Arabica coffee production?

The answers this study found were that farmers entered Arabica coffee production to enhance income and that they continue in Arabica for its high income, but those positions have an eye to sustainability. That would normally be taken to simply mean sustainability of the business, but the participants in this research had a further view that would mean sustainability at their present location. They are not passionate, footloose entrepreneurs wishing to chase maximum returns. These conclusions equally applied to the absolute newcomers to farming. State bureaucracy was essentially irrelevant, though free plants, etc along the way were most acceptable. However, the driving force behind this lengthy transition away from opium poppy and to Arabica coffee production was market forces. Fruit prices had collapsed, especially cherry, and Arabica prices were buoyant. A newer element, which the farmers were clearly attracted to, is farming community self-help organisation.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Using Two-Factor Theory to Examine Teacher Turnover Intention – A Case of a Private University in Sichuan, China

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ABSTRACT

In China, teachers from private higher education institutions (HEIs) are showing an upward trend to leave the education sector. Teacher turnover has been a concern for educators and policymakers worldwide, and many countries are grappling with the loss of high-quality teachers. Based on the Two-Factor theory, this paper aims to examine teacher turnover intention using a quantitative research method with a small sample size of 62 lecturers. Results show that workload is positively related with teacher turnover intention while leadership support is negatively related with teacher turnover intention. Professional development is negatively related with teacher turnover intention, but the relationship is not very strong. The study contributes to enhancing teachers' career development and private higher education institution's development, which is in line with SDG4 which focuses on quality education.

Keywords: Teacher turnover intention, private higher education institutions (HEIs), SDG 4

1. Introduction

Teacher turnover refers to teachers leaving their existing educational setting (Nguyen et al. 2020) and has been the subject of ongoing research because of the consequences it has for students, educators, and policymakers. Significant research has shown how teacher turnover harms students' academic success, educational institutions' reputations, and the system's general viability (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Scholarly interest in teaching as a unique profession has expanded across a number of disciplines, including pedagogy, psychology, and management. Prior studies mostly focused on documenting and understanding the teaching and learning processes with a focus on students, but more recently, issues regarding teachers' development,

assessment, training, retention, and turnover have come to light. Teacher turnover has been extensively studied in these areas (Maryam et al., 2021; Räsänen et al., 2020; Rajendran et al., 2020; Adnot et al., 2017), with a large portion of these studies focusing on improving teachers' quality of life (Jiang & Zhang, 2017; Toulabi et al., 2013). Current studies on teacher turnover have spent a lot of efforts exploring predictors of teacher turnover and many empirical studies have been conducted, which provide a solid practical foundation for this field. Except for empirical studies, there are also theorists devoting to understanding teacher turnover by using theories or models (Nguyen et al., 2020). The exponential increase of teacher turnover studies facilitates the establishment of theoretical frameworks, paving the way for further theoretical research on teacher turnover.

In this paper, teacher turnover is examined using the Two-Factor theory. Relationships among factors contributing to teacher turnover are examined by utilizing Two-Factor theory, which is categorised as motivators and hygiene factors. Using a quantitative method, this paper analyses teacher turnover intention in private higher education institutions (HEIs) in China, thus trying to understand teacher turnover in a different light.

The main issue highlighted in this paper is that recent research indicates a growing trend among teachers in private HEIs who consider leaving the educational sector, posing a significant threat to the overall teaching quality and advancement of HEIs in China (Zhao & Zhou, 2022). In China, private higher education institutions (HEIs) comprise 25% of all HEIs, with instructors in private HEIs constituting 20% of the total higher education teaching workforce (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021). To address this challenge and retain qualified educators within private HEIs while alleviating the detrimental impacts of high teacher turnover rates, it is imperative to rigorously examine the factors contributing to teacher turnover, both from practical and theoretical standpoints. The term teacher is used popularly in China to refer to educators or lecturers in HEIs.

According to Toropova et al. (2021), job satisfaction is closely related to teachers' career decision, which indicates that lower job satisfaction indicates higher intention to leave the institution. In China's private HEIs, teachers expressed their dissatisfaction of their work, mainly from the lack of supportive leadership, mounting workload, and the absence of professional development opportunities (Xiaoli, 2022). Besides, as private HEIs are different from their public counterparts in nature, teachers from these institutions are not tenured and the stability of faculty is lower than public institution (Liu, 2020). Hence, research on the job satisfaction of teachers from private HEIs is imperative to understand teacher turnover.

High turnover rate among HEIs has attracted attention from scholars worldwide, as studies have revealed that teachers in HEIs are valuable assets for the society and the retention of teachers are beneficial not only to institutions themselves but also to the wider society (Tian & Lu, 2017). However, there is a dearth of studies on the turnover among HEIs teachers from China, especially from private HEIs (Dan et al., 2023). As private higher education in China has gained increasing popularity in recent years, turnover of teachers in these institutions should be given due attention. Besides, current studies of

teacher turnover mainly focus on a wide range of factors, which include individual, organisational, and social (Nguyen & Springer, 2021). While these studies show a comprehensive picture of teacher turnover, systematic research on factors contributing to teacher turnover is needed. Studies categorizing these factors are limited, therefore, analyzing teacher turnover and its related factors from a theoretical perspective helps understand this issue. Using the Two-Factor theory, this paper categorizes factors contributing to teacher turnover into two types, which are motivators and hygiene factors.

Hence, this paper sets out to study three objectives:

1. To determine the level of job satisfaction and turnover intention of teachers in China's private HEIs;
2. To examine the relationship between hygiene factors and teacher turnover intention in China's private HEIs;
3. To examine the relationship between motivators and teacher turnover intention in China's private HEIs.

2. Literature Review

This section presents a review of the theoretical framework pertaining to teacher turnover as examined in prior scholarly investigations. Furthermore, it expounds upon the Two-Factor Theory in the context of teacher turnover. Numerous scholarly inquiries into teacher turnover have scrutinized the factors affecting this phenomenon, with academics offering diverse perspectives on the exit behaviour of educators. Drawing from the Two-Factor Theory, this study categorises the factors impacting teacher turnover intention into hygienic factors and motivators.

2.1 Two-Factor Theory

The Two-Factor theory, formulated by Frederick Herzberg (1959) serves as a prevalent framework for elucidating workplace behaviour and decision-making patterns. Within this framework, two distinct categories of factors, motivators, and hygiene factors, operate independently. The former encompasses elements such as achievement, personal growth, and recognition, which are conducive to fostering job satisfaction. In contrast, the latter group pertains to factors that engender job dissatisfaction, including aspects like compensation, supervision, vacation policies, and the working environment (Herzberg, 1959). This theory has been extensively employed to investigate employee turnover

across diverse workplace settings, and its applications in management are manifold.

The application of the Two-Factor Theory to scrutinize teacher turnover within the educational domain is a notable endeavour. Within this context, HEIs are actively engaged in an exploration of the intricate factors that shape the decisions of professors to either remain in their roles or seek alternative employment. This quest aims to not only retain a cadre of high-calibre faculty members but also to ensure the sustained delivery of academic excellence. Research conducted in private HEIs in Malaysia has also revealed a strong association between certain pivotal factors, including workplace autonomy, job satisfaction, and remuneration, and the intentions of professors to consider departure (Subramaniam et al., 2015).

On the other hand, Rathakrishnan et al. (2016) reported that neither job security nor supervisor support wielded a substantial influence on lecturer turnover. In a parallel investigation centred on the elements impacting teacher satisfaction among exemplary educators in Malaysia, the significance of personal growth opportunities and effective supervisory relationships emerged as crucial determinants (Amzat et al., 2017). The outcomes of this investigation significantly diverge from those reported in Rathakrishnan's (2016) study, likely due to the varying geographical and institutional settings of the academic institutions under examination. Nevertheless, it is posited that the implementation of measures such as offering suitable incentives and granting increased autonomy to the teaching staff within Pakistan's higher education institutions can be instrumental in reducing the rate of teacher turnover (Khan et al., 2021).

In China's private HEIs, low salaries, limited professional development opportunities, and authoritarian leadership are found to predict teacher turnover (Zhang, 2021). As an essential part of HEIs, teachers play an important role not only in the institution but also in the wider society. College university students are the main force of the labour market, indicating the quality of education they received indirectly determine the development of different industries. In this sense, understanding teacher's turnover intention in HEIs from the perspective of Two-factor theory is significant in understanding this phenomenon.

2.2. Teacher Turnover Intention

As an issue that concerns academic institutions worldwide, teacher turnover has become the focal point

for researchers in different educational contexts, such as early childhood education, secondary education, tertiary education, and special education. Currently, perspectives for understanding teacher turnover involve teachers in rural and urban schools, teachers who teach special subjects such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and teachers in private and public educational institutions.

Due to its size and prominence as the world's most populated nation, China has the largest higher education system, with more than 3,000 colleges and universities on the mainland as of 2021. While more than 44.3 million students are enrolled in these schools, only 240 million Chinese citizens have graduated high school (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Private institutions make over 25% of China's broad array of HEIs, which is the greatest global portion. However, it's important to keep in mind that private HEIs in China are very different from those in Europe and North America. There are currently 140 universities around the country on the list of Double First-Class Universities, a scheme intended to increase the visibility of elite universities in China. Notably, all of these higher education institutions (HEIs) are part of the public sector (People's Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2022). With the aim of advancing the sustainable growth of private HEIs in the nation, policymakers and educational leaders must work together to address the marginalised status of private HEIs in China. Recent years have witnessed the findings of numerous surveys conducted by researchers, which consistently indicate a growing exodus of educators from China's private HEIs or a strong inclination among them to exit the teaching profession. This trend is estimated to persist in the years ahead (Zhao & Zhou, 2022).

The paper uses turnover intention, as a proxy to study does not look into instances of teacher turnover which is a common and strongly supported method in the scholarly literature. This is mainly because examining actual turnover requires access to private personnel files, and meta-analyses have repeatedly confirmed that turnover intention is a key indicator of actual turnover. (Griffeth RW et al., 2021, 2000).

2.3 Hygiene Factors and Teacher Turnover Intention

Hygiene factors, in the context of employee satisfaction and motivation, refer to the basic elements that must be present in the work environment to prevent dissatisfaction (Amzat et al., 2017). These factors are essential for maintaining a minimum level of job satisfaction, but

they alone do not lead to high levels of motivation or engagement. In the realm of teaching, hygiene factors play a crucial role in determining teacher turnover rates. Hygiene factors in the education sector include factors such as pay, company policies, administrative policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, interpersonal relations, and job security (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). When these factors are lacking or subpar, teachers may become dissatisfied and more likely to consider leaving their positions (Rathakrishnan et al., 2016).

In HEIs, when teachers feel supported by effective leadership, they are more likely to feel valued, motivated, and engaged in their roles (Ford et al., 2019). On the other hand, a lack of supportive leadership can lead to feelings of frustration and isolation, contributing to dissatisfaction and an increased likelihood of seeking employment elsewhere. Similarly, student discipline policies and practices play a significant role in shaping the classroom atmosphere. In schools with well-established and consistent discipline measures, teachers can focus on teaching, and disruptions are minimized. However, an environment with persistent discipline issues can lead to teacher burnout and a sense of helplessness. Workload is another crucial factor affecting teacher turnover. When educators are overwhelmed with an excessive workload and lack sufficient time and resources to meet the demands of their profession, they may experience heightened stress levels and reduced job satisfaction. This could lead to a higher propensity to leave their positions in search of more manageable teaching environments.

Current studies also indicate that institution resources, including teaching materials, technology, and facilities, are essential for providing a conducive learning environment. Inadequate resources can hinder effective teaching practices and limit the ability of teachers to deliver high-quality instruction. When educators perceive their institutions as lacking the necessary resources to support their work, they may feel disheartened and more inclined to explore opportunities in other schools or educational settings. In this research, hygiene factors include four aspects, which are leadership support, student discipline, workload, and institution resources.

2.4 Motivators and Teacher Turnover Intention

According to the literature (Ghazi et al., 2013), motivators are crucial in understanding what drives teachers to either stay committed to their profession or seek opportunities elsewhere. Motivators, in the context of employee satisfaction, refer to factors that go beyond the basic job

requirements and are known to significantly increase job satisfaction and motivation. In the teaching profession, motivators include opportunities for professional growth and development, recognition for their efforts, work itself, a sense of achievement, and the ability to make a positive impact on students' lives. When teachers experience a strong presence of motivators in their work environment, they are more likely to feel fulfilled, engaged, and committed to their role as educators, leading to lower turnover rates. Conversely, if motivators are lacking, and teachers feel stagnant or unappreciated, they may become dissatisfied and more inclined to explore other career options or seek employment in educational settings that offer better opportunities for growth and personal fulfilment.

Motivators in this study include work itself and professional development. The nature of the work teachers engage in daily, including classroom instruction, lesson planning, and student interactions, significantly influences their job satisfaction and commitment to the profession. When teachers find their work meaningful, challenging, and aligned with their passion for education, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates. On the other hand, a lack of fulfilment in the daily tasks and feeling stagnant in their roles can lead to disengagement and increased turnover.

According to a study which focussed on new teachers (Perrone et al., 2019), professional development also plays a vital role in teacher turnover. Providing opportunities for continuous growth and learning allows teachers to enhance their skills, stay updated with modern educational practices, and feel supported in their career advancement. Institutions that prioritise and invest in comprehensive professional development programs tend to have more motivated and dedicated teachers who see the institution as invested in their success. In contrast, limited or insufficient professional development opportunities may leave teachers feeling undervalued and unprepared for the evolving demands of their profession, potentially leading them to seek other opportunities elsewhere.

3. Research Methodology

Quantitative research design is utilised to examine the level of job satisfaction, turnover intention and demographic factors which influence teacher turnover intention. To answer research objective 1, descriptive statistics is used, while for research objectives 2 and 3, correlation analysis is used in this study. To determine

the presence of a statistically significant relationship, correlational research is frequently used by researchers. This approach utilises a correlation coefficient to explain both the magnitude and direction of the connection between variables. In this study, a two-tailed Pearson's r test was employed to calculate Pearson's correlation coefficient and assess the linear association between the variables.

Being a pilot study, a total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in a private university in Sichuan, Province, China. However only 62 were usable to produce valid results. The use of a small sample size was necessary because this study serves as a preliminary pilot test for a larger research project which is in progress now. Purposive sampling was used in the participant selection process to ensure participation from all faculties in the university. Fourteen of the responders were men, and forty-eight were women. This demographic represents the real scenario of teachers in HEIs in China.

3.2 Instruments

A Likert scale questionnaire with five response points was utilized in this study, drawing upon the work of Toropova et al. (2021) and Harden et al. (2018). There are four separate sections in the questionnaire. Demographic questions, which includes age, gender, marital status and teaching experience, are covered in the first segment. The second section looks at questions about conditions connected to the work environment, covering leadership support, student discipline, workload, institutional resources, the nature of the work itself and chances for professional development. The third section consists of four questions designed to gauge job happiness, while the fourth section consists of inquiries into the likelihood of teacher turnover. Table 1 provides specifics about the instrument's dependability.

Table 1. Reliability test results (N=62)

| Sub-constructs | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Leadership Support | 3 | 0.904 |
| Student Discipline | 5 | 0.936 |
| Workload | 5 | 0.955 |
| Institution resources | 5 | 0.951 |
| Work Itself | 4 | 0.942 |
| Professional Development | 5 | 0.944 |
| Job Satisfaction | 4 | 0.912 |
| Teacher Turnover Intention | 5 | 0.945 |

Source: Authors

3.3 Data Collection

Data was gathered in this study using the social media platform WeChat. WeChat was used by the researcher to administer the questionnaire. A brief introduction detailing the goals of the study was given as an introduction in the questionnaire. Additionally, respondents were assured of the 10-minute time required to answer the questionnaire. Participants' anonymity was protected throughout the study in accordance with ethical guidelines.

3.4 Data Analysis

SPSS version 26 was used for the analysis of the survey's data. To evaluate the mean values of job satisfaction and teacher turnover intention, descriptive statistics were used. Following that, a Pearson correlation analysis was done to look at the relationships between turnover intention, motivators, and hygiene aspects.

4. Results

In this section, the findings of the study and data analysis are explained.

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

As shown in Table 2, the demographic profile of the study participants includes seven different elements. Notably, there is a sizable majority of female teachers in the sample (77%), which is over three times more than the percentage of male teachers. Regarding the distribution of respondents by age, those 51 years and older make up the largest group (37%) of respondents. Additionally, 61% of the respondents said they were parents, and half of the sample and have one child only. Lecturers and assistant lecturers together account for half of the respondents. In terms of prior teaching experience, the majority (34%) has 4–8 years.

4.2 Teacher Job Satisfaction

The first research objective is to determine the level of job satisfaction and teacher turnover intention. Tables 3 and 4, respectively, provide a summary of the mean values for each item within the sections on work satisfaction and teacher turnover intention.

Results of mean scores can be categorised into three types, namely low (1.00 to 2.33), moderate (2.34 to

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Profile (N=62)

| No | Demographic factors | Category | Frequency(n) | Percentage(%) |
|----|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | Gender | Male | 14 | 22.6 |
| | | Female | 48 | 77.4 |
| 2 | Age | ≤ 30 | 21 | 33.9 |
| | | 31–40 | 10 | 16.1 |
| | | 41–50 | 8 | 12.9 |
| | | ≥ 51 | 23 | 37.1 |
| 3 | Marital status | Single | 8 | 12.9 |
| | | Married | 54 | 87.1 |
| 4 | Children | Have | 38 | 61.3 |
| | | Don't have | 24 | 38.7 |
| 5 | No. of children | 0 | 24 | 38.7 |
| | | 1 | 31 | 50.0 |
| | | 2 | 6 | 9.7 |
| | | 3 | 1 | 1.6 |
| 6 | Title | Assistant lecturer | 25 | 40.3 |
| | | Lecturer | 25 | 40.3 |
| | | Associate professor | 9 | 14.5 |
| | | Professor | 3 | 4.8 |
| 7 | Teaching experience | ≤ 3 years | 11 | 17.7 |
| | | 4–8 years | 21 | 33.9 |
| | | 9–15 years | 19 | 30.6 |
| | | 16–25 years | 5 | 8.1 |
| | | ≥26 years | 6 | 9.7 |

Source: Authors

Table 3. Results of Teacher Job Satisfaction (N=62)

| Items | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. My current work situation is not a major source of frustration in my life. | 3.55 |
| 2. Overall, I am satisfied in my current practice. | 3.50 |
| 3. Overall, I am pleased with my work. | 3.45 |
| 4. My work in this practice has met my expectations. | 3.35 |

Source: Authors

Table 4. Results of Teacher Turnover Intention (N=62)

| Items | Mean |
|---|------|
| 1. It is likely that I will be working for this university/college this time next year. | 3.60 |
| 2. I will be working at this university/college 5 years from now. | 3.56 |
| 3. I will be working for this university/college till I retire. | 3.56 |
| 4. I will be working at this university/college 2 years from now. | 3.55 |
| 5. I will be working for this university/college until I get another job. | 3.44 |

Source: Authors

3.67) and high (3.68 to 5.00) (Thahira Bibi TKM Thangal, 2023). It is noteworthy that using a Likert scale with five points, greater values are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. According to the study's findings, teachers' level of job satisfaction is in the moderate category.

4.3 Teacher Turnover Intention

In this section, higher mean scores indicate a larger level of turnover intention since the items measuring turnover intention are worded in terms of the intent to remain. According to the study's results, the majority of instructors plan to stay on the job for only at least another year. Notably, Item 5 has the lowest mean score, which is in the moderate to high range, shows that more than half of the teachers intend to stay in their current jobs until they find another job opportunity.

4.4 Hygiene Factors and Teacher Turnover Intention

To examine the relationship between hygiene factors and teacher turnover intention in China's private HEIs, Pearson Correlation is used and the results are showed below.

Table 5. Relationship between Hygiene Factors and Teacher Turnover Intention (N=62)

| | Turnover intention | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| | leadership support | student discipline | workload | institution resources |
| Pearson Correlation | -0.536** | 0.055 | 0.549** | -0.022 |
| Sig.(2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.671 | 0.000 | 0.863 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

Results of this study show that among the four hygiene factors, leadership support and workload are significantly related with teacher turnover intention, with workload positively related with teacher turnover intention and leadership support negatively related with teacher turnover intention. According to Patrick Schober et al. (2018), coefficient between 0.40–0.69 is considered moderate correlation. Hence the relationship between leadership support, workload and turnover intention are moderate in this study. As for the relationships between student discipline and turnover intention, institution resources and turnover intention are negligible and not statistically significant.

4.5 Motivators and Teacher Turnover Intention

To examine the relationship between motivators and teacher turnover intention in China's private HEIs, Pearson Correlation is used and the results are showed below.

Table 6. Relationship between Motivators and Teacher Turnover Intention(N=62)

| | Turnover intention | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | work itself | professional development |
| Pearson Correlation | 0.249 | -.370** |
| Sig.(2-tailed) | 0.051 | 0.003 |

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Authors

Results of the analysis show that professional development is significantly related with teacher turnover intention, with more professional development opportunities indicating lower turnover intention(Räsänen et al., 2020). However, the relationship is weak (-.370). The relationship between work itself and teacher turnover intention is also weak (0.249) and has no statistical significance.

5. Discussion

5.1 Teacher Job Satisfaction

Results of the level of teacher job satisfaction show that teachers feel only a moderate level of satisfaction with their work and current practice. Teacher job satisfaction refers to the sense of fulfilment and gratification that teachers derive from working (Tsai & Antoniou, 2021). It is a positive emotional state that can help increase teachers' commitment and engagement to work, leading to a reduced likelihood to move to other organisations. However, results show that there is still room for improvement in terms of teacher's job satisfaction. The

well-being of teachers and the effective functioning of schools have both been empirically linked to teacher job satisfaction. Educators who manifest contentment in their roles tend to exhibit elevated levels of motivation, enthusiasm, and unwavering commitment to the institutional objectives. Moreover, those who express job satisfaction are notably less inclined to pursue alternative career paths or exit the teaching profession when compared to their dissatisfied counterparts(Toropova, 2021). Additionally, contented teachers evince a decrease in absenteeism, an augmentation of self-efficacy, and an improvement in their overall mental well-being.

5.2 Teacher Turnover Intention

The study's findings, which are consistent with those of earlier studies (Kang, 2023), show a modest degree of teacher turnover intention, indicating that the problem of teacher turnover in private higher education institutions (HEIs) has become a growing source of worry. The unfavourable working conditions and low job satisfaction that educators in this field feel are probably to account for this tendency. In-depth research on the importance of working conditions for academic professionals in HEIs has shown the crucial role that a supportive work environment plays in attracting and keeping teachers in these organisations. Enhancing teachers' job happiness may also have a negative effect on their decisions to leave, according to research on teacher turnover (Saiti & Papadopoulos, 2015). The intention of instructors to leave their professions within a year is relatively high in the context of this study. The improvement of working conditions and job satisfaction for educators within private HEIs in China must therefore be given top priority.

5.3 Hygiene Factors and Teacher Turnover Intention

Leadership Support

Based on previous research, successful school leadership incorporates a diverse array of tactics aimed at maintaining high levels of teacher satisfaction. These tactics encompass responsibilities such as aligning teachers with suitable grade levels and subject assignments, establishing dedicated time slots for collective planning, fostering robust social and interpersonal trust, promoting collaborative efforts among teachers, actively engaging teachers in the recruitment process, and facilitating the integration of new educators (Scallon et al., 2023). Furthermore, effective leadership extends support in addressing disciplinary matters, includes teachers in decision-making related to budgeting, discipline,

and curriculum development, and offers constructive feedback and recognition.

Results of this study show that leadership support is negatively related with teacher turnover intention, meaning that the more support teachers received from the leadership, the less they are likely to leave their institution. This is supported by findings from previous study, which also emphasizes the importance of leadership support (Balu et al., 2010). In a study that investigated teacher job satisfaction and turnover intention among English teachers, researchers found that job satisfaction appears to be significantly influenced by the effectiveness of leadership and teacher collaboration (Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). Another recent study also has indicated the importance of distributed leadership on teacher turnover (Keeley, 2021), which provides reference for HEIs in China about how to enhance effective leadership.

Student Discipline

As the main subject of schools and HEIs, students play an essential part in the process of learning and teaching. Students and teachers alike may suffer from student disciplinary issues that occur in the classroom setting. Teachers frequently view student misbehaviour as an especially distressing component, which can cause significant work-related stress for educators managing disciplinary difficulties in classrooms (Jensen, 2021). However, in this study, student discipline is found to be negligible in regard to teacher turnover intention. This is not surprising as the context of this study is higher learning education. Compared to teachers in primary or middle schools, teachers from HEIs are freer of student behaviour as their students are adults, most of them behave themselves in classroom. In China's education system, teachers are held more accountable for students' academic performance, which is closely related to their performance appraisal (James & Wyckoff, 2020). Therefore, teachers in these schools tend to regulate students with more strict classrooms to achieve good learning outcomes. This is different in HEIs, where teachers are mainly appraised based on their academic work and curriculum projects.

Workload

These results are in line with previous studies, which also show that more workload (Torres, 2016) predicts higher turnover intention. When educators have limited time to manage their responsibilities, they may struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance, leading to feelings of dissatisfaction with their careers (Song et al., 2011). Besides, a consistently demanding workload with little

relief or recognition can create a sense of undervaluation, prompting teachers to consider seeking opportunities in schools or districts that offer better work conditions and support. Therefore, private HEIs are supposed to reduce workload for teachers to reduce turnover.

As China's private HEIs focus more on teaching compared with public HEIs, teachers are required to shoulder bulky teaching tasks (Wronowski & Urick, 2019). This means that they must complete academic work while achieving teaching goals. Therefore, it is imperative that policymakers take measures to reduce teacher workload in private HEIs in China, thus helping decrease teachers' feeling of dissatisfaction.

Institution Resources

Institution resources can include modern technologies, classroom and office facilities, libraries and others that can facilitate teaching and learning (Cotton, John L. and Tuttle, 1986). However, limited studies have investigated the relationship between institution resources and teachers' decision to leave. The results of this study found that the relationship between these two variables is weak, meaning that teachers from private HEIs attach little importance to the facilities or resources during their teaching. This is different from previous studies, which show that institution resources such as financial support for teachers are related to teacher attrition (Imazeki, 2005). The divergence of results show that institution resources still need to be studied in terms of its effect on teacher turnover, as teaching quality largely depends on resources a teacher have.

5.4 Motivators and Teacher Turnover Intention

Professional Development

These results partially support previous studies, which reveal that more professional development opportunities will lead to lower intention to leave (Räsänen et al., 2020). When teachers have access to continuous learning opportunities, they feel supported in their career advancement and better equipped to handle the evolving challenges in education. Institutions that invest in comprehensive professional development programs tend to have higher teacher retention rates, as teachers feel valued and are more likely to stay committed to an institution that fosters their professional growth (Li & Yao, 2022). Conversely, a lack of opportunities for growth and limited professional development can lead to stagnation, reduced job satisfaction, and ultimately, a higher likelihood of teachers seeking new opportunities elsewhere.

Work Itself

According to Two-Factor theory, work itself also refers to the nature of work, which can be how challenging their work is (Herzberg, 1959). For employees who have intrinsic motivation for their work, they are more likely to take on challenges at work and may feel distressed when the work is drudgery. Results of this study show that there is a weak relationship between work itself and teacher turnover intention, which is conflicting to the findings of another study. In the study that investigates employee's motivation, it was found that employees who tend to choose high-demanding work have more intrinsic motivation, and they are less likely to leave once they feel the nature of work match his or her expectation (Chiat & Panatik, 2019). In the context of HEIs, teachers are expected to adopt more creative pedagogies, making teaching more challenging than before. Therefore, it is necessary to further investigate the effect of work itself on teacher turnover intention using larger sample size or sample from different cultures.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This paper focuses on teacher turnover in private HEIs in China, which is the largest in the world in terms of the number of teachers and students. Findings show that hygiene factors (leadership and workload) and motivator (professional development) are related to teachers' decision to leave the profession. According to the Two-Factor theory, the absence of hygiene factors will lead to job dissatisfaction and increase the likelihood of turnover; while the lack of motivators will lead to low job satisfaction, thus lower job performance (Rathakrishnan et al., 2016). As the lack of both sets of the factors will give rise to adverse effect, institution management and education policy makers are supposed to give due attention to ensure motivators and hygiene factors. With effective and supportive leadership, reasonable workload, and more professional development opportunities, teachers in private HEIs will feel more satisfied with their job and less likely to exit.

The management of China's HEIs and policymakers will benefit greatly from this research. In China, private HEIs are becoming more well-known among both the higher education community and the public. Educators and policymakers should actively work to mitigate teacher turnover and retain competent educators by prioritising the improvement of working conditions and the promotion of teacher job satisfaction (Xiong et al., 2023). Therefore, this initiative has the potential to raise educational standards and support the long-term growth of private HEIs.

However, limitations of this study should be explained so that further studies can be conducted to improve research on teacher turnover intention. As this was a pilot study, the sample size was small, which makes it difficult to generalise the results. To assess teacher turnover intention, this study uses a quantitative methodology with closed-ended questions. Future studies are suggested to be done using a larger sample size. Besides, qualitative or mixed methods are encouraged to study teacher turnover intention.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

No competing financial or personal interests exist in reporting the results of the study.

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Addressing Multi-Dimensional Perspective of Language Anxiety in the Chinese EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has long been considered a debilitating factor that hinders second language acquisition. Despite many coping strategies, FLA continues to plague Chinese foreign language learners. Hence, this study examined multi-dimensional FLA among learners of Chinese EFL tertiary students. This study was set in a public university in China and involved 190 second-year tertiary students. It employed an explanatory sequential research design wherein data were collected via a survey questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The findings indicated that the students experienced medium-level multi-dimensional FLA, with listening anxiety recording the highest anxiety level. There were no significant differences in multi-dimensional FLA based on gender, but significant differences were recorded in multi-dimensional FLA among students possessing low, intermediate, and high English language proficiency levels. The findings imply the dynamic nature of multi-dimensional FLA and showed that skill-specific anxieties were interrelated. A low FLA could result from low motivation and interest in learning English, negatively affecting their language performance. These findings suggest that universities should enhance differentiated instruction to sustain quality EFL instruction in China among EFL tertiary learners.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety, multidimensional FLA, EFL students, quality EFL instruction

Introduction

As globalization dawns upon the 21st century, English Language has become a lingua franca in most countries around the globe. According to Statista (2023), as of 2022, 1.45 billion people are currently speaking English as a native or second language. Countries and regions are now attaching increasing importance to learning English as a second (ESL) or foreign (EFL) language to survive and thrive in the competitive international community, and China is no exception. China is now adopting the “bring-in” and “go global” strategy and lays great importance on introducing China to the whole world. Thus, possessing a good command of the English language for people in all industries has become the

premise for internationalization (The National Foreign Language Teaching Administer Board under the Ministry of Education, 2020), which inevitably strengthens the development and flourishing of English Language education in China.

Today, China has embraced English as a foreign language (EFL) at all educational levels, including colleges and universities, and has become a compulsory foreign language for Chinese tertiary students (Cao, 2019). However, the English language proficiency among Chinese EFL learners has become an issue of grave concern not only among scholars but also the country’s Ministry of Education. Cai (2020) pointed out that the seventy-year English Language education program has

yet to achieve the expected success in China. It focused on acquiring basic English knowledge, neglecting the application and utilization of the language in meaningful situations. Scholars such as Cai (2020) and Li et al. (2019) have further highlighted that most Chinese EFL learners were also reported to possess a low English language proficiency upon graduation.

Hence, raising national English language proficiency among tertiary EFL students has become a significant national concern. Researchers such as Sidhu, et al (2022), Ellis (2008) and Brown (1973) have reiterated that external and internal factors play an important role in second and foreign language acquisition. Among the many internal factors, language anxiety has often received much attention. According to MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), anxiety refers to the “feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions” (p. 103). A study in China shows that foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Chinese EFL learners contributes to 30.6% of their English language achievement (Li et al., 2019). Thus, it is not surprising “that language anxiety has been the most widely studied emotion in second language acquisition (SLA)” (MacIntyre, 2017, p. 11). This study addresses a multidimensional perspective of FLA among Chinese EFL tertiary learners in China.

Problem Statement

Worldwide studies have been conducted on FLA in general and skill-specific FLA, such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking anxiety (Li, 2022; Nastiti, 2023). Findings have generally shown the negative influence of FLA and skill-specific FLA on language performance (Ran et al., 2022). A few studies have examined all four skill-specific anxieties in one holistic study (Abbaszadeh & Vizayaletchumi, 2020; Guo & Xu, 2014; Jee, 2018; Pae, 2013). For example, while Abbaszadeh and Vizayaletchumi (2020) explored the relationship between skill-based anxieties and language learners’ aptitudes, Pae (2013) investigated the relationship between the four skill-based anxieties and their relationship to general foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA).

Though anxiety has often been a much-explored factor in foreign language acquisition, gaps in the literature are still visible and require attention. Although most related studies have focused on general FLA or single skill-based anxieties, only a few are conducted with a comprehensive view with inconsistent findings. Secondly, qualitative research is missing in most skill-specific anxiety studies to triangulate the quantitative results. Lastly, only a

few comprehensive studies on FLA were conducted in the Chinese context, with tertiary students from local universities and colleges as the subjects.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate FLA among Chinese tertiary students from a multidimensional perspective, namely, the general classroom FLA and FLA in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the Chinese tertiary students’ overall multidimensional FLA and FLA in the general classroom, listening, speaking, reading, and writing?
- Is there any significant difference in Chinese tertiary students’ FLA levels based on the five dimensions?
- Is there any significant difference in overall multidimensional FLA based on gender?
- Is there any significant difference in overall multidimensional FLA based on self-perceived English language proficiency?

Literature Review

Language anxiety, a significant factor affecting foreign language learning, has been paid increasing attention to by researchers (Naser et al., 2019). Foreign language anxiety (FLA) research started in the early 1970s. Brown (1973) put forward the relationship between affective factors and successful learning of a second language and pointed out that anxiety was one of the main affective factors affecting second language learners. Krashen (1981) agreed that anxiety was like an emotional filter that limited second language acquisition.

Horwitz et al. (1986) first proposed the theoretical framework of foreign language anxiety. They presented the concept of foreign language anxiety as a “learner’s unique and complex self-awareness, belief, emotions, and behaviors related to classroom foreign language learning arising from the uniqueness of foreign language learning process” (p.128). These researchers went on to develop the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) according to practical experience. They concluded three performance anxieties: test anxiety, communication anxiety, and negative assessment anxiety. Since the emergence of the FLCAS, many people have begun to monitor foreign language learning anxiety (Jiang & Dewaele, 2019).

Earlier, it was thought that listening and speaking were the significant sources of language anxiety compared to reading and writing (Horwitz et al., 1986). However,

with the development of research on language anxiety, scholars gradually turned their eyes to skill-specific anxiety (Cheng, 2004; Saito et al., 1999). Research on foreign language reading anxiety appeared in the late 1990s when Saito et al. (1999) first constructed the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS). Cheng (2004) then put forward the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) involving both quantitative and qualitative research instruments. Next, Elkhafaifi (2005) began to investigate the effect of overall foreign language learning anxiety and listening anxiety on listening comprehension. In his study, he concluded that English proficiency and listening performance were negatively correlated. In another recent study by Wang, Sidhu and Wang (2023) they noted that Chinese EFL students often view speaking as a difficult skill and experience high anxiety when called upon to speak. Their study also revealed that a majority of Chinese EFL students recorded anxiety in speaking mainly because of the fear of negative evaluation, followed by comprehension apprehension with test anxiety recording the lowest mean score. Recently, studies have now moved from investigating single language skill anxiety to the exploration of the inter-and-intra relationship between skill-specific anxieties, as mentioned above in the problem statement.

Although FLA has been found to be related to other factors, such as gender and self-perceived language proficiency (Dewaele, 2013; Dewaele et al., 2016; Iqbal & Liu, 2018; Santos et al., 2015;), there have been inconsistent findings regarding the influence of gender difference and self-perceived language proficiency on FLA. Some studies found no significant difference in FLA between male and female language learners (Isa et al., 2023) while other studies have reported a higher level of FLA among female language learners (Piniel & Zólyomi, 2022). In addition, it was believed that a lower level of FLA was often connected with a higher level of self-rated language proficiency (Iqbal & Liu, 2018; MacIntyre et al., 1997). In contrast, Ewald (2007) in his study found that even advanced language learners experienced FLA.

Studies in FLA in China began in the late-1980s and steadily increased since the beginning of the 21st century. It followed the research trend in the international field, mainly focusing on research on ontology connotation, the correlation between anxiety and achievements, causes of foreign language learning anxiety, measures to alleviate anxiety, and the correlation between learning anxiety and other individual learner differences (Jiang & Dewaele, 2020; Li, 2018; Li & Li, 2016). A few studies in China examined the four skill-specific anxieties at once.

For example, using five questionnaires, Guo and Xu (2014) conducted empirical research on FLA among 457 non-English major college students in China. It found that the subjects experienced a medium level of anxiety in each dimension and overall. Among the four skill-specific anxieties, reading anxiety is the lowest. Ran et al. (2022) compared FLA based on four language scales, pointing out that listening anxiety was the highest and reading anxiety the lowest among Chinese college students.

Material and Methods

This study was a pilot study of a larger Ph.D. research project. This pilot study employed an explanatory-sequential research design. The quantitative results from the survey questionnaire were further triangulated using qualitative data collected through interviews.

Setting and Population Sample

This study was conducted in a public university in central China where the English language is a compulsory course for all first and second year EFL tertiary students. The target population comprised one hundred and ninety (190) randomly selected fourth-semester undergraduate students from the Faculty of Food Science, Chemistry and Education. They had attended the College English course for three semesters, and all had at least eight-year experience in English language learning since their primary and secondary school levels. They attended English classes two (2) times a week, with two 45-minute classes each time. All the subjects completed the questionnaires voluntarily.

Instrumentation

Data for the study were collected from responses to questionnaire questions sent to one hundred and ninety (190) second-year Chinese tertiary students and semi-structured interviews with six (6) purposively selected students.

In this study, *The Multidimensional FLA Questionnaire* (MFLAQ) with five subscales was distributed to the subjects to measure their five-dimensional FLA: general classroom foreign language anxiety, listening anxiety, speaking anxiety, reading anxiety, and writing anxiety. The five sections of MFLAQ were based on the following sources:

- General classroom FLA was measured with Zhang and Guo's (2018) adapted version of FLCAS and comprised 28 items.
- Listening anxiety was measured employing Zhang and Zhao's (2010) adapted version of FLLAS and consisted of 11 items.
- Speaking anxiety was measured using Wu's (2009) intact version of the Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Self-Schema Questionnaire (FLSASQ) with 30 items.
- Reading anxiety was based on Saito et al.'s (1999) version of FLRAS with 20 items; and
- Writing anxiety was measured using Guo and Qin's (2010) adapted version of SLWAI, comprising 20 items.

All these five subscales have been widely used in several international and Chinese context studies for their validity and reliability. Each questionnaire was attached with one open-ended question to further explore the subjects' FLA. For this study, the term foreign language or other terms referring to languages were replaced with "English." The respondents were required to respond to the items in all the questionnaires based on a 5-point Likert scale. A score of "1" indicated a strong disagreement with the item, while a "5" demonstrated strong agreement. The questionnaire also included a section for demographic information such as gender and self-perceived English language proficiency (SELP). The students' SELP was graded into three grades, with "1" for "Low," "2" for "Intermediate," and "3" for "High."

Validity and Reliability

A panel of two experts validated the adapted versions of MFLAQ and the interview protocols. One expert was a university professor with more than 30 years of experience in TESL, while the second was another university professor with more than 25 years of experience teaching EFL in China. Feedback from the panel was considered, and the necessary amendments were made before the study.

The reliability of the MFLAQ was tested and the results based on Cronbach's alpha reliability are shown in Table 1 below. The results were above 0.7 for the overall MFLAQ and each subscale, indicating that the questionnaires were reliable and could be used for the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey instruments were presented in both English and Mandarin to avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation that may occur due to the limited English language proficiency among some Chinese EFL students. The English subscales were translated using the back-translation procedure, giving the process higher validity and reliability.

The qualitative data from semi-structured interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed verbatim before being sent for member checking. Peer debriefing was also conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the interviews. The semi-structured interviews were carried out in the Mandarin language and were transcribed and translated into English by two experienced translators. Both translators reconciled any differences between the two versions and came to a mutual understanding. The back-to-back translation yielded a 91.5% level of agreement.

Data Collection and Analyses

A total of two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, but only one hundred and ninety (190) tertiary students responded to the questionnaires and were tested valid. The response rate was 95%. The demographic information of the 190 respondents based on gender and self-reported English language proficiency is presented in Table 2.

After data cleaning, the data were analyzed with SPSS version 25.0 and employed both descriptive and inferential statistics such as one-way ANOVA.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six (6) respondents from the first sample to triangulate the quantitative findings. These participants were purposively

Table 1. Reliability Index of Five Questionnaires

| Dimensions | Reliability Cronbach's alpha | N of Items |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------|
| General classroom FLA | .866 | 28 |
| Listening Anxiety | .793 | 11 |
| Speaking Anxiety | .876 | 30 |
| Reading Anxiety | .809 | 20 |
| Writing Anxiety | .851 | 20 |
| Overall Multidimensional FLA | .944 | 109 |

Source: Author

Table 2. Participants' Demographic Information.

| Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 59 | 31.1% |
| | Female | 131 | 68.9% |
| Self-perceived English language proficiency | Low | 70 | 36.8% |
| | Intermediate | 102 | 53.7% |
| | High | 18 | 9.5% |

Source: Author

Table 3. Tertiary Students' Multidimensional Foreign Language Anxiety.

| Dimensions | M | SD |
|------------------------------|-------|------|
| General classroom FLA | 3.002 | .531 |
| Listening Anxiety | 3.471 | .621 |
| Speaking Anxiety | 3.158 | .485 |
| Reading Anxiety | 3.067 | .486 |
| Writing Anxiety | 3.104 | .549 |
| Overall Multidimensional FLA | 3.123 | .406 |

Source: Author

Scale: 1.00-1.80 = low, 1.81-2.60 = low to moderate, 2.61-3.40 = moderate, 3.41-4.20 = moderate to high, 4.21-5.00 = high

selected based on their overall multi-dimensional FLA levels. The respondents with the lowest levels of multidimensional FLA (bottom 20%) were referred to as LR1 to LR2 (L=Low anxiety level, R=Respondent, 1=respondents' number). The respondents with medium levels of multidimensional FLA were referred to as MR1 to MR2 (M=Medium anxiety level, R=Respondent, 1=respondents' number). In comparison, the highest levels of multidimensional FLA (top 20%) were referred to as HR1 to HR2 (H=High anxiety level, R=Respondent, 1=respondents' number).

The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were then analyzed thematically according to Braun et al.'s (2019) thematic framework to obtain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of multidimensional FLA and strategies used by Chinese tertiary students.

Results

The following section provides the main findings of the pilot study based on the three research questions that guided this study.

Multidimensional FLA Levels

Research Question One in this study examined the FLA levels of Chinese EFL tertiary students based on the

five dimensions. The data were analyzed employing descriptive statistics, and the results are shown in Table 3 below. From the findings, the mean rating for overall multidimensional FLA was 3.123 ($SD = .406$), which showed that the respondents possessed a medium level of FLA in five dimensions when learning English. The mean value for general classroom FLA was 3.002 ($SD = .531$), which showed that the respondents had a medium level of general classroom FLA when learning English. Listening anxiety reported a mean rating of 3.471 ($SD = .621$), which ranked the highest in all the five dimensions, showing a medium to high level of anxiety. Speaking anxiety showed a mean rating of 3.158 ($SD = .485$), followed by the mean scores for writing anxiety ($M = 3.104$, $SD = .549$) and reading anxiety ($M = 3.067$, $SD = .486$). These mean scores showed the respondents experienced medium anxiety levels in all five dimensions, with listening anxiety being the highest and general FLA the lowest.

Each subscale was attached with one open-ended question to triangulate the findings from the questionnaire. In terms of general classroom FLA, 75 (39.5%) respondents in the open-ended question reported "no interest in English" or "My English is bad," explaining why they were not anxious in class. As for listening anxiety, most respondents said they were nervous when they failed to understand what they were listening to, showing the shared experience of listening anxiety in English tests and communication. Furthermore, poor listening proficiency could lead to poor performance in speaking, which in turn causes speaking anxiety. As for speaking anxiety, findings from the open-ended items revealed a high proportion of reluctance (61.5%) to speak English in English class and in daily life. This reluctance indicated low self-efficacy and motivation among students and a lack of exposure to English for EFL learners in China. For reading anxiety, most respondents (75.8%) did not like reading in English because "I am not used to reading in English." This response indicated the isolation of English learning and practical use in Chinese EFL teaching and learning. For writing anxiety, the open-ended question revealed that 153 respondents (80.5%)

did not write English articles or journals if they are not asked to because of no interest or inadequate writing proficiency.

One of the questions posed during the interview session was to get the respondents to share their experiences with FLA in learning English. Overall, the findings displayed that the students who recorded high anxiety in learning English experienced the following symptoms: nervousness, worry, sweaty palms, heart palpitations, and difficulty concentrating on the day's lesson. For instance, Respondent HR1, a female student, said:

"My heart beats fast, and I tend to speak fast when asked to answer questions in class. I am also anxious when the English teacher asks students to read aloud in class. . .guess we are all anxious having to speak or read in English."

Respondent MR2, a male student, expressed his anxiety over English tests:

"... I am fine with learning English and do not get very anxious...but I often get anxious when I must sit for an English Language test, and I am worried about my CET-4 test. . .this test will affect us in our future when we go out to look for work, so most of us get very anxious sitting for English tests"

From the above excerpts it can be concluded that speaking anxiety prevails over other dimensions among Chinese EFL tertiary students, and test anxiety is also high adding to the list of worries about learning English. Reading and writing anxiety levels were lower compared to both listening and speaking. This is probably because Chinese EFL students in China live among a homogenous population where most of the Chinese population speak Chinese and thus, they have little exposure to listening and speaking in English. Besides that, a majority of the EFL classroom teachers often focus on reading and writing and this are often main language skills examined in almost all English tests ranging from Middle and High Schools to tertiary colleges.

Differences in Anxiety Levels Based on Five Dimensions

Research Question Two in this study explored if there was any significant difference among Chinese EFL tertiary students' anxiety levels based on the five dimensions.

The data were analyzed utilizing inferential statistics. A one-way ANOVA was employed to examine the

differences in anxiety levels among the five dimensions (general classroom FLA, listening anxiety, speaking anxiety, reading anxiety, and writing anxiety). The data analysis showed that Mauchly's Test of Sphericity results were significant ($p = .000 < .05$). Therefore, the degree of freedom was adjusted for the averaged tests of significance. The results of Greenhouse-Geisser and Huynh-Feldt in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects showed that anxiety levels of five dimensions significantly differed ($F = 43.96, p = .000 < .05$) as shown in Table 4.

Thus, the following conclusions can be made:

- The highest level of anxiety faced by EFL students is in listening. It is also significantly higher than general FLA anxiety, speaking, reading, and writing anxiety.
- General FLA is the lowest and is significantly lower than the anxiety of speaking and listening.

However, there is no significant difference between general classroom FLA, reading anxiety, and writing anxiety. These findings were also corroborated by students during the interview sessions. For instance, Respondent HR2 highlighted his anxiety over listening and speaking by saying, *"What is worse is that when I fail to understand the listening part, I cannot do the speaking."* This illustrated the relationship between listening and speaking. It also pointed out the situation-specific nature of FLA.

Besides that, other respondents felt that listening is difficult as they often found it difficult to follow the speakers in the listening scripts as a majority felt they *'speak too fast we cannot understand and even if we listen very carefully, sometimes we do not understand some words and then we cannot understand the whole speech'* (MR1). As mentioned above anxiety levels in both listening and speaking are probably high due to limited exposure to both these skills both in their immediate environment and their EFL classrooms.

Gender Differences in Overall Multidimensional FLA

Research Question Three in this study explored if there was any significant difference in overall multidimensional FLA based on gender. The independent sample t-test was conducted to answer this question, and the results are presented in Table 5.

The mean value of multidimensional FLA for male students was 3.130 ($SD = .414$), and for female students,

Table 4. Pairwise Comparison

| (I) FLA | (J) FLA | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. ^b | 95% Confidence Interval for Difference | |
|------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------|--|-------------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| 1 | 2 | -.500* | .044 | .000 | -.625 | -.375 |
| | 3 | -.156* | .034 | .000 | -.252 | -.059 |
| | 4 | -.076 | .041 | .647 | -.191 | .040 |
| | 5 | -.112 | .040 | .060 | -.226 | .003 |
| 2 | 1 | .500* | .044 | .000 | .375 | .625 |
| | 3 | .344* | .046 | .000 | .214 | .475 |
| | 4 | .424* | .047 | .000 | .290 | .559 |
| | 5 | .388* | .046 | .000 | .256 | .520 |
| 3 | 1 | .156* | .034 | .000 | .059 | .252 |
| | 2 | -.344* | .046 | .000 | -.475 | -.214 |
| | 4 | .080 | .036 | .290 | -.023 | .183 |
| | 5 | .044 | .039 | 1.000 | -.068 | .155 |
| 4 | 1 | .076 | .041 | .647 | -.040 | .191 |
| | 2 | -.424* | .047 | .000 | -.559 | -.290 |
| | 3 | -.080 | .036 | .290 | -.183 | .023 |
| | 5 | -.036 | .037 | 1.000 | -.141 | .069 |
| 5 | 1 | .112 | .040 | .060 | -.003 | .226 |
| | 2 | -.388* | .046 | .000 | -.520 | -.256 |
| | 3 | -.044 | .039 | 1.000 | -.155 | .068 |
| | 4 | .036 | .037 | 1.000 | -.069 | .141 |

Source: Author

Scale= 1=General classroom FLA, 2=Listening anxiety, 3=Speaking anxiety, 4=Reading anxiety, 5=Writing anxiety

Note: Based on estimated marginal means.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 5. Students' Overall Multidimensional Based on Gender

| Groups | Overall multidimensional FLA (Mean±SD) | T-value | Sig.(2-tailed) |
|-----------------|---|---------|----------------|
| Males (n=59) | 3.130±.414 | .163 | .871 |
| Females (n=131) | 3.120±.404 | | |

Source: Author

3.120 ($SD = .404$), indicating that both male and female students experienced moderate levels of overall multidimensional FLA. Furthermore, the independent sample t-test revealed that the gender differences were not significant ($t = .163, p = .87$).

However, during the interview, the male students reported rather differing views compared to their female counterparts. A majority of the females during the interview session provided a more positive take on practicing speaking in English as Respondent HR2 stressed that *'I like to practice English during English class so that my teacher can help correct me if I am wrong'* whilst others added that *'class time is good for practicing our English'* and *'my teacher encourage me so I try hard'* (MR1) to speak English in class.

On the other hand, the male students revealed that they experienced more FLA in the English classroom. For example, Respondent LR1 stated, *"I am anxious in English class. I am afraid of being asked to answer questions, so I always sit in the back rows of the classroom with other boys. Thanks to the girls who are active in class."*

This excerpt showed the general impression that female students were more active in language learning and probably experienced less anxiety. This sentiment was also echoed by other male respondents who stated that, the *'girls in my class talk more during English class'*, whilst another highlighted that *'in my opinion girls like to practice English in class but we boys do not like to speak in English.'* All these excerpts indicated that the female students are more willing to communicate in English and

Table 6. Students' Overall Multidimensional Based on Self-perceived English Language Proficiency.

| Groups | Overall multidimensional FLA (Mean±SD) | F | Sig. | Multiple Comparison (Turkey HSD) |
|--------------------------|--|--------|------|----------------------------------|
| Low ELP (n=70) | 3.332±.340 | 19.823 | .000 | Low>Intermediate |
| Intermediate ELP (n=102) | 3.030±.391 | | | Low>High |
| High ELP (n=18) | 2.835±.371 | | | |

probably have less anxiety in speaking English compared to their male counterparts.

Self-perceived English Language Proficiency Differences in Overall Multidimensional FLA

Research Question Four in this study explored if there was any significant difference in overall multidimensional FLA between the three self-perceived English language proficiency (ELP) groups (high, intermediate, and low). A One-way ANOVA was conducted to answer this question, and the results are presented in Table 6.

The mean value of multidimensional FLA for students with low self-perceived English language proficiency students was 3.332 ($SD = .340$), for intermediate self-perceived English language proficiency students 3.030 ($SD = .391$), and for high self-perceived English language proficiency students 2.835 ($SD = .371$). It indicated that the students of different self-perceived English language proficiency experienced moderate levels of overall multidimensional FLA, and students with low ELP had the highest level of multidimensional FLA. Furthermore, the one-way ANOVA revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in mean multidimensional FLA between at least two groups ($F(2, 187) = 19.823, p = .000 < 0.05$).

Turkey's HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that the mean value of multidimensional FLA was significantly different between the Low ELP and Intermediate ELP ($p = .000$), the Low SELP and High ELP ($p = .000$), but there was no statistically significant difference in multidimensional FLA between the Intermediate ELP and High ELP ($p = .102$).

The qualitative data from open-ended questions and interviews recorded mixed responses from the low proficiency students. Twenty-one (21) out of the seventy (70) or 30% of the low ELP students in the open-ended questions section admitted being anxious in English classrooms. Still, another eight (8) students (11.4%) reported being relaxed in English class with "no love for

English" or because "the English teacher is kind." These findings illustrated that although the low proficiency among students could lead to FLA among the students, other factors could help alleviate their apprehension and nervousness.

Discussion

With reference to Research Question One posed in this study, the findings for five dimensions of anxiety showed a medium level of anxiety among Chinese tertiary students, confirming findings from previous studies (Guo & Xu, 2014; Jiang & Dewaele, 2020). As mentioned in the literature review, studies of FLA in China have increased since the 21st century, and many strategies have been put forward to reduce FLA. However, research has also pointed out that the medium level of FLA and low proficiency level persist among Chinese EFL learners through the years. This finding illustrates the complex nature of FLA among Chinese EFL learners in the monolingual context, with English being compulsory since the third year of primary school. This fact further illustrates the importance of studies on multi-dimensional FLA and instructional design of EFL teaching and learning in China.

The findings for Research Question Two were based on the results of one-way ANOVA. The findings showed that listening and speaking anxiety ranked high among the five dimensions. This finding is again partly consistent with Horwitz et al.'s (1986) and Li's study (2018). A recent study by Wang, Sidhu and Wang (2023) further revealed that anxiety was often high due to Chinese EFL students fear of negative evaluation and comprehension apprehension which according to McCroskey (2001) refers to learner's anxiety associated with either 'fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons' (p.40).

The findings in this study also demonstrate that Chinese tertiary students are good at input or receptive skills like reading but need to improve their output and productive skills like speaking. The high level of listening anxiety also

pointed out the interrelations of linguistic skills: good listening skills lead to clear understanding and better speaking. Meanwhile, the qualitative data pointed out the common concern of vocabulary and grammar among the students, which directly affected their performance and confidence in language skill acquisition and application.

However, the results from this study are inconsistent with those conducted by Guo and Xu study (2014). In their study, the general FLA was the highest and significantly higher than reading anxiety and writing anxiety. There was no significant difference between general FLA, listening anxiety, and speaking anxiety. Both studies were conducted in a Chinese context with Chinese tertiary students as the subjects. The questionnaires in both studies were of good validity and reliability. Thus, a plausible reason for the difference in the results may be due to the participants' differences. In Guo and Xu's study, the participants were selected from a key university directly under the Ministry of Education (MOE) of China. In contrast, the participants in this study were selected from a provincial university under local authority. These two kinds of universities differ in funding sources, enrollment standards, facilities, and student orientation. It sheds light on the sample difference and calls for more attention to tertiary students from local universities and colleges. The qualitative data also shows that students in local universities have low ambitions for themselves and need to be more optimistic about their English language proficiency in all skill-related practices.

Research Question Three showed no significant difference in overall multidimensional FLA between the male and female participants. The same conclusion was found in studies conducted by Dewaele (2013) and Isa et al. (2023). Contrary to findings from Piniel and Zólyomi's (2022) meta-analysis, this study found that female students had slightly lower anxiety numbers than male students. This difference echoes the inconclusive findings regarding gender differences in FLA. In their study, Piniel and Zólyomi (2022) opined that gender difference was more complicated than it appeared. Therefore, gender differences in FLA should be further investigated in its social context (Dewaele et al., 2016).

Research Question Four showed that there was a significant difference in multi-dimensional FLA based on SELP. In this study, the Low SELP group demonstrated significantly higher multi-dimensional FLA than the Intermediate and High SELP groups. It means that the students who rated their English language proficiency as low experience more anxiety and apprehension in

learning English. This finding is pertinent to the idea that higher levels of FLA are often related to lower levels of SELP (Iqbal & Liu, 2018; Santos et al., 2015). However, the qualitative findings to this question showed that further study should be conducted to explore the relationship between FLA and SELP (self-perceived English language proficiency) as SELP was subject to psychological and sociocultural factors.

In summary, the combined results of both the quantitative and the qualitative analyses shed light on FLA in five dimensions among Chinese tertiary students. The quantitative findings supported previous findings on Chinese EFL learners' moderate level of FLA, no significant difference in FLA based on gender, and the negative correlation between FLA and students' self-perceived English language proficiency. Moreover, the qualitative findings displayed the complex nature of FLA in general and in five dimensions. The qualitative findings showed that skill-specific anxieties were interrelated. Low FLA could result from low motivation and interest in learning English, negatively affecting their language performance. Lastly, sociocultural factors should be included in the study of FLA to address issues concerning gender difference, self-perceived English language proficiency students, and sources of FLA.

Researchers such as Hu, Sidhu and Lu (2022a) highlight that it perhaps timely that EFL instructors in China embrace the global paradigm shift towards positive psychology and ensure their EFL classrooms provide fun and anxiety-free learning environment so that their learners develop a positive growth mindset towards learning EFL. Their study found that both foreign language enjoyment and a growth mindset toward learning EFL have positive and significant effect on learners' language performance. In another study, Hu, Sidhu and Lu (2022b) stressed that when EFL instructors are able to provide a low-anxiety, fun -loving language learning environment, learners will develop a positive attitude toward English thus lowering their anxiety level leading to them achieving higher language achievements.

Conclusion

Anxiety in EFL hinders the process of language acquisition and proficiency level. The Chinese EFL tertiary learners' achievement does not equal to the time they spend on English Language learning, and their FLA levels has remained at the medium level for years. Therefore, a comprehensive investigation into multi-dimensional FLA is perhaps required.

Though this study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of FLA, it has its share of limitations which can be viewed from three aspects. First, the convenient sampling showed homogeneity in instructional level, region, and academic background. Thus, this study only represents a small sample of Chinese EFL tertiary students, limiting the generalization of the findings. Secondly, when employing questionnaires as a data collection tool, researchers can never ascertain whether respondents have provided their honest and true responses. It is possible that some may have provided socially expected answers when answering items in the questionnaire. Hence more qualitative data could have been included to complement the study. Thirdly, a micro-developmental and dynamic perspective is needed for future studies to provide a detailed understanding of tertiary students' FLA in the five dimensions of FLA in a longitudinal study.

Despite its limitations, this study has shed some insight and provided some theoretical and pedagogical significance to the stakeholders in the country, namely the policymakers in the Ministry of Education, in China and the Chinese EFL teachers teaching English at all levels of education. The results obtained have helped to broaden the perspective of FLA research in second language acquisition by comprehensively investigating the inter-relationship between the four skill-based anxieties and general FLA with a mixed research method. Secondly, it sheds light on practical English language education in China. Multi-dimensional anxiety levels in learning English have not decreased even though much research has been done and scholars and educators have put forward various strategies to solve the problems.

Thus, it is timely for both EFL instructors and other stakeholders to examine if instruction in self-management and coping strategies can be integrated within the college English language education program. Differentiated instruction could be viewed as an alternative in Chinese EFL classrooms to cater to more individualized teaching and learning. Thirdly, this study calls for attention to students in local universities and colleges, who do not have more edge over their peers in key universities but constitute most Chinese tertiary students. Their expectation of themselves affects anxiety levels in five dimensions of FLA and their competitive force in the international market.

Attention must be paid to general FLA and skill-based anxieties, as English is fast becoming an international language. Chinese tertiary students must be equipped with the linguistic capabilities to become academically and economically productive and develop sustainable

skills with the right attitude and low anxiety in learning English.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Rhetorical Moves in the Application Letters of Indigenous People and Cebuano Job Applicants

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the rhetorical moves present in the application letters of Indigenous People (IP) and Cebuano job applicants applying to a state university in a province in Mindanao, Philippines. Using Upton and Connor's (2001) Coding Scheme, this study revealed that there are 7 common moves employed in the IP writers' application letters which amounts to a general rhetorical order, while 5 common moves were employed in the Cebuano writers' which also amounts to a general rhetorical order. This study also observed the interplay of cultural traits as they surface in the writing styles of the IP and Cebuano writers. IPs in Bukidnon are exposed to different cultures but they still practice and integrate their own culture, to which accounts that though exposed to an English writing convention, they would still cling to their own way of writing. They exhibit a proclivity for employing indirect communication strategies, demonstrating a preference for the expression of their thoughts in a manner that is both highly personal and characterized by a cyclical nature. Cebuanos, on the other hand, possess a sense of 'Garbo' which displays their strong pursuit to dignify their social identities by striving hard for status through education or hard work which also regulates their public behavior to conform with the standard set of behavior, to which assumes that Cebuano writers tend to display their strong pursuit to be better, say, in writing classes, to dignify their status in the academe by way of following a standard set of conventions in which they are expected to follow.

Keywords: Contrastive rhetoric, rhetorical moves, Indigenous community, Cebuano community, job application letters

Introduction

Drawing inspirations from the historic work of Kaplan (1966) on writing cultures and cultural thought patterns, writers have the tendency to employ a multitude of ways when translating their thoughts in writing where attributing factors surface, such as culture, beliefs, values, especially language for it shapes or controls the thinking of an individual having a distinct or unique view of the world. Bhatia (1993), as cited in Thumpong and Tongpoon-Patanasorn (2017) elaborated that those writers with different languages other than English have the tendency

to translate their ideas differently when writing texts, that, for example, when writing in English, the structure of their written outputs would rather be similar to the structure of their first language to which accounts genre-based studies to explain the background premise of this cultural phenomenon. The primary objective of this research paper is to analyze the rhetorical moves and the order of these moves as employed in the application letters of Indigenous People and Cebuano job applicants applying to a state university of a province in Mindanao, Philippines. This study seeks to address two central inquiries: firstly, it aims to identify the distinct rhetorical

patterns present in application letters from Indigenous and Cebuano applicants, with a focus on discerning any significant variations between the two groups. Secondly, it endeavors to uncover and analyze the cultural attributes embedded within these application letters to shed light on the intersection of cultural elements with written communication in the context of job applications. In other words, the problem in this study pertains to the analysis of application letters submitted by Indigenous People and Cebuano job applicants applying to a state university in Mindanao, Philippines.

Accordingly, a genre is dependent on the socio-cultural environment in which it is used, and different cultures use genres differently as they warrant a unique structure, style, content, and intended audience used by a specific discourse community to achieve a certain purpose (Swales, 1990, as cited in Thumnong & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017; Pena, 2019; Kadhim & Al-Amrani 2022; Bekbossinova et al. 2023). In congruence, a job application letter offers an applicant an opportunity not only to clarify the information enclosed in the résumé but also to exhibit an association between such information and the required qualifications in the job advertisement which accounted as a part of promotional genres in business settings (Bhatia, 1993, as cited in Thumnong & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017). A job application letter endorses the enclosed resume (Thumnong & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017) and is pivotal to be written effectively so that a writer will succeed in convincing a potential employer (Pena, 2019). To convince means requiring writers' self-representation to convey information about themselves. Jones and Pittman (1982), as cited in Pena (2019) explained that the term "self-presentation" leads others to believe in something that a person possesses, such as experience, talents, and/or skills. In congruence, Baumeister et al. (1989) posited that self-presentation behavior is rooted in an individual's motivation. This motivation is elicited depending on situational factors such as the evaluative presence of other people and knowledge of one's behavior.

When writing job application letters, writers must adhere to certain rules and conventions. Observing the necessary elements of a cover letter links their readiness for the job and their chance to be called for an interview. Likewise, writing an effective cover letter is not a simple task. It requires thought, knowledge, and understanding, suggesting that a cover letter needs as much attention and skill in the preparation as the resume. Such a skill includes knowing how to maneuver the letter using some linguistic features and rhetorical elements (Dela Rosa et al., 2015). To investigate these rhetorical elements, several studies

on contrastive rhetoric were conducted in the past to reveal and explain the rhetorical patterns employed in English writing such as application letters, academic essays, and research articles (Torres & Medriano, 2020; Pena, 2019; Thumnong & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017; Dela Rosa et al., 2015; Fazilatfara & Naseri, 2014).

Torres and Medriano (2020) sought to reveal the rhetorical organization, specifically the placement of the thesis statement in the argumentative essays of the Ilocano, Tagalog, and Tagalog-Ilocano pre-service teachers by following Liu's (2005) framework on the location of a thesis statement. It was reported that the Tagalog pre-service teachers preferred the deductive pattern or placing their thesis statements at the beginning of their essays. Given the prevalent characterization of Tagalog individuals as generally displaying a proclivity towards conservatism, it is observed that this cultural attribute is mirrored in their writing style. This observation suggests a preference for a discourse organization that aligns with their established comfort zone, thereby yielding a diminished inclination to deviate from it. In contrast, the Ilocano pre-service teachers preferred to write their essays in different styles, so they placed their thesis statements not just in the middle, but also towards the end of their essays (inductive pattern), both directly and implicitly stated. The multiplicity in the rhetorical styles of the Ilocano writers is informed by their cultural background as people who are known to be adventurous, that they go beyond what is taught to them, and rather explore by imploring different styles in writing. On the other hand, because the Tagalog-Ilocano pre-service teachers were already a combination of the two discourse communities, the two different patterns were almost shared, yet the inductive pattern was preferred over the deductive.

Pena (2019) examined the linguistic resources and moves of the writers' self-presentation in writing their job application letters. Interestingly, it was premised that L2 writing is cultural, believing that the thought pattern used is manifested in these letters. Guided by Swale's (1990) notion of moves, rhetorical moves were determined, hand-tagged, and analyzed. The study revealed six (6) common moves in job application letters among the 10 moves identified, such as greetings, intention, educational or academic qualification, work experience, skills, and gratitude. It was reported that the overt emphasis on qualification and a lasting impression on the reader from a brief introduction of self might cause misunderstanding, leading the reader to doubt the intention of the writer. The study concluded that effective communication in business writing, say, in job application letters demands

that essential components, such as details of qualification, work experience, skills and training, contact details, and other important professional advancement are present to edify one's application.

Thumngong and Tongpoon-Patanasorn (2017) analyzed the generic structure or rhetorical moves used in the job application letters written by ASEAN applicants. To analyze the rhetorical moves employed in each letter, the study employed a coding scheme synthesized from previous studies. The study revealed a marginal difference in that ASEAN applicants almost shared a pattern in writing their job application letters. However, it was reported that the repetition or reversal of moves suggests rhetorical freedom in terms of writing a job application letter. The study also informed that most of its findings are by way at par and consistent with the findings reported from related studies previously conducted in different contexts. However, a certain interesting amount of difference involves especially the rhetorical moves employed by the ASEAN applicants, suggesting that they do not entirely follow these moves as suggested in the writing conventions of other discourse communities.

Dela Rosa et al. (2015) investigated a multitude of rhetoric features employed in job application letters written by Filipino and American teacher applicants. One of these features involved the rhetorical moves identified and categorized following Upton and Connor's (2001) Coding Scheme. Dela Rosa et al. reported that contrary to the American writers who employed the pertinent elements in a job application letter religiously, Filipino writers rather suspended strict observation of these needed elements. They would rather follow a more personalized and unconventional way of presenting details in their application letters. American writers on the other hand are more structured when writing their application letters to represent each move in their letters. The study therefore concluded that teachers be taught about the basic premise of effective job application letter writing because students' employability is prepared by way of learning how to write effectively to promote themselves. Knowing the prescribed conventions may warrant their applications to be considered by their prospective employers.

Fazilatfara and Naseri (2014) aimed to investigate the possible relationship between generic organizations of research articles in applied linguistics Iranian journals and the negotiation of researchers' identities. By applying Pho's (2008) model of move analysis, the results were associated with the instances of writer identity using Hyland's framework (2002). The results demonstrated

different percentages of writer identity categories across different moves of articles suggesting that rhetorical moves performing various functions in articles need to be carried out by specific categories of authorial identity to better satisfy the expectations of their respective applied linguistics communities. This study therefore fostered implications for those interested in teaching reading and writing to introduce the identified rhetorical structure to native and non-native English speakers as a way of informing them of specific reading skills, such as expecting what is expected while reading, identifying what purpose the authors have while writing, and getting a foundation to write according to the conventions expected in a discourse community. As cited, a considerable number of studies were conducted previously involving the identification and analysis of rhetorical moves in written discourses (Torres & Medriano, 2020; Pena, 2019; Thumngong & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017; Dela Rosa et al., 2015; Fazilatfara & Naseri, 2014). However, it is observed that some of these studies also measured data quantitatively in addition to qualitative measures to reveal the frequencies of the rhetorical moves employed in the target written discourses according to English rhetorical conventions. These studies also failed to explore any background premise that resulted to the modification of standard rhetorical conventions committed by Filipino writers in writing English texts like application letters. Regrettably, previous studies also failed to explore the rhetorical analysis of the English texts written by two (2) different discourse communities belonging to one province to consider contrastive studies in a smaller context.

It is, therefore, significant that this study analyzed and categorized the rhetorical moves in the application letters of the IP and Cebuano job applicants belonging to a province in Mindanao, Philippines to contribute to intercultural rhetoric studies in a smaller context. In contrast with previous studies, this study did not reveal the frequency of the rhetorical moves employed based on the English rhetorical convention but rather revealed the moves and their rhetorical orders and whether they followed the order of the English rhetorical moves. Moreover, this study sought to surface cultural features that explain the background premise which resulted in modifications of the English conventions committed by IP and Cebuano writers in writing their application letters.

Research Questions

1. What rhetorical moves can be found in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants?

2. What cultural features are present in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants?

Framework of the Study

This study is underpinned by an examination of the Cebuano personality, an exploration of the cultural domains of seven indigenous cultural communities (ICCs) in Bukidnon, and an analysis of the typical elements found in job application letters. By involving the glimpse of Cebuano personality informs this study on its role in the writing style of the Cebuano writers in writing their application letters. Lagahid and Puyo (2016) associated Cebuanos with possessing a sense of 'Garbo' which displays their strong pursuit to dignify their social identities by striving hard for status through education or hard work. Attainment of education to edify one's profession is a prize and becomes a marker to earn the right to be 'mapasigarbohon' (proud of oneself). 'Garbo' is also seen to regulate their public behavior to conform with the standard set of behavior in which people, especially educated ones are expected to act. In preserving social hierarchies, 'garbo' sets some of the Cebuanos' conduct over those lesser in status. It has been said that a Cebuano seldom backs down when it is a matter of pride, but too much 'garbo' could be counterproductive to one's self-presentation. Others consider one who has too much 'garbo' as 'garboso' to describe someone negatively as grandiose or a show-off.

In this study, the theoretical framework draws primarily from John Dewey's Rhetorical Theory. According to Burks (1968), Dewey's work emphasizes the dynamic interplay between language, experience, and communication, providing a foundational perspective on how individuals use rhetoric to engage in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving. By applying Dewey's theories, this research aims to illuminate the intricate connections between rhetorical strategies and the expression of experience, as seen in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants.

This study is also informed with the cultural areas of the seven tribes or indigenous communities in Bukidnon to surface any cultural traits reflected in the application letters of IP writers. Improgo (2012) reported that although the seven tribes are in different areas of the province, their ways of life are similar. In the area of religion, although they have already been exposed to different religious denominations, they still believe in the existence of spirits that affect their daily activities,

say, continue to engage in rituals. The "duay" practice is no longer widely practiced except for a few tribal leaders who still adhere to it. Giving birth with the help of a "manguguyamo" will continue as the IPs adhere to it as a safe and economical practice. The use of herbal medicines to cure certain illnesses will remain a tradition even with the presence of health centers. The IPs practice burying their dead within the day because they highly respect the dead. The dreams and aspirations of the IPs are socio-economic in nature. They long for government support to help them uplift their social and economic status. They do not want to be rich, what they want is just to survive. They want to continue the legacy that their forefathers have started.

Another framework that informs this study in analyzing and assigning moves in the sample letters is the description of the identified common moves in the job application letters, such as greetings, intention, educational qualification, work experience, skills, and gratitude (Pena, 2019). Firstly, greetings are found in the first paragraph of an application letter that establishes rapport. Like spoken discourse, greetings set the tone of a conversation by being refined, formal, and pleasant, as well as setting a positive vibe initially when infused with spiritual details that may warrant a good favor from readers. Also, writers extend their pleasantries to begin their purpose and to promote themselves as potential employees.

Secondly, the intention is a move found in the second paragraph of an application letter. The writers introduce themselves and state their intentions before enumerating their educational achievements. Some of the strategies used by the writers to convey their thoughts include the use of typical expressions that invoke emotional appeal, praising the institution or employer, and direct expression of intent. In terms of the strategy in the language used, writers may employ unnecessary words that are assumed as a form of indirectness, say, praising a prospective employer.

Thirdly, educational, or academic qualification is a staple in any application letter. It usually contains the degree attained by the applicant and other information relative to professional growth such as a master's degree or career service eligibility. Application letters contain the writers' personal and professional details which primarily aim to sell or promote themselves. The writers introduce themselves and state their intentions before citing their academic qualifications. Like spoken discourse, interlocutors usually start with pleasantries, then the main purpose of communication.

Finally, the work experience or employment history of an applicant is important to a potential employer. It narrates the past and current responsibilities of an applicant to an agency either briefly or implicitly. Skills in an application letter, as the fifth, refer to the writers' capabilities to excellently or positively execute the responsibilities of the work applied for in the application letter. Noteworthy of the writers' ways of promoting their skills involves mentioning their commitment and financial consequence once hired, stating their willingness to subject themselves to training, and expressing words of honor to the agency. And lastly, gratitude is expressed using spiritual items, such as, "God bless" and "Godspeed" to extend their gratitude to the potential employer, as well as thanking the readers or recipients for their time and consideration, followed by words of expectations in the same paragraph.

Methodology

The identification and categorization of the rhetorical moves employed in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants was purely qualitative based on semantic and pragmatic rather than on linguistic clues because accordingly, moves may vary in size that can be realized with a single sentence or more or even a short phrase or a clause (Thumnon & Tongpoon-Patanasorn, 2017). The qualitative method was chosen to analyze the rhetorical moves in application letters because it allows for a nuanced examination of the diverse linguistic strategies used by Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants. This approach aligns with the study's focus on semantic and pragmatic cues, enabling the identification of moves that may vary in length and complexity, as linguistic clues alone may not capture the full spectrum of rhetorical elements present in the letters. The qualitative analysis permits a more in-depth exploration of the content and context of these moves, enhancing the study's ability to uncover subtle cultural and linguistic nuances.

Corpus

This study analyzed two (2) sets of job application letters written by Indigenous People and Cebuano job applicants applying to a state university in the province of Mindanao, Philippines. These application letters were submitted to the Human Resource Development Unit (HRDU) of this university from June 2022 to July 2022 either for a teaching or non-teaching position. These samples were purposely selected, and the staff was asked to categorize them according to the target discourse communities based on the ethnicity specified in the applicants'

Personal Data Sheet (PDS). In this study, due to time restraints in the collection of samples and because most of the applicants did not specify their ethnicity in the PDS, the researchers analyzed only 10 samples from each discourse community.

Data Collection Procedure

To comply with the set ethical standard, the researchers first secured consent from the president of the institution where the application letters were submitted by forwarding a letter to request the release of the said documents. The letter specified the number of sample letters needed from each discourse community and guaranteed that these letters were treated with utmost confidentiality. When the request letter was approved, the researchers forwarded it to HRDU and then coordinated with the staff assigned to control the application letters to go through procedures such as signing a Data Privacy Protection Form before the release of the needed samples. After the release of the needed samples, the researchers analyzed them based on Upton and Connor's (2001) Coding Scheme as used in Dela Rosa et al. (2015). The researchers analyzed each application letter and tagged each paragraph with move or moves when it warrants more than one (1) move.

Coding Scheme

To identify the rhetorical moves employed in each letter, this study followed a coding scheme (Upton & Connor, 2001), as used in Dela Rosa et al. (2015). Table 1 shows this scheme with seven (7) moves that involve 1) identifying the source of information, 2) applying for the position, 3) providing argument including supporting information for the job application, 4) indicating desire for an interview or a desire for further contact or specify means of further communication/how to be contacted, 5) expressing politeness (pleasantries) or appreciation at the end of the letter, 6) offering to provide more information, and 7) attaching of reference resume. Accordingly, coding schemes allow a coder to identify and to categorize, as well as to observe how often a certain pattern or feature occurs, say, in a job application letter (Dela Rosa et al., 2015).

Data Analysis

To analyze and categorize the rhetorical moves employed in the application letters written by Indigenous and

Table 1. Upton and Connor's Coding Scheme

| Move | Description |
|------|--|
| 1 | Identify the source of information (Explain how and where you learned of the position) |
| 2 | Apply for the position (State desire for consideration) |
| 3 | Provide argument, including supporting information, for the job application. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Implicit argument based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience b. Argument based on what would be good for the hiring company c. Argument based on what would be good for the applicant. |
| 4 | Indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact or specify means of further communication/how to be contacted. |
| 5 | Express politeness (pleasantries) or appreciation at the end of the letter. |
| 6 | Offer to provide more information |
| 7 | Reference attached resume |

Cebuano job applicants, this study adapted Upton and Connor's (2001) Coding Scheme used in Dela Rosa et al. (2015). In the analysis, the researchers analyzed each paragraph of a letter and assigned it with a specific move or moves when a paragraph suggested more than 1 move. In the presentation of these moves, the researchers assigned each move to its equivalent move based on Upton and Connor's (2001) whether they are of the same number or not to see if this assignment follows the prescribed order.

Results and Discussion

To identify and analyze the rhetorical moves in the application letters of the IP and Cebuano job applicants, the coding scheme for application letters developed by Upton and Connor (2001) was adapted. Generally, Table 2 and Table 3 present the rhetorical moves and the order of these moves as employed in the sample letters. Specifically, Table 2 shows the rhetorical moves and the order of these moves as employed in the sample letters written by IP writers, while Table 3 shows the rhetorical moves and the order of these moves as employed by Cebuano writers.

Table 2 reveals the rhetorical moves common to all IP writers based on the moves espoused by Upton and Connor such as apply for the position, explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience-what would be good for the hiring company and what would be good for the applicant, indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact or specify means of further communication or how to be contacted, and express pleasantries such as politeness or appreciation at the end of the letter. Interestingly, the results also revealed that IP writers employed other

moves that include greetings, demographic information, and anticipation of response which are not present in Upton and Connor's.

As ascertained in Table 2, the IP writers were able to employ some of the rhetorical moves based on Upton and Connor's (2001). However, the application of these moves did not follow the order of the prescribed rhetorical moves. The IP writers were also able to employ other moves, such as, expression of greetings, provision of demographic information, and anticipation of response in addition to Upton and Connor's which generally warrants the 7 common moves present in the application letters written by IP writers in the following order: M1-greetings, M2-apply for the position, M3-provide demographic information, M4-explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience, what would be good for the hiring company and what would be good for the applicant, M5-anticipate response, M6-indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact, and M7-express pleasantries.

To consider the background premise which may have influenced this significant modification, Improgo (2012) reported that although Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Bukidnon have already been exposed to cultures of different communities, they would still practice and integrate their own culture to protect and preserve them. They even long for government support to help them uplift their social and economic status, including the protection of their rights. Interestingly, IPs do not even want to be rich but are striving and adapting to survive. Given the cultural inclination about IPs, this result suggests that although IP writers are exposed to an English convention in writing to promote themselves such as writing an application letter, indigenous people would still cling to their own way of writing to protect and promote their

Table 2. The Summary of Rhetorical Moves and the Order of these Moves in the Application Letters of Indigenous Job Applicants

| ALs by IPs | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 | M7 | Other Moves |
|-------------------------------|---|----|----------|----|----------|----|----|---|
| AL1 | - | M2 | M4 | M7 | M5 | - | - | M1-Greetings; M3-Provide demographic info; M6-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL1</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (provide demographic info), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (express pleasantries), M6 (anticipate response), M7 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL2 | - | M2 | M3 | M5 | M4 | - | - | M1-Greetings with salutation; M6-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL2</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (express pleasantries), M5 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M6 (anticipate response) | | | | | | | |
| AL3 | - | M3 | M4 | M7 | M2 M6 | - | - | M1-Greetings; M5-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL3</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (express pleasantries), M3 (apply for the position), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (anticipate response), M6 (express pleasantries), M7 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL4 | M1 | M2 | M4 | M5 | M6 | - | - | M3-Provide demographic info |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL4</i> | M1 (identify the source of information), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (provide demographic info), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M6 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL5 | - | M2 | M3 M5 | M7 | M4 M9 | - | M8 | M1-Greetings; M6-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL5</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (express pleasantries), M5 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M6 (anticipate response), M7 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M8 (reference attached resume), M9 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL6 | - | M1 | M2 M4 | M6 | M7 | M5 | - | M3- Provide demographic info |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL6</i> | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M3 (provide demographic info), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (offer to provide more information), M6 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M7 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL7 | - | M4 | M3 M5 | M7 | M8 | - | M6 | M1-Greetings; M2- Provide demographic info |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL7</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (provide demographic info), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (apply for the position), M5 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M6 (reference attached resume), M7 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M8 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL8 | - | M2 | M4 | M7 | M5 | - | - | M1-Greetings; M3-Provide demographic info; M6-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL8</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (provide demographic info), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (express pleasantries), M6 (anticipate response), M7 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL9 | - | M1 | M4 | M6 | M5 | M3 | M2 | - |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL9</i> | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (reference attached resume), M3 (offer to provide more information), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (express pleasantries), M6 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL10 | - | M2 | M4 | M5 | M8 | - | M6 | M1-Greetings; M3-Provide demographic info; M7-Anticipate response |
| <i>Order of Moves in AL10</i> | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (provide demographic info), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M6 (reference attached resume), M7 (anticipate response), M8 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |

freedom on how to express themselves. Though freedom may be at hand, they may also seek assistance from, say, a teacher of writing to help themselves up in pursuit of survival in the academe, but never to be better than

anyone else. On the other hand, though Improgo failed to associate IPs as indirect kinds of people, the result also revealed a considerable number of moves committed by IP writers. This result may establish a connection

between IPs and a communication style characterized by indirectness, a preference for personal expression, and a cyclical nature.

Table 3 reveals the rhetorical moves common to all Cebuano writers based also on Upton and Connor's (2001) that include applying for the position, explaining qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience would be good for the hiring company and what would be good for the applicant, indicating the desire for an interview or a desire for further contact or specify means of further communication or how to be

contacted, and express pleasantries such as politeness or appreciation at the end of the letter. Another interesting result revealed that like the IP writers, Cebuano writers also employed other moves that are not present in Upton and Connor's (2001). However, in contrast to the other writers, Cebuanos only employed a single additional move to include demographic information in their application letters which amounts to the 5 common moves employed by Cebuano writers in the following order: M1-apply for the position), M2-explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application based on neutral evidence or information about background and experience, what would be good for the hiring company, and what would be good for

Table 3. The Summary of Rhetorical Moves and the Order of these Moves in the Application Letters of Cebuano Job Applicants

| ALs by Cebuanos | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | M6 | M7 | Other Moves |
|------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|--|
| AL1 | - | M1 | M2 | M4 | M5 | - | M3 | - |
| Order of Moves in AL1 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M3 (reference attached resume), M4 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M5 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL2 | - | M1 | M3 | M4 | - | - | - | M2-Provide demographic info; M5-Anticipate response |
| Order of Moves in AL2 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (provide demographic information), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M5 (anticipate response) | | | | | | | |
| AL3 | - | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | - | - | M1-Provide demographic info |
| Order of Moves in AL3 | M1 (provide demographic information), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M5 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL4 | - | M1 | M2 | M3 | M4 | - | - | - |
| Order of Moves in AL4 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M3 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M4 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL5 | - | M2 | M3 | M4 | M5 | - | - | M1-Greetings |
| Order of Moves in AL5 | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M5 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL6 | - | M1 | M3 | M5 | - | - | M4 | M2- Provide demographic info |
| Order of Moves in AL6 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (provide demographic information), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (reference attached resume), M5 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL7 | - | M1 | M2 | M3 | - | - | - | - |
| Order of Moves in AL7 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M3 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact) | | | | | | | |
| AL8 | - | M2 | M4 | - | M7 | - | M5 | M1-Greetings; M3- Provide demographic info; M6-Anticipate response |
| Order of Moves in AL8 | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (provide demographic information), M4 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M5 (reference attached resume), M6 (anticipate response), M7 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL9 | - | M2 | M3 | - | M4 | - | - | M1-Greetings |
| Order of Moves in AL9 | M1 (greetings), M2 (apply for the position), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |
| AL10 | - | M1 | M3 | M4 | M5 | - | - | M2-Provide demographic info |
| Order of Moves in AL10 | M1 (apply for the position), M2 (provide demographic information), M3 (explain qualifications by providing argument including supporting information for the job application), M4 (indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact), M5 (express pleasantries) | | | | | | | |

the applicant, M3-include demographic information, M4-indicate desire for an interview or a desire for further contact, or specify means of further communication or how to be contacted, and M5-express pleasantries such as politeness or appreciation at the end of the letter.

As presented in Table 3, the result revealed that in contrast with IP writers who have shown indirectness and circularity in writing their application letters, Cebuano writers tend to be direct or linear in writing their application letters. The sample letters are well-structured in a way that they religiously assumed the English rhetorical convention present in Upton and Connor's (2001). To consider the background premise which may have influenced this significant linearity, Lagahid and Puyo (2016) associated Cebuanos to possess a sense of 'Garbo' which display their strong pursuit to dignify their social identities by striving hard for a status through education or hard work. Attainment of education to edify one's profession is a prize and becomes a marker to earn the right to be 'mapasigarbohon' (proud of oneself). 'Garbo' is also seen to regulate their public behavior to conform with the standard set of behavior in which people, especially educated ones are expected to act. This cultural trait can then be assumed to have played a role in the application letters written by Cebuano writers. Because Cebuanos possess a sense of 'Garbo', they tend to display their strong pursuit to be better, say, in writing classes, to dignify their status in the academ by way of following a standard set of conventions which students are expected to follow.

Answer to the first research question ("What rhetorical moves can be found in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants?"):

Table 2 provides an overview of the rhetorical moves employed in the application letters of Indigenous People (IP) job applicants. It specifies the following rhetorical moves used by IP applicants:

- M1: Greetings
- M2: Apply for the position
- M3: Provide demographic information
- M4: Explain qualifications by providing an argument with supporting information
- M5: Anticipate response
- M6: Indicate a desire for an interview or further contact
- M7: Express pleasantries

It also notes that IP writers included additional moves such as greetings, demographic information, and anticipation of a response, which were not present in the conventional application letter format outlined by Upton and Connor.

Additionally, it highlights that the order of these moves was not strictly aligned with the standard convention.

Answer to the second research question ("What cultural features are present in the application letters of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants?"):

Table 2 and the associated discussion touch upon the cultural features found in the application letters of Indigenous job applicants. It suggests that the cultural inclination of Indigenous People to preserve their own writing style and express themselves freely, despite being exposed to English conventions, may have influenced the modification of rhetorical moves in their application letters. For Cebuano applicants, Table 3 highlights that they tend to adhere to a more linear and direct writing style, aligning closely with the English rhetorical convention present in Upton and Connor. This is attributed to the cultural trait of 'Garbo,' associated with Cebuanos, which emphasizes pursuing education and striving for a higher status in society.

To summarize, the answers to the first research question are mainly found in the analysis of Table 2, while the answers to the second research question are embedded within the discussions surrounding the cultural influences on the writing styles of both Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants.

Conclusion

The study analyzed the rhetorical moves present in the application letters of the Indigenous People and Cebuano job applicants in a state university located in the province of Mindanao, Philippines. The analysis of the corpus revealed that the two discourse communities significantly differ in the employment of rhetorical moves in writing their letters. IP writers employed additional moves that are not present in Upton and Connor's (2001) Coding Scheme such as expression of greetings, provision of demographic information, and anticipation of response which warranted the 7 common moves present in the application letters written by IP writers, while Cebuano writers, in contrast with the IP writers, only employed a single additional move to include demographic information in their application letters to which amount the 5 common moves employed in their application letters. IPs in Bukidnon, although exposed to cultures of different communities, would still practice, and integrate their own culture which means that although IP writers are exposed to an English convention in writing, they would still cling to their own way of writing and tend to

be indirect in their dealings and rather have themselves expressed too personal and cyclical. While Cebuanos possess a sense of 'Garbo' which displays their strong pursuit to dignify their social identities by striving hard for a status through education or hard work which also regulates their public behavior to conform with the standard set of behavior. This explains that Cebuanos tend to display their strong pursuit to be better, say, in writing classes, to dignify their status in the academe by way of following a standard set of conventions that they are expected to follow.

Moreover, the study underscores the enduring impact of culture on individuals' communication styles, as observed in the Indigenous People's inclination towards indirect and personal expression, and the Cebuanos' adherence to standardized conventions. These insights extend beyond the scope of job application letters, highlighting broader implications for intercultural communication and language practices in diverse contexts. As we navigate an increasingly globalized world, understanding how culture and rhetoric intersect in written communication becomes essential. This research not only sheds light on the specific practices of Indigenous and Cebuano job applicants but also contributes to the broader conversation on cultural and rhetorical diversity in communication.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Cognitive Flexibility and Intolerance of Uncertainty amongst Undergraduate Dental and Medical Students during COVID-19 in a Healthcare University

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ABSTRACT

As the pandemic unfolded, the uncertainty about the continuity of learning became a source of stress for medical and dental undergraduates. Cognitive flexibility (CF) is one's capacity to adapt in response to environmental changes. CF correlated with intolerance of uncertainty (IU) which influences one's reaction to events. Previous literature has analyzed students' CF and IU. However, CF and IU during the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be explored especially for medical and dental students as these courses are practical skill based and when taught virtually can give rise to stress students and create self-doubt of their abilities. The Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS) and Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS) scales were administered to 74 medical and 89 dental students. An independent t-test revealed a significant difference in CF and IU between the medical and dental students. Dental students possessed lower CF and higher IU as opposed to medical students. A simple linear regression, IU was found to be inversely predicted by CF. The findings infer that medical students who have high CF are able to adjust to changes such as the sudden transformation to online learning settings during uncertain events like the COVID-19 pandemic as opposed to dental students. This study implies that the university needs to devise an intervention to assist dental students, particularly prepare them to face challenges and, to adapt to uncertainties in future.

Keywords: COVID-19, dental education, dental students, medical education, medical students, mental health

Introduction

After being discovered for the first time on December 31st, 2019, in Wuhan City, China, the coronavirus has caused waves worldwide. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a global public health emergency (WHO, 2020). In Malaysia, the first case of COVID-19 was detected on 25 January 2020 and by 18

March 2020, a nationwide "Movement Control Order" was implemented to control the spread of COVID-19 (Shah et al., 2020). As the pandemic unfolded, the educational system was severely hit, with the shutting down of all universities and adoption of online learning, which impacted clinical training to an extent (Ramachandran et al. 2023). Although the theoretical aspects of the program were largely restored through online lessons,

clinical training suffered. The unpredictable scenario, with uncertainties related to academic performance, course extension, future career prospects, social and financial constraints together posed as major stressors amongst university students (Sundarasan et al., 2020; Ramachandiran et al. 2023). A recent study showed several Norwegian dental students considered quitting their studies due to uncertainty and accumulated stress related to COVID-19 (Løset et al., 2022). Numerous studies have consistently found high levels of stress among dental and medical students (Montero-Marín et al., 2014; Brondani et al., 2014). There are several causes of stress amongst dental students for instance performing clinical dentistry, managing patients, meeting academic and clinical requirements, frequent assessments, anxiety over failing or falling behind, interactions with peers, clinical educators, and support staff, as well as a lack of time for self-care and relationships with loved ones (Burk & Bender, 2005; Naidu et al, 2002). Whereas, for medical students the expectations and strain of medical school may threaten their personal welfare in training, contributing to high levels of anxiety, depression, burnout, and psychological distress (Dyrbye et al. 2006). Mental health issues among students were shown to be strongly correlated with exam stress as a result of non-interaction interactions with faculty. A previous study has demonstrated a marked rise in perceived stress from first-year to third-year medical students, with an increased risk for depression (Ludwig et al., 2015). Eustress enhances performance, but distress or negative experiences of stress-related symptoms have adverse effects on mental health (Hakami et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study investigated the fundamental elements of intolerance to uncertainty which is one of the contributing factors to stress level and cognitive flexibility on how an individual can adapt to unforeseen situations.

One of the aims of this study is to compare dental and medical students because both medical and dental programmes incorporated more simulation and virtual learning methodologies during the pandemic to make up for the deficit of clinical skill learning. Dental students rely heavily on hands-on skills to develop manual dexterity, while medical students rely on clinical rotations for patient interaction. Thus, restricted practical experience impacted the development of these skills which affected the confidence levels of the student (Ramachandiran et al., 2023). However, medical students could simulate a broader range of medical procedures and patient interactions as compared to dental students who rely heavily on hands-on skills and clinical experience. Both medical and dental students also engage in research as part of

their education. The pandemic had varying effects on research opportunities, with some projects being delayed or modified to accommodate remote work (Chaklader et al., 2022). Hence, a comparison is made between the undergraduate students of both these programmes.

Intolerance of Uncertainty (IU)

According to Buhr and Dugas (2009), the tendency to react negatively to uncertain situations and occurrences on an emotional, cognitive, and behavioural level is a personality trait that results from prior unfavourable ideas about uncertainty and its effects. Individuals who are unable to tolerate uncertainty are believed to possess a lack of coping skills to deal with threatening conditions which creates negative feelings. Individuals with high IU interpret unpredictable events as unsettling and frightening, leading to pessimistic expectations about the future (Demirtas & Yildiz, 2019). The health-related professions are full of uncertainty. It is of utmost importance for health professional students to have the ability to cope with different uncertainties that they would encounter in life. A study conducted in Turkey with 1772 participants showed an indirect relationship between high IU and low mental well-being (Satici et al., 2022). Previous literature shows that IU significantly predicted depression, anxiety, and insomnia (Zhuo et al., 2021). IU scale was associated with worry, anxiety, and depression (Buhr & Dugas, 2003; Freeston et al., 1994).

Cognitive Flexibility (CF)

According to Rhodes and Rozell (2017), cognitive flexibility is defined as the ability to assimilate previously learned information and concepts to generate novel solutions to new problems. It is referred to as one's ability to flexibly adjust one's behaviour to changing environmental demands (Armbruster et al., 2012). People with greater cognitive flexibility are adaptive and assertive, conscious of their choices in dealing with problems, sociable, sensitive, and tolerant of conflict and uncertainty. It improves one's capacity to deal with both physical and environmental stressors. Gabrys et al. (2018), have reported a strong association between cognitive flexibility scores and negative stress. When combined with optimistic thinking, high levels of CF have been linked to a significant reduction in emotional stress. Cambaz and Ünal recently studied the CF among students before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and concluded that CF of students decreased over time during the pandemic (Cambaz & Ünal, 2021).

Dual Process Theory on Intolerance of Uncertainty (IU) and Cognitive Flexibility (CF) among Medical and Dental Students

Dual process theory posits that the higher the intolerance of uncertainty the lower one's cognitive flexibility. Intolerance of uncertainty refers to an individual's discomfort or inability to deal with situations that are uncertain or ambiguous. Cognitive flexibility, on the other hand, is the ability to adapt and change one's thinking or behaviour in response to new or unexpected situations. When people are faced with a highly uncertain and rapidly changing situation like a pandemic, those who struggle with uncertainty may find it challenging to adapt to new information, make decisions, and change their behaviours as the situation evolves.

Dual process theory explains how humans have two cognitive processes, which are automatic or intuitive and controlled or deliberative. Cognitive flexibility is associated with controlled thinking, permitting individuals to adapt to uncertain situations. Whereas, intolerance of uncertainty is related to intuitive thinking, which tends to be less flexible and more reactive.

According to Evans & Stanovich, (2013), in dual-process theory, there are two general types of processes that function in the mind. The first process is called Type 1 that produces "intuitive" response autonomously and with less thinking involved. Whereas, the second is called Type 2 which requires more effortful thinking.

However, it's essential to note that these relationships can vary greatly from person to person. Some individuals may have high intolerance of uncertainty but still demonstrate high cognitive flexibility, while others with low intolerance of uncertainty may struggle with flexibility in their thinking and behavior, which is one of the objectives of this study.

The ability to tolerate ambiguity is linked to cognitive rigidity, which affects how people perceive, comprehend, and respond to circumstances. Previous literature suggests that CF is negatively correlated with IU. Lieberman et al demonstrated that adults with panic disorder had a negative correlation between CF and IU (Lieberman et al. 2016). Demirtas and Yildiz (2019) explored the relationship among hopelessness, CF, IU, and perceived stress among 302 university students in Turkey and suggested that CF was inversely correlated with IU and stress scale among non-health professional university students in Turkey. Results show that CF is a key characteristic that helps people build efficient coping methods for

uncertain situations, however, it will reduce IU in stressful conditions. A mediation study suggested cognitive rigidity as a likely target for upcoming therapy among panic disorder patients with high IU. A group of adults with panic disorder showed a negative correlation between CF and IU (Lieberman et al., 2016). Several researchers have studied the IU and CF of students. However, COVID-19's psychosocial effects on undergraduate dental and medical students and their ability to protect their mental health have not yet been sufficiently explored. In terms of theorizing the relationship between these two variables, IU serves as a structure and CF serves as a function. The objectives of this study are to determine the significant differences in intolerance to uncertainty and cognitive flexibility between undergraduate dental and medical students and to determine the significant prediction of intolerance of uncertainty from cognitive flexibility among both the programmes during COVID-19 pandemic. The first null hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in intolerance to uncertainty and cognitive flexibility between undergraduate dental and medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic and the second null hypothesis was that there is no significant prediction of the intolerance of uncertainty from cognitive flexibility of dental and medical undergraduates during COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Procedure

A cross-sectional survey design was conducted in this study. Stratified random sampling was employed and the population was divided into 2 strata (medical and dental students). The inclusion criteria encompassed actively enrolled dental and medical students in Years 1 through 5, while individuals who had been deferred, terminated, or suspended were excluded from the study. The population size of dental and medical undergraduates in the university was 300 and 700 respectively. The final sample N = 163, are the respondents who volunteered to participate in the survey which consisted of 89 dental and 74 medical students. In addition, using G-power sample size calculation, the overall predicted sample size is 148, with power of .95, margin of error .05 and with large effect size = .60 suffices the final sample collected.

A single mode of online data collection was employed through Google Forms which was sent to students through email and WhatsApp messages. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Online informed consent was obtained from all individual participants. Eighty nine

dental students and 74 medical students consented and completed the survey.

Sample Size

A total of 163 responses were collected out of which 89 dental students and 74 medical students participated in the survey. Almost 70% female respondents and 30% male students participated. The ethnicity of most respondents was Chinese (82.8%), followed by Indians (8.6%) and Malays (4.3%). The students ranged from Year 1 to 5, with the majority of 33.7% students in Year 3 and 22.1% in Year 4. The mean age was 21.79 years with a standard deviation of 1.623. 64.4 % of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 23.

Instruments

Three sets of questionnaires were distributed to students who consented to take part in the study. The survey involved self-administered questionnaires through an online platform which consisted of a sociodemographic profile, Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS), and Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS).

Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS)

IUS was first developed in French before being translated into English (Freeston et al., 1994). The English version of IUS was utilised by Buhr & Dugas in 2009.

This scale assesses a trait-like belief that uncertainty harms one's reputation, irritates them, stresses them out, and inhibits them from acting. There were a total of 27 items. The response format is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "not at all characteristics of me" to 5 = "entirely characteristic of me." The scoring has two factors, i.e., uni-factorial and bi-factorial. Higher scores imply higher level of uncertainty of intolerance by simply adding up all items which results in uni-factorial. Regarding the bi-factorial dimension, Factor 1 is calculated by summing up Items 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 23, and 25, which measures uncertainty and has negative behavioral and self-referent implications. The responses for items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21, 26, and 27 were added to score for Factor 2 which measures uncertainty is unfair and spoils everything. IUS has shown good convergent and divergent validity, excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.9189$) (Vadivel et al., 2022), and good

test-retest reliability indices over twelve weeks (Wilson, et al., 2020). ($\alpha = 0.78$).

Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS)

Martin and Rubin developed CFS in 1995. The ability to be adaptive, flexible, and confident in one's ability to be flexible are all measured by this test. It has a total of 12 items. A 6-point Likert scale with the options of 6 = Strongly Agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree was provided. Items 2, 3, 5, and 10 are reversed scored. The test-retest reliability was measured using Pearson correlation tested 1 week apart ($r = 0.83$) (Martin and Rubin, 1995). The scale has high concurrent validity with the Interaction Involvement Scale.

Ethical approval

The university's Ethics Committee was sought for ethical approval, (BDS I-01/2021(10)).

Results

Data was analysed using an independent t-test and simple linear regression. Decision criteria were set at $p < 0.05$ to determine the hypothesis rejection threshold. Table 1 shows breakdown of demographic factors.

Table 1. Demographic of respondents ($N = 163$)

| Category | | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|---------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 49 | 30.1 |
| | Female | 114 | 69.9 |
| Ethnicity | Malay | 7 | 4.3 |
| | Chinese | 135 | 82.8 |
| | Indian | 14 | 8.6 |
| | Others | 7 | 4.3 |
| Program | Dental | 89 | 54.6 |
| | Medical | 74 | 45.4 |
| Year of Study | 1 | 26 | 16.0 |
| | 2 | 26 | 16.0 |
| | 3 | 55 | 33.7 |
| | 4 | 36 | 22.1 |
| | 5 | 20 | 12.3 |
| Age | 18-20 | 35 | 21.5 |
| | 21-23 | 105 | 64.4 |
| | 24-26 | 21 | 12.9 |
| | 27-29 | 2 | 1.2 |

Source: Author

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was not violated for both the measured variables. Based on the score range, it can be construed that the degree of IU amongst both professions is generally low, as the scores range from 27 to 135. An independent t-test was employed to analyse the significant difference between the two programs in IU and CF variables respectively. The homogeneity of variance was evaluated using Levene's test of equality of variances. Assumptions were not violated for both variables, $F(1.404), (161), p = .238$; $F(2.568), (161), p = 0.11$. Results show that IU is significantly higher among dental students ($M_{\text{dental}} = 78.70, SD_{\text{dental}} = 19.31$); ($M_{\text{medical}} = 69.77, SD_{\text{medical}} = 21.720$), $t(161) = 2.777, p = .006$ with a very large effect size of Cohen's $d = 20.435$.

Results for CF among the two programs revealed that medical students' mean score was higher ($M_{\text{dental}} = 50.52, SD_{\text{dental}} = 6.519$); ($M_{\text{medical}} = 53.08, SD_{\text{medical}} = 7.094$), $t(161) = -2.402, p = .017$ Cohen's $d = 6.786$, inferring large effect size. CF scores range from 12 to 72, which infers both professions fared above average.

All assumptions for linear regression such as homogeneity of variances and normality of residual were not violated. A linear regression analysis was used to determine whether CF would predict IU for both programmes during the COVID-19 pandemic, ANOVA, $F(1, 161) = 17.385; p < .001$ shows a significant value, indicating that the regression model is fit, thus, the predictor (CF) successfully predicted the dependent variable (IU); ($\beta = -0.946, p < .001; t = 4.170, p < .001$). A coefficient of determination of 9.7% variance in IU is explained by CF. For every 1 unit increase in CF, IU is decreased by -.946. The negative beta coefficient indicates that a higher degree of CF predicted a lower IU. Thus, demonstrating that students who are aware of alternatives, are flexible, adaptable, and are able to accept uncertain events readily.

Discussion

The first objective is to compare the IU and CF between undergraduate dental students and medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dental students demonstrated a higher mean score in IU in comparison to medical students thus the first null hypothesis is rejected. In line with the results, dental students have lower CF levels as compared to medical students. This finding raises concern about dental undergraduates' performance on IU and CF. These findings are aligned with a study conducted in Kuwait which compared the stress levels of medical and dental undergraduates and concluded that dental students were more burdened because the dentistry

curriculum covering more subjects during an academic year than the medical curriculum (Ahmad et al., 2017). Additional pressure stems from the technical skills dental students need to master in the dental simulation labs before they treat real patients. Medical education was found to be less stressful as compared to dental education by assessing chronic stress both before the start of an undergraduate course and after it has ended (Schmitter et al., 2008). According to a similar study conducted in Pakistan, dental students experienced higher stress than medical students in the clinical years of training (Abbasi et al., 2020). Another study conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany found that dental students have a heavier mental workload than medical students due to the significant practical content at the beginning of their studies (Guse et al., 2021). Intervention must be given in the form of integrated mechanisms of adapting to uncertain events and stress management techniques in the dental program to overcome the curricular challenges and produce future work-ready dental professionals by enhancing their psychological health to encounter unforeseen circumstances.

The second objective is to predict IU from CF. The findings from this study concluded that there is a significant prediction of IU from CF, thus the second null hypothesis is rejected. This is in line with a few findings from earlier investigations that suggested CF is inversely correlated with IU. For instance, according to Lieberman et al., adults with panic disorder have a negative correlation between their CF and their IU (Lieberman et al., 2016). Demirtas and Yildiz (2019) have explored the relationship between IU, perceived stress, hopelessness, and CF, among 302 university students in Turkey and reported that CF correlated negatively with IU and perceived stress.

Dental undergraduates who have low CF find it challenging to adapt to the changing environment and enduring unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, the ability to cope and adapt to the ever-changing environment must be enhanced. Constant training must be incorporated into the curriculum and assessment to enhance thinking capacity to encounter the challenges in future.

Limitations and Scope for Further Research

Despite the significant findings in this study, there are some limitations. IU and CF in students is measured at one point at one point in time only. The data was collected entirely through the online survey which could be prone to response bias. The size and diversity of our sample constrains the generalisability of our findings as almost

70% of the participants are female with 83% of Chinese ethnicity. These limit the generalization of findings to males and other ethnicities. We also have an insufficient sample size involving participants from a single private institution. Therefore, future research can be conducted with a larger sample size and a homogenous mix of students in terms of various programs to generalize at a bigger scale.

Conclusion

This study was conducted during COVID-19 pandemic, when there was an abrupt transition from traditional mode of teaching and learning to virtual education which impacted both medical and dental programs. The programmes are intended to be clinically oriented where patient-interaction is required. This phenomenon has brought about a postulation of the beliefs and feelings about the medical and dental students' behavior in regard to how much cognitive flexibility they possess and uncertainty tolerance during unforeseen circumstances, in this case the COVID-19 pandemic. The objective of this study is to determine the significant differences in CF and IU between undergraduate dental and medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The other objective is to determine whether CF is able to predict IU. Findings indicate that CF successfully predicted IU conforming with past studies, indicating an inverse negative correlation. There was also a significant difference in CF and IU between medical and dental students. Dental students scored low in cognitive flexibility and high in intolerance of uncertainty as opposed to medical students.

The findings will be of interest to educational institutions especially offering health professional education programmes which involves clinical practice and skills. The results emphasize the practical implication of enhancing cognitive flexibility by adjusting to overcome obstacles that may affect clinical learning.

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Competing interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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Appendix: Supplementary Data

Part 1: Participant Demographic

Questionnaires

Age: |__|__| years

Gender:

☐ Male ☐ Female

Ethnicity:

☐ Malay ☐ Chinese ☐ Indian ☐ Other *please specify:* _____

Nationality:

☐ Malaysian ☐ Other *please specify:* _____

Email address: _____

Are you an active undergraduate student in XXX university?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you a medical or dental student?

☐ Medical ☐ Dental

Which year are you in?

☐ Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☐ Year 4 ☐ Year 5

Part 2: Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale

Instruction: Please use the scale below to describe to what extent each item is characteristic of you. Please circle a number (1 to 5) that describes you best.

1. Uncertainty stops me from having a firm opinion.



2. Being uncertain means that a person is disorganised.



3. Uncertainty makes life intolerable.



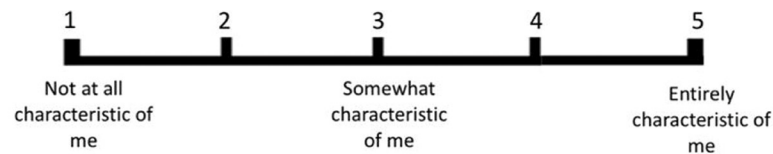
5. My mind can't be relaxed if I don't know what will happen tomorrow.



6. Uncertainty makes me uneasy, anxious, or stressed.



7. Unforeseen events upset me greatly.



8. It frustrates me not having all the information I need.



9. Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life.



10. One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises.



11. A small unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning.



12. When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyses me.



13. Being uncertain means that I am not first rate.



14. When I am uncertain, I can't go forward.



15. When I am uncertain I can't function very well.



16. Unlike me, others always seem to know where they are going with their lives.



17. Uncertainty makes me vulnerable, unhappy, or sad.



18. I always want to know what the future has in store for me.



19. I can't stand being taken by surprise.



20. The smallest doubt can stop me from acting.



21. I should be able to organise everything in advance.



22. Being uncertain means that I lack confidence.



23. I think it's unfair that other people seem sure about their future.



24. Uncertainty keeps me from sleeping soundly.



25. I must get away from all uncertain situations.



26. The ambiguities in life stress me.



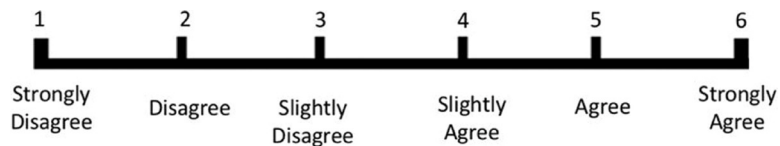
27. I can't stand being undecided about my future.



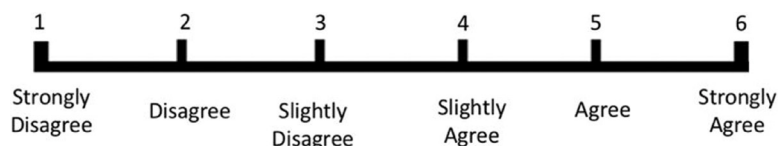
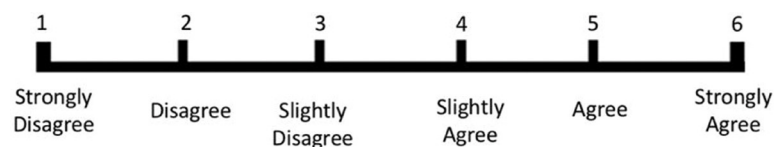
Part 3: Cognitive Flexibility Scale

Instructions: The following statements deal with your beliefs and feelings about your own behaviour. Read each statement and respond by ticking the number that best represents your agreement with each statement.

1. I can communicate an idea in many different ways.

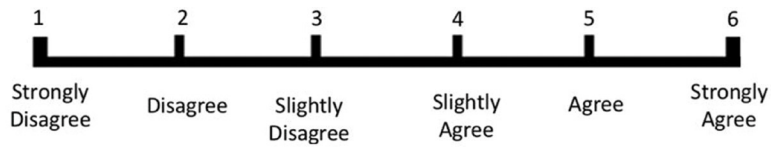


2. I avoid new and unusual situations.

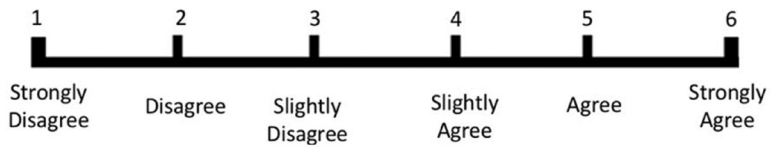


3. I feel like I never get to make decisions.

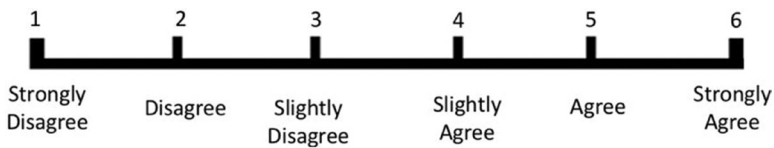
4. I can find workable solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems.



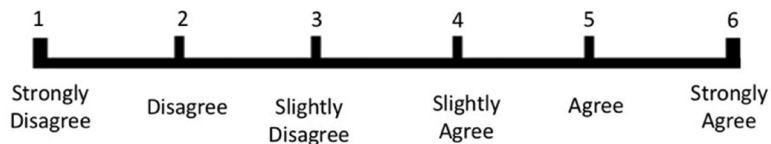
5. I seldom have choices when deciding how to behave.



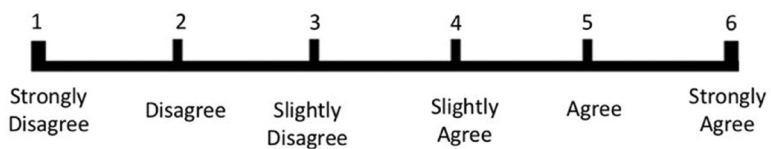
6. I am willing to work at creative solutions to problems.



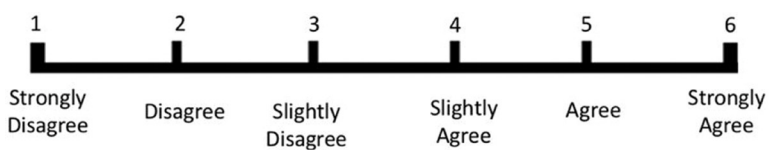
7. In any given situation, I am able to act appropriately.



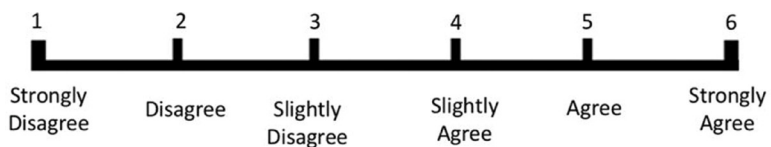
8. My behavior is a result of conscious decisions that I make.



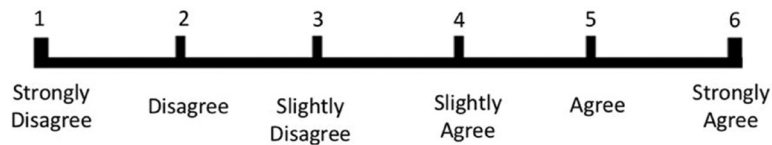
9. I have many possible ways of behaving in any given situation.



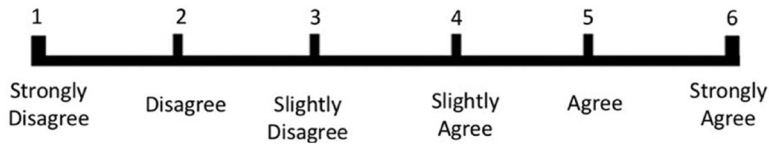
10. I have difficulty using my knowledge on a given topic in real life situations.



11. I am willing to listen and consider alternatives for handling a problem.



12. I have the self-confidence necessary to try different ways of behaving.



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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Education for Environmental Sustainability in Preschool through STEM Project-based Learning

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ABSTRACT

Educating preschool children on environmental sustainability is an excellent investment in shaping a sustainable society. In this study, the researchers conducted action research using Lilian Katz's Project Approach in cooperation with two teachers to explore the process of developing and implementing STEM modules in a preschool in Chengdu, China. Thirty children aged 5 to 6 years were involved in STEM modules in two cycles, each cycle was improved based on feedback from the previous cycle. Adopting the constructivist approach, these STEM modules are child-centered, inquiry-driven, and process-oriented. Through observation and interviews with teachers, children and principals, it was found that these STEM modules successfully engaged children to investigate, deepen their understanding of trees, motivate them to experiment and innovate, and enhance their self-learning ability. The children were happy and excited to learn, they expressed aspirations to create a green world, protect trees, and save and recycle paper. In short, they showed the beginning of understanding and awareness of environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, STEM, Modules, Project Approach, Preschool, Action Research

Introduction

In today's modern world, there has been an increasing concern for the prolific man-made environment that has caused problems such as depletion of natural resources, global warming, and declining biodiversity (Gunderson, 2014). Educating individuals with nature-loving attitudes and behaviors toward the sustainability of the environment is a crucial first step to solving these problems. Educational researchers suggested that effective implementation of environmental education promotes the formation of responsible attitudes and behaviors in individuals, which have long-lasting outcomes that will influence society and the world they live in (Cagle, 2018; Corraliza & Collado, 2019). To drive such

desired change in environmental behaviors, all individuals need to be equipped and empowered by their values and heightened awareness, knowledge, and skills to create a world that is more just, peaceful, and sustainable, as stated in the Rio+20 (UN Convention on Sustainable Development, Rio De Janeiro, 2012). The effort starting early childhood is a good investment to establish a long-term friendly relationship between humans and the environment, nurturing environmental sensitivity in young global citizens. It is well established that such positive relationships and environmental sensitivity in individuals should be developed within the scope of environmental education in early childhood (UNESCO, 1978). Education for environmental sustainability without a doubt needs to begin from a young age.

Literature Review

Environmental problem is ascribed to the lost connection between humans and nature (Clayton, 2003; Mayer & Frantz, 2004; R. Wilson, 2007). Schultz (2002) emphasized that an increase in our bond (connection) with nature through engagement in activities using various kinds of natural elements and within the nature setting will help us to accumulate experiences that help achieve positive behavioural changes in our environmental awareness and sensitivity. This engagement needs to start young to widen the children's environmental perspectives and develop their emotional connection with nature and their interest in topics related to the environment. Researchers like Chawla and Cushing (2007) and Wells and Lekies (2006) agree that this is the purpose of education for environmental sustainability. Environmental sustainability is generally defined as the ability of our planet Earth to maintain an ecological balance in terms of its natural resources to support the well-being of current and future generations. Educating children in environmental sustainability is therefore of utmost importance for human survival as environmental degradation and climate change are increasingly harming the earth. According to Louv (2008), the limited time children spend in nature leads to weak ties(connection) with the environment, which, in turn, negatively impacts their development of sensitivity towards environmental sustainability.

Many studies have revealed that children may form responsible behaviors, positive attitudes, and environmental ethics once their affection and love for nature are nurtured in their early years of life (Fisman, 2005; Palmberg & Kuru, 2000). Thus, this call for environmental education in early childhood is urgently needed (Ernst & Burcak, 2019; Otto et al., 2019; Wals & Benavot, 2017). It is critical to strengthen and maintain this connection with nature in the early years, as it is only when these feelings embed themselves in the way children see the world that action for environmental sustainability take root especially when they become responsible adult (Kahn Jr. & Kellert, 2002; Tilbury, 1994; R. Wilson, 2007).

One of the most effective ways to implement children's environmental education programs is to design them in line with children's learning and development. This would help to develop their love of nature, increase their interaction and connection with nature and form a positive attitude. Many kinds of research have been conducted to study children's understanding of science concepts related to the environment. The main target

of these studies is the development of environmental education programs that could shape children's attitudes and behaviors positively toward the environment (Ergazaki & Andriotou, 2010; Littledyke, 2004; Palmer, 1995).

Problem Statement

In China, preschools are mandated by the Ministry of Education to provide children with high-quality early childhood education programs. Many preschool education providers and teachers understood high quality as readiness for primary school, thus, they adopted a basic-skills-oriented approach in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This is despite the Ministry of Education's recommendation for a more child-centered approach that would enable children to have direct, open-ended, self-initiated experiences and focus on children's all-round development. This attention to academic preparation at the preschools meet parents' expectation and make children "win at the starting line". However, it makes it difficult for preschool teachers in China to incorporate experiences in natural outdoor settings despite the worldwide movement to reconnect children with nature. Thus, it is necessary to explore how to provide children with more learning opportunities in nature to develop their lifelong positive attitudes and values toward nature and subsequently inculcate awareness of environmental sustainability.

Project Approach

Project Approach is a pedagogy that allows children to construct knowledge, participate, and exercise agency (Nelson, 2001). As an integral part of the Progressive Education Movement (notably John Dewey's work advocating the idea of "learning by doing"), the Project Approach developed in the 1910s allows the teacher to facilitate children's learning and development through project work, which is defined as an in-depth investigation of a real-life, worthwhile topic of their interest (Helm & Katz, 2016). The characteristics of the Project Approach are child-centered, inquiry-driven, process-oriented, and constructivist, all of which attune to children's innate dispositions, including their inborn curiosity about their surrounding environment and make sense of their experience (Helm & Katz, 2016; Katz, 1994).

In this study, the researchers and two preschool teachers cooperated to design project-based learning STEM modules targeted at promoting children's love for

nature. The Project Approach by Helm and Katz (2016) was employed to design and implement the designed modules.

Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to explore the use of the Project Approach in increasing children's connection to their natural environment while promoting their love for nature. To this end, the research questions are:

1. How were the STEM modules formulated to generate awareness of environmental sustainability?
2. What are the challenges and barriers to designing and implementing STEM project-based learning modules in preschool?

Methodology

The research methodology adopted in this study is action research because it is thought to be one of the most appropriate ways to solve the issue of instilling a love of nature among young children. Action research is also focused on solving the problem by informing preschool teachers of new methods that can impact their teaching and learning. This section deliberated on the selection of the setting and participants, data collection, and data analysis.

Setting of the Study and Participants

The study was conducted in a public preschool in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Participants included two (2) preschool teachers with over five (5) years of teaching experience and thirty students (30) aged between 5 to 6 years old. All the participating children's parents provided written consent for their children's participation. The two teachers espoused the value of the child-centeredness Project Approach and learned to implement it in this action research through the help of researchers. A

convenience sampling method was employed to select the participants. This method is appropriate for selecting individuals for study when subjects are readily available and willing to participate (Creswell, 2012). The study was conducted from the fall semester of 2020 to the end of the spring semester of 2021.

Data Collection

The spiral model of action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) was adopted in this study. In this model, each spiral of a self-contained cycle consists of three steps which are (1) planning, (2) acting and observing, and (3) reflecting. These steps took place both sequentially and linearly. Adopting this model provided a systematic framework for the researchers and the two participating teachers to develop, implement and evaluate the preschool project-based STEM modules. In the initial process of planning, the two teachers decided to ask the children to propose a project topic based on their interests. 'Tree' was brought up as the preferred topic. Subsequently, the children explored the 'tree' with the teachers' help, following the three phases of the Project Approach (Kartz, 1994) as shown in Table 1.

Data collection centered around the action research cycle of planning, acting and observing, and reflecting. Firstly, the planning and development of the STEM project approach modules ('Tree' modules) were examined and documented. Secondly, the implementation of the 'Tree' modules was observed together with feedback from teachers, students, and principals. Thirdly, the reflection on the Project Approach was elicited from teachers, students, and principals. The collection of data in these three steps was made possible through regular interviews with teachers, students, and principals throughout the project as well as observations of the lessons in the classroom and during field trips. The method adopted in this study conforms to that proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) of multiple research cycles within each project, where each cycle will be an improvement of the previous cycle.

Table 1. Phases of Project Approach in this study

| Phase | Activities |
|-----------|--|
| Phase I | Decision of topic, 'tree' topic was selected. Children were led by the teacher in discussing what they know, and what they want to know about the 'tree' which determines the direction of the subsequent investigation. |
| Phase II | Children investigate the topic through field trips and interaction with experts and find the answers to their questions. |
| Phase III | Children led by teachers reflected on what was learned and then complete the project with a culminating event of presentation of their project. |

Source: Author

In this action research, two cycles of action research were administered with a total of eleven (11) lessons implemented within the two cycles. The number of lessons was decided based on children's and teachers' needs and reflections. Teachers supported the children to lead the project and to develop their environmental awareness while conducting the investigation based on each of the modules. A module can be implemented in more than one lesson. Each lesson implemented adhered to the plan-act-observe-reflect stages with constant discussions between the researcher and the teachers. The journey of how this action research went on was documented by the researcher.

The data obtained in this study were from the following: (1) classroom observation notes (2) video recordings of each lesson (3) audiotaped interviews with the teachers, (4) audiotaped interviews with students, and (5) researchers' notes. Classroom observation transcripts and notes described how teachers and children interacted in their teaching and learning process as well as the development of children's understanding of environmental sustainability through the Project Approach. Audio-taped semi-structured interviews with the teachers helped to indicate the challenges and support the teachers need to promote children's understanding of environmental sustainability in early childhood education settings. It documented the journey of the teachers in implementing this project. Interviews with students were done in situ as researchers observed and interacted with the children, often with the products of their 'tasks'. It was noted that at times children's tasks were something that the children come through on their own and not a result of teachers' specific instruction.

The developed STEM modules were implemented based on the gathered evidence in the teaching process, and changes were made in teaching practice as the project progressed to improve the quality of environmental education for positive change in children's attitudes and behavior. These modules were often work-in-progress within this research.

Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of 'making sense out of the data' (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this qualitative action research study, the process of data collection and data analysis happen simultaneously, both tightly interwoven, recursive, and dynamic (Corbin & Strauss, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell,

2015). The constant comparative method suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2014) was used in this study. The researcher was constantly making comparisons between data obtained and among categories generated until the final findings were confirmed. As this study is a two-cycle of action research, a constant comparison was carried out on two levels. Firstly, comparison within each cycle, that is comparing data collected through all interactions between teachers and children through observation, interview, or journal. The second level of comparison was a cross-cycle comparison. In cross-cycle comparison, categories that emerged from the first cycle were compared with the categories that emerged from the second cycle, and so forth.

Data analysis involved systematic, meticulous, and intuitive processes of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The first stage of coding is 'open coding' where data was broken down or taken apart into discrete parts to be compared between each other (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). These parts were then classified or categorized according to similar characteristics. Conceptual labeling was then given to these categories. The second stage of data analysis is the 'axial coding' which aims to form webs of relationship between categories and subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Establishing relationships between categories or subcategories is a key feature in the analysis of data in this study. The third stage is 'selective coding' where the core category was sought and the storyline determined. Analysis of data started immediately from the moment the first transcript of data was read and scrutinized by the researcher. The process continued until the writing of the 'conclusion' was completed.

Findings

Interview transcripts and observation notes were systematically examined and analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Corbin & Strauss, 2014) to answer the research questions.

Research Question 1: How were the STEM modules formulated to generate awareness of environmental sustainability?

Data analysis yielded three themes that are related to the impact of the Project Approach STEM modules on the awareness of environmental sustainability among the children. The three themes are: (1) Focus on Basic Scientific Investigation (2) Connect with Nature in Outdoor Space (3) Getting the voice of the children.

These themes have been validated by the participants and experts in this field and are elaborated on in the following sessions.

Theme 1: Focus on Basic Scientific Investigation

The STEM modules were intentionally developed to encourage the children to explore nature around them. Each module focused on specific activities organized around 'tree'. Children were found to be actively exploring the leaves and trunks of trees. The researcher and the two teachers were amazed by the long-lasting enthusiasm toward the natural tree topic, as reflected in the quotes below:

The children were busy investigating outside their classrooms. Their sustained interest surprised the teachers and the school principal. Accessibility to nature enabled children to explore the natural environment around them. Nature is highly stimulating and engaging. (Researchers' Note 1)

As the children went around investigating trees based on the activities in the STEM modules, they naturally used the basic scientific skills of observation, comparing, and categorizing, as shown in the quotes from one of the teacher's interviews:

"My kids were quite excited to explore the outdoors and were able to focus on the leaves in the schoolyard. They spontaneously took the initiative to observe, compare, and categorize different leaves while collecting leaves, doing observational drawings, and sharing their leaves with others. You know, nature invites study." (Teacher 1)

Children's enthusiasm for the topic enabled them to take the initiative to do observational drawing spontaneously, measuring the circumference of different trunks in the schoolyard, documenting their investigation through photo taking, and achieving deep thinking. For instance, one boy named ZL used photos to document his finding and raised his question, "Why all of the leaves on this tree fell off while the leaves of some other trees are still green?". Nature provides this boy the opportunity to develop a sense of cause and effect. ZL's comparative observation and deep thinking in outdoor learning led to a subsequent classroom discussion on the differences between evergreens and deciduous trees in this tree project. They learned to appreciate the beauty of nature with its different kinds of trees and were led to a discussion on why there is a need to keep more trees in the environment.

The two teachers' reflections from the teacher interviews also demonstrated that children's enthusiasm for the

natural topic motivated them to do experimentation and innovate, which in turn enhanced their self-learning ability. For instance, children's enthusiasm towards making their "big" birds' nest to give the birds their 'home' gave them the impetus to solve problems in a practical way, which was shown in the following quote from another teacher's interview:

"The kids decided to make a bird nest big enough for a bird family. Through brainstorming, they thought a big and strong base was a must. They worked together to experiment and finally figured out that twisting more straws together to weave the base in a circle shape would be effective." (Teacher 2)

Theme 2: Connect with Nature in Outdoor Space

An increase in connection with nature emerged as one feature of this 'tree' project work. The project approach provided the children with outdoor learning opportunities. The original plan was to bring the children to the forest a distance away for field trips. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic where travel was discouraged, children were brought only to the surrounding of the school where there are different kinds of leaves and trees.

Through multiple discussions and exploration, the researcher and teachers decided on a two-pronged approach, which is, bringing nature into the classroom and bringing the children to nature through field trip visits that include the school compound where trees were planted. The two teachers held that bringing natural resources associated with the tree topic into the classroom will provide children with concrete hands-on experience. This was necessary considering the constraints of traveling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The participating teachers spoke candidly that the children had limited connection to nature in their traditional learning. They perceived that "real teaching materials" used in classroom teaching would be highly stimulating and facilitated the implementation of the Project Approach in this tree project. They were right as shown in the following quote.

"My children were excited to use project-based learning modules. They were very engaged in exploring natural sub-topics, such as leaves and trunks, which we brought into the classroom. They participated actively in observational drawing, playing with the leaves and barks which were collected from field trips some were provided by us" (Interview 3)

Classroom observation notes documented children's enthusiasm and excitement toward learning even within

the limited outdoor space in the school compound. This is a testament to children's inborn love of learning in nature and could be seen in the following observation note after module 2 (note field trip visit):

When the children heard they would explore the schoolyard, they became excited and noisy. They shouted to express their excitement. Teacher Lisa and two teaching assistants had to manage the class before the children were quiet enough to listen to the requirements.

Children's positive reactions to being connected with nature even though it was within the school compound made the two teachers reflect on their previous teaching. Both of them felt encouraged to design more lessons using natural teaching resources and bringing the children out to nature in their future teaching practice. Quotes from the interview between the researcher and teacher Annie below illustrated this point:

"My children were interested in these natural things. We should have noticed the natural resources available at the school. It is valuable to consider how to embed these natural, familiar things in future teaching." (Interview 6)

At the end of the project, the researchers summarized the features of the STEM modules developed by them as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The STEM modules largely focus both on 'bringing children to nature' and 'bringing nature to children' through direct, indirect, and vicarious experience. 'Bringing children to nature' provides a direct experience for the children. It occurred in two scenarios: first, the children were brought to the forest or parks where trees grow naturally without much interference from human activities. Second, the children were brought to the school compound where trees were planted in a more confined space. On the other hand, 'Bringing nature to children' is where resources from nature were brought

into the classroom for discussion and manipulation. This also occurred in two scenarios: first, resources were brought in by teachers (indirect experience), and second, from the use of picture books, photos, or video for vicarious experience.

In this study, all these experiences were found to have influenced the awareness of environmental sustainability. Although the children were provided with three types of experiences that connected them with nature, it is the direct-contact experiences that were critical as children's investigation was promoted in this study and true environmental education is pursued.

Theme 3: Getting the voice of the children

Data collected in this study demonstrated that children's expanded experiences with nature yielded a positive influence on children's attitudes and behaviors to nature. Their love and concern for nature were evident in their interaction with their teachers as well as through their work. The STEM modules developed based on Lilian Kartz's Project Approach focus on getting the voice of the children. For instance, during Module 4 and Module 10, when the children were asked to re-web on the subtopics (leaves and trunk) to represent what was learned in the project, their ideas clearly showed their interest, love, care, and understanding about leaves and trunk.

Figure 1 is the mind map done by the teacher in the class with the children relating to what they have learned from the sub-topic on leaves while Figure 2 is on tree trunks. Children expressed their aspiration to create a green world, protect trees, save and recycle paper, and understand the growing condition of the trees. This is the early beginning of inculcation of the awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability.

Table 2. Features of the 'Bringing children to nature' in the STEM modules

| Open Experiences in Natural Setting | Direct Experiences within the confines of the school compound |
|---|--|
| Unstructured, explorative contact with trees in nature. Children planned and decided their own learning experiences through investigations in nature in each cycle of the action research. | Exploring in the preschool yard. Interaction with controlled nature in the preschool yard, such as gardens with different kinds of trees, leaves, and trunks in multi-task group work. Exploration is limited to what is available. |

Source: Author

Table 3. Features of the 'Bringing nature to children' in the STEM modules

| Direct Experiences | Vicarious Experiences |
|---|---|
| Teachers bringing natural resources into the classroom for activities | Abstract learning about nature. Picture books, photos, videos, and media associated with the tree topic. |

Source: Author

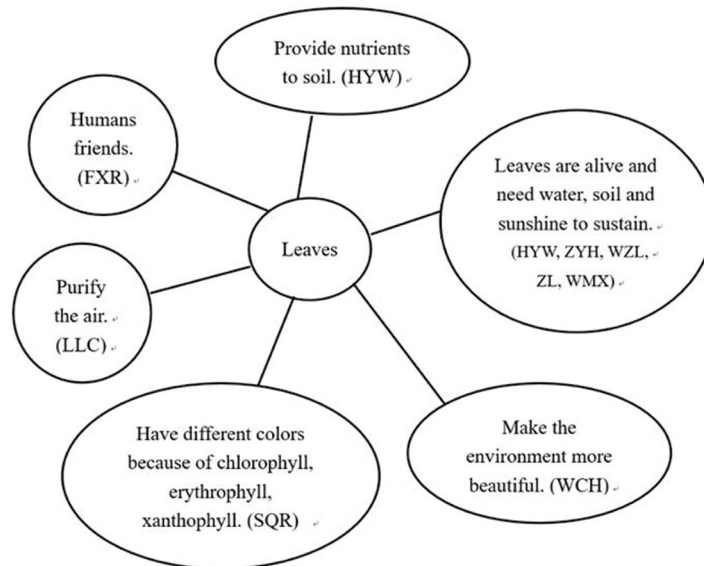


Figure 1. Children's web on what they had learned on the subtopic of leaves
Note: The initial given in brackets is the pseudo name of the children

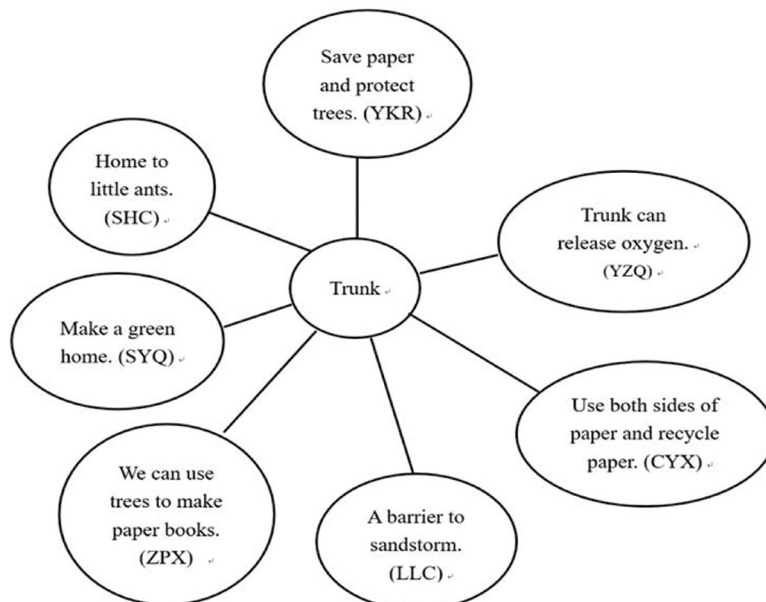


Figure 2. Children's web on what they had learned on the subtopic of trunk
Note: The initial given in brackets is the pseudo name of the children

Children's response indicated their role as the agent of change. For instance, teacher Lisa reflected on the children's spontaneous decision to build bird nests to shelter birds in this action research. The following quote illustrates this:

"The children decided to build bird nests to conclude the project. To support children's care for birds, one parent donated picture books. Our teachers showed the children videos of many species of birds building nests. Children did their research on how to build bird nests and tried to make their bird nests through hands-on practice based on their concept drawing." (Teacher interview 12).

After completing making bird nests, the children on their own accord decided to provide shelter for the birds by placing their bird nests on the trees in their schoolyard as shown in Figure 3. They placed the nests carefully, hoping their effort would provide the birds with a better resting place.

The implementation of STEM project-based learning modules appears to expand children's connection with nature and respond to children's needs and interests. The project topic that focused on natural plants (trees) encouraged the children in this study to develop positive attitudes and behaviors toward the natural environment.



Figure 2. Children were placing provision of bird housing in good positions in the schoolyard.

Thus, the curriculum that was developed has increased children's connection with nature and should be implemented as it would help children love, respect, and care about nature.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges and barriers to designing and implementing the STEM project-based learning modules in the Chengdu preschool?

Based on the data collected, this study revealed a confluence of four major barriers in teachers' implementing the STEM project-based learning modules: (1) Lack of time for planning and reflection (2) Lack of professional training (3) Challenges in the management of children's behavior in outdoor learning (4) Pressure of preparing the child to enter formal primary school education.

Lack of time for planning and reflection

The two teachers asserted that "lack of time for planning and reflection" was one of the influencing factors that undermined their tree project practice. Given a large amount of material to cover in their existing curriculum and the developed STEM modules, the two teachers perceived that they were not able to implement the project-based learning to be entirely child-led. Also, they pointed out that fulfilling each phase of action research was time-consuming. For instance, teacher Lisa reported that:

"Project work in action research requires extra time for planning, implementation, and reflection. After each module, you have to prepare, carry out, and reflect. It was also labor-intensive". (Interview 9)

"For this tree project, we had to squeeze out time. Children who are entering primary one must have some compulsory bridging courses as expected by their parents. They also need to prepare in many aspects, such as practicing

appropriate classroom behavior and good learning habits."

Lack of professional training

The two teachers initially expressed their hesitation in doing projects on environmental sustainability. As projects on the environment often lead to teaching science, they were not as prepared to teach science as they are for language and other humanity disciplines. Furthermore, sustainability is a big term. Teacher Lisa reported;

"Despite the increased curricular attention to mathematics and science, they tend not to be emphasized by teacher preparation or in-service professional development programs"

Both teachers also said that they hesitated to do a project on nature because they did not have many experiences with nature during their own learning journey. Besides, both teachers initially believed that studying nature during the COVID-19 period was impossible because their preschool is located in a city. They were also discouraged from traveling far with the children. As they progressed to do the "Tree" project, they were surprised to learn that nature can also exist within their urban preschool environment.

The two teachers also stated that they had only briefly learned about the child-centered Project Approach and other Western-derived progressive pedagogies from their respective teacher education programs. As teacher Lisa shared below:

"We learned about the Project Approach in school. But it was just one of the pedagogical approaches mentioned in class. We did not discuss nor study it in depth and seldom apply it to our teaching practice."

Although they were provided with this study opportunity by the preschool to experiment with a different mode of teaching, both teachers did not feel they were competent enough or fully equipped with the knowledge and skills required to implement the Project Approach. The topic “environmental sustainability” seems to be too ‘far-fetched’ for them. Teacher Annie explicitly said:

“It would be better if we could have more long-term and systematic training on how to practice Project Approach in environmental education.”

Echoing Annie, teacher Lisa also stated:

“Professional training on Project Approach is not enough. I had little teaching experience with cases utilizing this Approach.”

Both teachers however agreed that expert guidance would assist them in identifying problems and finding solutions in their project-based teaching.

Challenges in the management of children's behaviors in outdoor learning

Managing a group of young children in an outdoor setting is challenging for any teacher. Children tend to be noisy as outdoor learning provides an escape for them from the rigid and restricted conditions in the classroom. Thus, it is not unexpected that the two teachers admitted the “management challenge” as an influencing factor in implementing the tree project through a project approach. The teachers held that children had limited opportunities to use real natural materials in the classroom and to learn outdoors in nature in their traditional learning. Thus, the increased connection with nature in this study made the children happy and excited, which resulted in difficulty in managing children's behaviors. Also, recognizing that just as they needed to get prepared for formal schooling academically, the children were required to form moral virtues (e.g., behavioral control, discipline, conformity). For instance, the two teachers often reminded the children of the importance of being quiet and listening attentively when someone is talking as a means to develop proper behavior. Teacher Lisa emphasized in this way:

“Children have to know that listening is a class rule. They were talkative, but they also need to learn to listen attentively to a speaker. We, teachers, should train them for good behavior. It is beneficial for their future development.”

Discussion

In recent years, environmental education has gained increasing global attention as an important subject area in early childhood education. It is becoming obvious that the earth is facing great challenges of survival. Thus there is an urgent need to educate the young generation about the importance of environmental sustainability so that they are ready to plan and act to reduce future worsening of climate change, combat pollution, and ensure the sustainability of quality of life through sufficient clean air, clean water, and sufficient food. This action research explored ways to increase children's awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability through developing and implementing STEM project approach modules. The findings from this study found that the use of STEM modules did increase children's connection with nature and helps develop their positive attitude and behavior toward environmental awareness and sustainability. The findings support studies conducted by Ernst and Burcak (2019) and White (2004) who concluded that using nature experiences within the early years of children's life could help them develop feelings of love, care, and respect for the natural environment.

This connection with nature needs to be occurring more regularly and not just sporadic (Kals & Ittner, 2003; Phenice, 2003; Sobel, 2004). Bogner (1998) brought the purpose of education for environmental sustainability to a higher level by saying that children involved in an outdoor education intervention were more sensitive to environmental protection and more willing to take action to protect the environment. This sense of agency is developed early among the children and it augurs well for a greater possibility of future action especially when they reach adulthood. The finding of this study also concurs with Robertson's (2009) discovery in a longitudinal study that children who interacted with nature more will have more affection toward animals after they were involved in nature-based education.

The participating children in this study were typical urban children with limited access to nature in their formal schooling. Their learning activities were previously more directed by their teachers in a brick-and-mortar manner. These children seldom have opportunities to lead their learning, and they only have access to several manufactured materials such as man-made toys. In this study, children got the opportunity to decide what to explore under the subtopics of leaves and trees. Teachers playing a reverse role implemented

the teaching by following children's interests. The implementation of this STEM project approach modules provided these children with the time and place needed to interact with nature. As suggested by Fismann (2005), these outdoor types of activities helped the children to grow their environmental awareness. At the same time, the opportunity of hands-on interaction with nature has provided the children the opportunity to sharpen their acquisition of basic science process skills of observation, comparison and contrast, categorization, etc.

In this action research study, the teachers shared the challenges they faced. These include the lack of time, lack of support, and the feeling of insufficiency in their competence to take the heavy load of education for environmental sustainability. To increase the effectiveness of environmental education in early childhood education, it is recommended that teachers follow children's interests and integrate them into all education activities in a manner that reinforces the learning of children rather than during a limited period of instruction time in a specific subject. Providing regular connection with nature for children requires collaboration among teachers, parents, and preschool principals (Li et al., 2012; Rao et al., 2010). For preschools lacking natural resources, teachers and principals could seek public support and advocate for parents to help find the needed resources. Parents could be involved in project work during field trip visits in the natural environment. Increased children's connection with nature would be supported by parents when they are fully informed about what is planned and expected and the main purposes of the site visit in nature (Li et al., 2012). This requires teachers to plan elaborately and collaborate well with parents. Teachers could also connect child-centered project work with environmental education. Thus, preschools need to give teachers training on how to use project approaches to promote education for environmental sustainability.

Conclusion

As teachers search for a pedagogy for educating children in environmental sustainability, a project approach is a good choice in the preschool in Chengdu China. Within the six (6) months duration of the project, it was observed that the children were stimulated and excited about learning, their environmental awareness grew, and they seem to show an initial sense of agency in wanting to play a part in their environment. While the students learned about the sustainability of the environment, their

teachers too grew in their pedagogical knowledge and learned to think of the project approach as a possible pedagogy to be used in their future teaching. However, some challenges need to be overcome including time constraints and professional development. These challenges need to be managed for the sustainability of the impact of the project approach.

Recommendations for Future Studies

For future research possibilities, longitudinal studies could be conducted during the later life stages of children who have experienced environmental sustainability education in early childhood education. This type of study could explore whether the early experiences they had would continue to influence them. Second, further research could be conducted to explore children's development of positive attitudes and behavior toward nature when they have been exposed to project-based teaching and learning approaches in early childhood education. Third, the research could be conducted that follows preschool children into primary school settings where project-based education practices are employed to gain insight into how and whether children continue to improve in their environmental awareness and action as they grow older.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Hate Speech Acts against the Shia Community: Focus on Pakistani Social Media Users

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how hate speech is used against Pakistan's Shia community in social media domains. Pakistan is a Muslim-majority, multi-sectarian country, and misunderstandings on the basis of sectarian differences often result in conflicts and violence. Hate speech is one of the manifestations of sectarianism in Pakistan. Two major Islamic sects namely Shias and Sunnis live in Pakistan. Data collected through purposive sampling from social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter are qualitatively analyzed using Austin's speech act theory and national and international legal provisions to report findings. Research findings reveal that Pakistan's Shia minority community faces hate crimes in both online and offline domains; inspired by majoritarian rightist ideology, hate groups target the minority group violating Pakistan's constitutional provisions that guarantee freedom of religion and association. It is concluded that a more comprehensive understanding of hate crime and social conflict must incorporate group interests and social freedom, and further research needs to be undertaken on other communities who suffer from hate speech acts in a range of contexts.

Keywords: community; hate speech; legal provisions; minority; speech acts; Pakistan; Shia

1. Introduction

One of the most important characteristics of free democratic and modern societies in today's world is peoples' right to free speech (Dewberry et al., 2018; Rosenthal, 2020). However, as messages of hatred, denigration, and dehumanisation against particular individuals or groups of individuals on the grounds of political, ethnic, religious, or other types of affiliations nowadays grow and expand, infecting many humans, it has become debatable if hate speech should be simply seen as free speech (Goodman, 2015).

A brief look at research on hate speech (Demaske, 2020) and its nexus with free speech shows that there is a vast spectrum of diametrically opposing viewpoints. One school of thought identifies hate speech as free speech because it enhances the chances for individual expression and cultural regeneration, while the other school of thought sees hate speech as a separate but dangerous phenomenon that should be suppressed and penalised (Trajkova and Neshkovska, 2019). The third school of thought that lies in the middle ground of the spectrum claims that "only targeted vilification of a person on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, and sexual

orientation, or other protected characteristics should be classified as hate speech and proscribed” (Trajkova and Neshkovska, 2019: p. 72).

Though hate speech is an ancient phenomenon, only recently it has begun to resurge in an invigorated way (Mårtensson, 2013). Its rapid and intense spread can be imputed, up to an extent, to social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), as these provide channels by which hate speech is spread globally like wildfire (Alkiviadou, 2018). Trajkova and Neshkovska (2019) state that the lack of accountability apparatus to identify and intercept fake social media accounts enables many persons to indulge in the use of aggressive rhetoric.

Hate speech is a phenomenon also found in Pakistan (Sarfray, 2017). In 1947 and in 1971, the newly born country witnessed violence on religious and ethnolinguistic lines respectively (Ali and David, 2021). Sectarian violence is a resurging phenomenon in the country, and religious, and ethnic violence can be witnessed sometimes (Lakshman, 2020).

1.1 Defining hate speech

Hate speech has not been clearly defined and enshrined in international law, however, there are some provisions which help identify expressions considered as hate speech.

In his qualitative description of hate speech, Lewis (2012) says that any speech that offends others along the lines of gender, religion, race, or sexual orientations can be described as hate speech. Though this definition delineates offensive dimensions of hate speech, it does not identify linguistic features of hate speech. According to Council of Europe (n.d.), hate speech contains “all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin”. This definition mentions different forms of expression; however, it also does not postulate how such forms of expression are realised using different linguistic items.

Cohen-Almagor (2011) gives a far-reaching definition of hate speech and defines it as bias motivated, hostile, malicious speech made against a person or a group of people because of their real or conceived characteristics.

Though this definition elaborates on thematic ambitions of hate speech, how such ambitions are realized using different linguistic terminologies has not been discussed in the definition. He further expands the thematic ambitions of hate speech and defines it as “discriminatory, intimidating, disapproving, antagonistic, and/or, prejudicial attitudes towards those characteristics, which include gender, race, religion, ethnicity, colour, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation”. The thematic ambitions of hate speech have also been defined by Gagliardone (2014) who suggests that hate speech is intended to “injure, dehumanize, harass, intimidate, debase, degrade and victimise the targeted groups, and to foment insensitivity and brutality against them”. This definition also falls short of identifying linguistic features of hate speech.

The definition of hate speech proposed in Hate Speech in the Media and Internet Report (n.d.) categorically identifies three forms of hate speech and its discursive contents. Identifying forms and contents of hate speech cannot account for the context in which hate speech is used. Based on its levels of threat that hate speech poses to individuals and society, researchers explain that it can be manifested in three forms: soft, moderate, and harsh forms (Hate Speech in the Media and Internet Report, n.d.). Soft forms include negative statements used against an individual or a group of individuals, while moderate forms encompass justification of historical incidents of violence and discrimination. Harsh forms of hate speech involve implicit and explicit calls for discrimination and violence (Hate Speech in the Media and Internet Report, n.d.).

The same definition can be applicable to online hate speech. However, some social media sites have their own definition of hate speech. According to Facebook (n.d.), “content that attacks people based on their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or disease is not allowed”. Moreover, this definition does not identify incendiary terminologies used in hate speech.

The Council of Europe’s Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime (n.d.) has also defined online hate speech without identifying its marked linguistic features. It defines online hate speech as “any written material, any image or any other representation of ideas or theories, which advocates, promotes or incites hatred, discrimination or violence, against any individual or group of individuals, based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin, as well as religion if used as a pretext for any of these factors”.

1.2 The context of hate speech in Pakistan

If we look at the case of Pakistan, the historical, religious, sectarian, and socio-political context of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan appears to be conducive for hate speech to thrive and flourish. Although Pakistan is a country of approximately 208.57 million inhabitants (Statista, n.d.), the majority of whom are Muslims (97%), 3.5% of these are minorities who belong to faiths, such as Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism etc (Statista, n.d.). Pakistani Muslims are divided along sectarian lines. According to Ahmar (n.d.), 80% of Muslims in Pakistan belong to the Sunni sect, while 15-20% belong to the Shia sect. The Shia-Sunni conflict has deep roots in the history of Islam (Hazleton, 2010) and of Asia (Nuruzzaman, 2017). In her narrative history, Hazleton (2010) mentions that the Shia-Sunni divide occurred after Prophet Mohammad passed away in 632 AD.

The sectarian conflict has been a problem in Pakistan (Ahmar, n.d.). This conflict between the Shia minority and the Sunni majority on the one hand and among different schools of thoughts¹ of Sunnis on the other hand intensified in late 1970s and 1980s, when a Shia-led government came to power in Iran and a Sunni-led government under Zia-ul-Haq's dictatorship came to power in Pakistan (Ahmar, n.d.).

This study problematises the speech acts of hatred against the Shia community in Pakistan because such speech acts can result in sectarian conflicts. We interpret anti-Shia discourse as a criminal speech act using speech act theory and national and international protocols and legal provisions on hate speech.

1.3 International and national legal provisions on hate speech

There are some provisions which help identify expressions considered as hate speech. These provisions also help in curtailing the spread of hate speech both in online and offline domains. Such provisions criminalise and penalise hate speech. However, none of the laws/provisions, to the best of our knowledge, identify linguistic features of hate speech. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (n.d.) suggests that states should criminalize "direct and public incitement to

commit genocide" (p. 1). This suggestion also does not provide any guides regarding linguistic characteristics of such incitement. Similarly, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) (n.d.) also seeks to criminalize "all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or racial hatred as well as incitement to racial discrimination". In linguistic terms, the features that constitute such racism have not been mentioned.

Another important covenant is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1976) which advises all countries that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law". Though in this covenant advocacy of hate speech has been identified as a criminal act, no mention to specific terminology that constitutes hate speech has been made. Pakistan also ratified this covenant in 2009, and debate on how the country's laws should be amended in compliance with ICCPR soon started in its parliament (Sirmed, n.d.). This debate also neglected the linguistic dimension of hate speech.

In addition to these provisions, national law codes of Pakistan, such as Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (n.d.) defines and distinguishes hate speech. Although these legal provisions criminalise and penalise hate speech, there is no linguistic mechanism in place to identify such crimes and implement these laws. The lack of linguistic identification of hate speech has caused a big gap between these laws and their implementation. Bearing this in mind, we have discussed Pakistan's laws on hate speech. For instance, Section 153-A (a) of PPC criminalizes anyone who "by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representations or otherwise, promotes or incites, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste, or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities" (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.).

Likewise, Section 153-A (b), punishes anyone who "commits, or incites any other person to commit, any act which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities or any group of persons identifiable as such on any ground whatsoever and which disturbs or is likely to disturb public tranquillity" (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.). Section 153-A (c) also criminalises incitement to violence and penalises such criminal act "with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and with fine" (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.).

¹"The Sunni Muslims of South Asia are divided into two major schools of thoughts, i.e. Deobandi and Barelvi, named after their places of origin in India in the 19th century. Because of abiding differences between them, these two groups have built up walls of hatred and mistrust between them over time. The faultline between them has erupted violently in Pakistan since the late 1970s" (Behuria, 2008).

Section 295-A of PPC criminalises and penalises “deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs”. It suggests that criminals of such an offence “shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both” (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.). Moreover, section 295-C of PPC criminalizes and penalises the use of derogatory remarks against Prophet Mohammad. Someone involved in such a crime “shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine” (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.). Section 298 of PPC also criminalizes utterance of words with deliberate intention to wound religious feelings. A person involved in this type of crime “shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year or with fine, or with both” (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.).

Section 298-A of PPC criminalizes derogatory remarks used against holy personages. If a person is found guilty of such a crime, he/she “shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both”. Section 499 also criminalizes defamation perpetrated in any form whatsoever (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.). Section 500 of PPC penalises such an offence with imprisonment “which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both” (Pakistan Penal Code, n.d.).

Under The Defamation Ordinance (2002), civil remedies against hate speech have also been provided. In section 3 of the ordinance, defamation has been defined as “any wrongful act or publication or circulation of a false statement or representation made orally or in written or visual form which injures the reputation of a person, tends to lower him in the estimation of others or tends to reduce him to ridicule, unjust criticism, dislike, contempt or hatred shall be actionable as defamation”. Under the defamation ordinance, defamation has been categorized in two forms: slander and libel. “Any false oral statement or representation that amounts to defamation shall be actionable as slander”, while libel has been defined as “any false written, documentary or visual statement or representation made either by ordinary form or expression or by electronic or other modern means of devices that amounts to defamation shall be actionable as libel” (The Defamation Ordinance, 2002). Thus, in this research, false oral defamation/hate speech has been conceptualized as defamation, while false written defamation has been conceptualized as libel.

Section 9 of the ordinance gives remedies for defamation. “Where defamation shall be proved to have occurred,

the Court may pass order directing the defendant to tender the apology, if acceptable to the plaintiff, and publish the same in similar manner and with the same prominence as the defamatory statement made and pay reasonable compensatory damages as general damages with minimum of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees fifty thousand) and in addition thereto, any special damage incurred that is proved by the plaintiff to the satisfaction of the Court... provided that in case of the originator the minimum compensatory damages as general damages shall be three thousand rupees” (The Defamation Ordinance, 2002).

Pakistan has its own cyber laws which also criminalise hate speech. Pakistan’s Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) (2016), also criminalises glorification of offences and hate speech (see sections 9 and 11). Section 11 of PECA states that “whoever prepares or disseminates information, through any information system or device that advances or is likely to advance interfaith, sectarian or racial hatred shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years or with fine or with both” (Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016).

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To explore anti-Shia discourse on social media domains (Facebook, Twitter).

This study addresses the following research questions:

- i. What speech is used against Shias on Facebook?
- ii. How are Shias described on Twitter by hate groups?

2. Literature Review

Previous studies in Pakistan’s context focused on hate speech along religious, ethnic, political, and sectarian lines. However, none of the studies conceptualised how hate speech used against Shias is a sectarian crime, and how it is perpetrated through speech on social media. It is hoped that this research fills the research vacuum by investigating the known type of hate speech using the above stated legal provisions and the theory of speech acts as a theoretical framework.

This research takes place against the backdrop of burgeoning body of research on hate speech in Pakistan’s context (Lall, 2008; p. 58; Ali, 2020). Some researchers have identified hate speech as one of the causes of violent extremism and terrorism (Weinbaum, 2019; Ali, 2020).

Lall (2008) in Pakistan and India's context conducted fieldwork interviews and drew on textbook data to demonstrate how religion was used as a tool to inculcate ideologies of hate in curricula of both the countries. In their empirical study of Pakistan, Syed et al. (2014) also demonstrated that systemic incendiary language and bigotry have been embedded in Pakistan's educational curricula. Such violent elements and ideologies have resulted in non-Shia militant groups perpetrating acts of terrorism against the Shia community in Pakistan (Ali, 2020).

Research on the role of different media in spreading hate speech has also seen an increase in recent years (Qasim and Usmani, 2021; Rao, 2020; Ali et al., 2021). Qasim and Usmani (2021) qualitatively conceptualize hate speech as a hybrid war waged along sectarian lines in Pakistan. Religious educational institutions are also fostering this culture of intolerance (Ahmar, n.d.). Rao (2020) conducted qualitative, content analysis of social media campaigns by Pakistan's political parties during 2018 and demonstrated how they propagated hate speech in Facebook and Twitter posts. Ali et al. (2021) also investigated how some students use social media to propagate their racist, sexist, sectarian, homophobic, or transphobic views via social media.

In this research, hate speech is conceptualized as a criminal act. The concept of speech as an act was first discussed by John Langshaw Austin in 1962. According to Austin (Searle, 1965), "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as saying something" (p. 6). He elaborated on the idea and added that requesting, advising, ordering, or congratulating a person are acts which are performed via language (Austin, 1962). Speech can be locutionary acts (the action of saying something), perlocutionary acts (conventions that make possible performing acts in saying something), and illocutionary acts (consequences of action by saying something) (Searle, 1965). Illocutionary acts and perlocutionary acts can either be intentional or unintentional, and accordingly researchers should take different stances on hate speech (Di Rosa, 2019).

After Austin, Searle (1965, 2001) reduced speech acts/ performatives to illocutionary acts. According to Searle (2001), all speech acts are actions whose effects depend on social conventions. He also added that illocutionary acts rely on intentionality, while perlocutionary acts depend on both intentionality and physical action. His debate with Jacques Derrida (cited in Nealon, 2017: p. 1-5) demonstrates that performatives are product of repetition beyond a particular context (Alfino,

1991: p. 147-148). Performatives carry all the track of their previous uses in other contexts, and they are a constant citation of other infinite speech acts (Derrida, 1988).

Many researchers have studied the role of speech acts in different contexts (David, 2016; 2018; 2021; Meier, 2010). Employing qualitative analyses, these researchers have demonstrated that the use of speech acts varies from one cultural context to other cultural contexts. Though these researchers have explored how lack of cultural competence can lead to conflict and misunderstanding when performing speech acts, their focus was not on how the resulting conflict and misunderstanding can cause hate speech.

Using this theory of performativity, we conceptualize hate speech used against Pakistani Shias as criminal acts.

3. Materials and Methods

This research uses qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Data were collected from Facebook, and Twitter through purposive sampling. Collected data were codified and thematically analysed using legal provisions and speech acts theory.

The research design used in this study can be sequenced in four stages given and discussed here.

3.1 Social media search for relevant posts

Twenty social media posts were selected through retrieval from the internet search. These posts were retrieved by using keywords, such as 'shia', 'shia kafir', 'boycott shia', etc. These social media (Facebook and Twitter) posts were purposively chosen based on a list of selection criteria, specifically: (1) Social media posts published within the past 10 years; (2) written in English and Urdu (translation for posts in Urdu is provided for analysis); (3) contain evidence of hateful, sectarian speech against Shias in Pakistan; and lastly, (4) posted and perpetrated in Pakistan.

3.2 Selection of relevant chunks containing the hateful, sectarian speech acts in the greatest density for each post

For each post, relevant excerpts which contain speech acts of sectarian hatred across all the posts and comments

were selected as the unit of observation, being *the who or what being studied in an analysis* (Miles, 2019).

3.3 Transcription for each excerpt into Microsoft Word document

The selected excerpts comprising the speech acts of hate from the selected social media posts were transcribed into a Microsoft Word document as “running verbal texts” in “orthographic units” or sentences (Srinivass, 2011: p. 197).

3.4 Analysis of speech acts

Research findings obtained at this stage have been tabulated and analysed to demonstrate how speech acts of hatred can break legal provisions and are criminal acts.

4. Results

In this section research findings are analysed based on three main headings: *Hate Speech of Declaring all Shias as non-Muslims (Kafir)*; *Boycotting Shias*; *Threatening Shias*.

4.2 Hate Speech of Declaring all Shias as non-Muslims (Kafir)

Some non-Shia Muslims use negative slurs and libels against Shias in Pakistan. Shias in Pakistan are accused of

introducing new concepts and practices in Islam (Bid'ah), which is prohibited in Islam. These concepts and practices are used as a tool to spread hate against Shias and declare them as 'Kafir' which means non-Muslims. For speech acts of sectarian hatred perpetrated against Shias in Pakistan, see Table 1.

Responses in Table 1 taken from social media sites, Facebook and Twitter, show how hate speech is used against Shias in Pakistan. Shias are not even considered as Muslims, though it is prohibited in Islam to declare a Muslim as an infidel.

Response 1 in Table 1 can be conceptualized as a perlocutionary act, because it is a result of social conventions and norms. According to Austin (1962), perlocutionary speech acts are regulated by social norms and conventions. Similarly, response 1 in Table 1 is a product of the non-Shia's conventional beliefs and ideas which are held against Shias in Pakistan. As Di Rosa (2019) says, these perlocutionary acts are intentional, there is a need to take a legal stance in interpreting and countering such speech acts. Moreover, the response also violates International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) that prevents and criminalizes hate speech along religious and other lines, which Pakistan has ratified. Response 1 that declares all Shias in Pakistan as non-Muslims also violates sections 153-A (a) and 153-A (b), 295-A and 298 of Pakistan Penal Code, and section 11 of PECA which criminalizes and prohibits such spread of hate speech by any means.

Table 1. Aspersions cast against Shias

| No. | Hate speech | Violation of legal provisions |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | Shias are Kafir (infidels or non-Muslims), and I don't consider them as Muslims, because during their Ashura procession in the month of Moharram, they shut down mobile and the internet networks. Only some stupid persons will accept them as Muslims (slander). | Violation of international conventions on hate speech and Pakistan Penal Code sections 153-A (a) and 153-A (b). Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 2. | Shias are born because of illegitimate relation which they have on the night of Sham-e-Ghariban. Thus, they are born Kafir (slander). | Hate speech violating PPC and international provisions against such speech. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 3. | Shias are Rafzi and Kafir because they abuse the companions of the Prophet of Islam (Slander). | Violation of PPC and other conventions. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 4. | Shia sect is the only sect whose foundations stand on blasphemy and bid'ah (adding new things to Islam) (slander). | Violation of PPC and other legal provisions. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 5. | Truth is bitter. Shias are worse infidels (Kafir) than Jews and Christians. They are involved in the worst form of polytheism. Shias much like other infidels are to be punished in this world and in hereafter. Oh God, protect us against these infidels (slander). | Violation of PPC and other legal provisions. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |

Source: Author

Response 2 in Table 1 is yet another accusation levelled against Shias in Pakistan. It misinterprets Shia's recalling of the sacrifice and tolerance of the family of Imam Hussain on the night of the oppressed (Sham-e-Ghariban). Such misinterpretation is intentional, and it amounts to hate speech. It is a speech act of sectarian hatred that spreads propaganda and misinformation against Shias in Pakistan. Such speech acts go beyond the context and tend to have far-reaching effects (Loxley, 2007). Rendering such far-reaching effects using hate speech acts against a minority is considered as an echoing responsibility (Medina, 2006). Spreading this type of hate and propaganda is a serious violation of sections 295-A, 298 of PPC and section 11 of Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (2016).

Response 3 in Table 1 is yet another speech act of sectarian hatred committed against Shias in Pakistan. It demonstrates that Shias are Rafzi/Rafdhi infidels. Using such illocutionary speech acts can create distorted reality against an individual or a group of individuals (Butler, 1997). Similarly, Shias in Pakistan are also victims at the hands of some hate groups who use those performatives which negatively define Shias and their beliefs. Performatives are citations of other infinite speech acts (Derrida, 1988). Such negative performatives used against Shias in Pakistan are also citations/repetitions of negative slurs/performatives perpetrated against Shias in different contexts and times. It also violates sections 295-A and 298 of PPC and section 11 of PECA.

Pakistani Shias have also been accused of blasphemy and Bid'ah. Such hate speech has been repeated in response 4 of Table 1 which claims that the Shia sect stands on the foundations of blasphemy and Bid'ah. The speech act of sectarian hatred was posted on Twitter, and the tweet violates the policy of Twitter on hate speech.

According to Loizidou (2007), such speech acts of hatred are socially *iterable*, because these are not exclusively individualistic or material, rather they transgress a certain context and render far-reaching effects. Similarly, speech acts of sectarian hatred used against Shias may have far reaching effect on the entire community and in such circumstances, Di Rosa suggests (2019), legal stance should be taken against such hate speech acts. This response is also a violation of sections 295-A and 298 of PPC and section 11 of PECA. Response 5 in Table 1 is a result of religious conventions which determine whether a person is an infidel, a polytheist or whether he/she is to be punished or not. Though social conventions result in intentional production of perlocutionary hate speech acts against a minority, these need to be critically evaluated. If the role of social conventions is not critically evaluated, this can create the sense of echoing responsibility in some people to spread such speech acts of hatred against others (Medina, 2006). As shown in response 5, the same situation can be witnessed in Pakistan, where using hate speech against Shias is propagated as a social responsibility. Such anti-Shia discourse is a criminal violation of sections 295-A and 298 of PPC and section 11 of PECA. In addition to declaring Shias as infidels, social boycott against Shias in Pakistan is also encouraged, and this is now discussed in the following section.

4.2 Boycotting Shias

Boycott against Shias is also propagated through social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. For details, see Table 2.

Response 1 in Table 2 is a product of social conventions of cleanliness and uncleanness. Shias have been associated

Table 2. Propaganda against Shias

| No. | Hate speech | Sectarian criminal act |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | There is no difference between a Shia and a Hindu. They wash horses and use the same water for drinking as they claim it will cure them. It's time to distance yourself from them (slander). | Violation of international conventions and national legal provisions. Also, violation of social media policies on hate speech. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 2. | There should be not any relationship with Shias because they do not believe in the finality of Prophethood (slander). | Violation of international conventions and national legal provisions. Violation of Section 295-A, Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. Also, violation of social media policies on hate speech. |
| 3. | Don't eat or drink with Shias, because their Niaz (food prepared during Muharram) and Sabeel (water or drink fed during Muharram mostly by Shias) are prohibited in Islam (slander). | Violation of international conventions and national legal provisions. Also, violation of social media policies on hate speech. Violation of Section 295-A, and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 4. | It is not allowed to marry a Shia person. Therefore, you should avoid it (libel). | Violation of international conventions and national legal provisions. Also, violation of social media policies on hate speech. Violation of Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |

Source: Author

with drinking unclean water as the respondent claims they superstitiously believe that this will cure all their ills. These social conventions of cleanliness have been embodied in the speech acts of sectarian hatred used against Shias in Pakistan. Moreover, these performatives rely on intentional sectarian hatred to create negative social reality against the Shia community. Such constructed reality, in the words of Medina (2006), can cause the spread of hate speech.

Shias are also wrongly blamed that they do not believe in the finality of Prophethood. This is mentioned in response 2 of Table 1. Though all Shias in Pakistan and other countries believe in the finality of Prophethood, such hate speech is intentionally used against Shias to misrepresent them. This claim was asserted in Pakistan on Facebook, and this incendiary message used against the Shia minority community in Pakistan also violates Facebook's policy on hate speech. It also flouts international conventions and violates local laws on hate speech and is therefore seen as a criminal, sectarian speech act.

Response 3 in Table 2 is also a speech act of sectarian hatred committed against the Shia community in Pakistan on Facebook. Supposedly relying on Islamic conventions, the respondent asks people not to eat and drink with Shias. This response incites others to boycott and isolate the Shia community in Pakistan. Though the sectarian speech act relies on religious conventions, its message of hatred is intentional. According to Searle (2001), perlocutionary speech acts, though drawing on social norms and conventions, have certain intentions to fulfil. In this case, the sectarian perlocutionary acts are aimed at negatively representing Shias. This negative representation of the Shia community on social media is a manifestation of hate speech, and it violates sections 9 and 11 of Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (2016).

Response 4 in Table 2 also incites many non-Shia not to marry a Shia. This is an open call to boycotting the community in Pakistan. These acts of hatred and

discrimination against the Shia community not only flout social media policies but also violate sections 9 and 11 of Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (2016).

All responses in Table 2 (with the exception of response 4) violate sections 295-A and 298 of PPC and section 11 of PECA.

4.3 Threatening Shias

In addition to negative slurs used against the Shia community in Pakistan, threats against the Shia community in Pakistan are also posed. Many of these threats are performed using perlocutionary performatives. Threats used against the Shia community are shown in Table 3, and these were taken from Facebook.

All responses in Table 3 are examples of sectarian hate speech perpetrated against the Shia community. These threats of murder equate with real murder. Response 1 in Table 3 incites murder of a person because that person professes Shi'ism. Response 3 also violates social media policies and challenges Pakistan's law of registering First Information Report against an accused person. Response 2 in Table 3 incites genocide of the Shia community, and it violates the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (n.d.), which both prevents and penalizes genocide. Responses in Table 3 violate sections 153-A (c), and 98 of PPC, and section 11 of PECA. Thus, speech acts of threats have also been used against the Shia community in Pakistan, and many Shias have also been killed in the country (see Ali, 2020).

5. Discussion

As discussed in the background of this study, hate speech refers to any speech that offends others along the lines of gender, religion, race, or sexual orientations (Lewis, 2012; Cohen-Almagor, 2011). Similarly, this research has

Table 3. Threats used against Shias

| No. | Hate speech | Sectarian criminal act |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | He is a Shia boy. He is spreading propaganda. Just see his snap shots. He should be killed (slander). | Violating national, international, and social media regulations on hate speech. Violation of section 153-A (c), and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 2. | Ohhonourlesswe will destroy your generations. We will kill you. | Violation of section 153-A (c), and Section 298 of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |
| 3. | I will not register First Information Report against them, rather I will cut off their head (libel). | Violation of section 153-A (c) of PPC. Violation of Section 11 of PECA. |

Source: Author

also demonstrated how hate speech is used against the Shia community in Pakistan on social media. Such hate speech used against the community can become a source of widening divides in Pakistan's society. The posts shared by the respondents on social media are intertwined with speech acts of sectarian hatred perpetrated against the Shia community.

Speech acts of hatred against the Shia community resulted in violation of many international, national, and social media policies on hate speech. Findings showed that hate speech used against the Shia community on social media not only flouts international legal provisions but also violates sections 153-A (a), (b), (c), 295-A, and 298 of PPC and section 11 of PECA. Thus, in this research, speech acts of hatred have been conceptualized as crimes.

The sectarian performatives identified in this study are citations and repetitions of infinite speech acts of hatred used in different contexts and periods. Illocutionary acts of sectarian hatred show how hate speech has affected Pakistani society, and there is need to take action against such criminal speech acts. In brief, this study demonstrates how sectarian hate speech acts were propagated against the Shia community on social media, and how these speech acts violated many conventions and legal provisions. We suggest that law makers should linguistically identify linguistic and discursive features of hate speech, both slander and libel, so that such violations can be easily identified and laws on hate speech can be implemented. We suggest policymakers to coordinate with the social media sector and develop a regulatory mechanism to reach a much clearer and consistent policy on hate speech. Such a coordinated approach to policy on hate speech should take into consideration the rights and freedom of minorities.

The speech acts of sectarian hatred against the Shia community were demonstrated by the use of threats, slurs and declaring the Shia community as infidels. This research study also makes a theoretical contribution to current literature on what constitutes hate speech and how it can be identified in both online and offline domains. Unlike other researchers' findings (Weinbaum, 2019; Ali, 2020), our findings relate to the role of speech acts on social media in spreading sectarian violence, and how these can be seen as criminal acts and relate to current laws.

6. Conclusion

Employing legal provisions and speech act theory, this study discussed how Pakistan's Shia community faced hate

speech in a range of social media domains. Data collected from social media posts were qualitatively analysed to show how such platforms are used in propagating hatred. Moreover, this study has extended the definition of hate speech from religious hatred to identify its sectarian dimension in Pakistan's context. It is suggested that such sectarian violence should be strictly prohibited in social media sites, and punitive action should be taken against the owners of social media who should guard and prevent the use of hate speech. Though this research was limited to a small sample taken from Facebook and Twitter in Pakistan's context, a much larger sample from other social media platforms, such as Instagram, YouTube, etc. can have similar/dissimilar results. It is hoped that this research study will guide researchers to expand research on hate as a criminal speech act in a wide range of contexts.

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9. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared that they have no conflict of interest.

10. Patents

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Langar: The Challenges and Triumphs of Running a Community Kitchen in Sis Ganj Gurdwara, Delhi**Gursimran Kaur Butalia****Institute of Social Sciences, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India*

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ABSTRACT

Academic research has been concentrated mainly on the role of NGOs and the government in relief measures during COVID-19, demonetisation, natural calamities, political instability, etc. Often, the literary works have been fixated on the philosophical aspect of the religious study of *Langar* in Sikh culture, which is important to study, but no specific importance has been given to its societal impact or its management, which are both very noticeably important in order to understand its true impact. There has been no mention of the Sikh religion's contribution to serving *langar* throughout the trying times, especially when these free kitchens were turned into professionally managed 'Free Food Management Centres' and ensured food supply to the people impacted by the pandemic and other difficult times such as demonetisation, natural calamities like floods, earthquakes, etc. Another aspect, which is how these community kitchens are managed and what kind of monetary, psychological and emotional toll it takes on these *gurdwaras*, has also been missing in these academic studies. The research aims to study the psychological and emotional impact that is faced by the volunteers and *langar* managers in preserving this religious service by conducting thorough research on the management of *langar* in *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* in Chandni Chowk, Delhi.

Keywords: *Langar*, charity, *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, management, outreach activity

Introduction

The concept of charity is universal, and different religions have their own understandings and practices related to it. Charity is based on the idea of giving to others unconditionally, which is considered a fundamental part of serving those in need. We all need to contribute in whatever way we can if we want to make the world a better place for everyone. This crucial role in society is played by charity. In a world full of uncertainty and confusion, charity enables people to see that it is still possible to bless others. Giving to charity gives life a deeper meaning and enables us to understand our role in society. Giving back to others rises from concern and compassion for humanity. Humans are helpful creatures by nature. However, a person's ideas and ideals may be impacted by their prior experiences, which may sap them

of their social conscience and their desire to aid others. Charities help us understand that giving is never wrong and always pays off, especially in the short term.

Almost all religions have a way of giving back to society. In Hinduism, charity is defined as helping others without expecting anything in return and doing so because it is the right thing to do. It is exemplified by selfless charitable acts, and Hindus follow an important principle known as *ahimsa*, which means not harming or killing anything living. In Judaism, *tzedakah* or *Sedaqah* is viewed as a form of social justice provided by the donor as well as those who use the support to do their work and those who accept the support into their lives. The terms charity and *tzedakah* are used interchangeably, but *tzedakah* is the closest word in Hebrew to philanthropy. Philanthropy in spirit is much more than a financial transaction. In

Islam, *Zakāt* is the most well-known type of giving and is seen as a compulsory method of redistributing wealth. It was very much institutionalised in the days of Islamic empires, much like a tax system, where citizens were expected to give a percentage of their income to satisfy the needs of the community (Hardy; Harvard Divinity School, 2013). Charity is seen as a much more personal act in the modern world, but it was much more of a community duty in the ancient Islamic world.

In Christianity, charity is considered the highest form of love and represents the reciprocal love between God and man manifested in the unselfish love of one's fellow men. It is most eloquently demonstrated in Christian theology and ethics by Jesus Christ's life, teachings and death. Using this and other definitions from the Christian tradition, mediaeval theologians, particularly Thomas Aquinas, positioned charity within the context of the alternative Christian virtues, defining it as 'the inspiration or root' of them all. In Jainism, the religion recognises *Parasparopagraho Jīvānām* or interdependence, as a fundamental natural phenomenon. *Parasparopagraho Jivanam* (Sanskrit: परस्परपगर्हो जीवानाम् *Parasparopagraho Jīvānām*) is a Sanskrit sutra or aphorism of the Jain text of *Tattvārthasūtra*. It is translated as: Souls render service to one another. It is also translated as: All life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence. The etymological root of the phrase *Parasparopagraho Jīvānām* lies in the compound of three Sanskrit words: *paraspara* (mutual), *upagraha* (assistance) and *jiva* (living beings—*jivanam* is the plural of *jiva*). This sutra has also been accepted as the motto of Jainism. The aphorism *Parasparopagraho Jīvānām* has been accepted as motto of Jainism. It stresses the philosophy of non-violence and ecological harmony on which the Jain ethics and doctrine—especially the doctrines of *Ahmisa* and *Anekantavada*—are based. This motto is inscribed in Devanagari script at the base of the symbol of Jainism, which was adopted by all sects of Jainism while commemorating the 2500th anniversary of *nirvana* of Mahavira. The Jain scriptures laid down well-thought-out conditions to be observed while giving *Dana*, but they also significantly broadened the scope and extent of *Dana* from the perspective of the recipient. *Dana* has been divided into two classes based on its recipients: *Patra Dana* and *Karuna Dana*. The *Karuna Dana*, or gift of compassion, has a very broad scope, not limited to Jains alone but also to humans and other subhuman beings in need. In Buddhism, the Buddha mentioned six types of people who were especially in need of generosity: recluses or hermits, people in religious orders, the destitute, travellers, the homeless and beggars. Throughout his teaching, the Buddha was

emphatic that one should not avoid suffering but rather do everything possible to alleviate it. Nonetheless, for the majority of Buddhist history, charity was an individual practice, and monastic orders did not generally function as charities in an organised manner, except in times of great need, such as after natural disasters. Zoroastrian scripture also states that there are 33 ways to paradise and that 'he who is blessed on account of charity is able to go on all those ways'.

As part of their religious obligation to society, Sikhs have practiced *langar*, a kind of philanthropy, for hundreds of years. The term *langar* hails from Persian, especially the word *langar* (رنگنل), signifying 'anchorage' or 'refuge'. It has roots in both Sikhism and Sufism, but there are distinguishing features in their customs and contexts. Within Sikhism, *langar* pertains to the communal kitchen and the act of providing gratuitous meals to all visitors, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion or social standing. The originator of Sikhism, *Guru Nanak Dev ji*, established this tradition to foster equality, humility and the concept of *seva* (selfless service). The *langar* holds great significance in Sikh *gurdwaras*, where dedicated volunteers prepare and serve vegetarian meals to anyone who enters the *gurdwara*. On the other hand, in Sufism, *langar* is linked to the practice of providing food to the less fortunate as an act of charity and hospitality. Sufi saints and dervishes frequently set up *langars* as part of their spiritual discipline, extending free meals to the impoverished, travellers and those in search of spiritual guidance. This act of serving food in Sufism represents love, compassion and generosity, while also upholding the values of hospitality and care for others. While the concepts of *langar* in Sikhism and Sufism share similarities in terms of providing food and promoting equality, their origins and practices within their respective religious traditions remain distinct. *Langar* is a labour of love, a communal kitchen that is an integral part of serving both the Almighty and God's creations in the Sikh religion. Not only is it a benevolent and charitable act, but it also aims to embody humility, equality and love for all involved in its preparation, serving and consumption (Ahluwalia, 2013). *Guru Ka Langar*, a community kitchen also referred to as *Langar*, is one of the most revered institutions of Sikh religion, philosophy and culture (Trentonsocial, 2018). Based on the concept of *Garib Da Muh*, *Guru Di Golakh* (the mouth of the poor is filled by the treasury of the *Guru*), it calls upon all Sikhs to feed the needy before they feed themselves. *Guru Nanak Dev Ji's* social vision was not a utopia but a workable model. He had put it into practice while living in Kartarpur. Besides this, selfless service was another essential feature of the Sikh way of life, which inspired everyone to participate voluntarily

in community work (Dhillon, 2021). *Guru Nanak Dev Ji* issued three edicts to his followers after settling in *Kartarpur Sahib* and establishing a Sikh *gurdwara*: *Naam Japo*, *Kirat Karo* and *Vand Chhako* (meditate the name of God, work hard and share what you eat) (Singh, 2021). As a result, the *Guru* placed a high value on sharing and partaking of food together in the *langar*. *Guru Angad Dev Ji*, the second Sikh *Guru*, paid special attention to the concept of *langar* and developed it as an essential part of Sikh community life. Apart from providing food, the *Langar's Sevadars* (volunteers) were instructed to regard the vicinity as a place of relaxation and refuge and to continually be well-mannered and hospitable to all visitors. *Guru Angad Dev Ji* found unwavering support from his wife, *Mata Khivi Ji*, by establishing this practice (Bhatt, 2018). She personally attended to those who partook food at the *langar*. Her dedication to the cause continued even after *Guru Angad Dev Ji* died, all the way up to the time of *Guru Arjan Dev Ji*, when she died at the ripe old age of 76. The *Guru Granth Sahib* mentions her devotion to the *langar*. *Guru Amar Das Ji*, the third Sikh *Guru*, reinforced the *Langar* with the aid of changing it right into a 24-hour provider and establishing *Pangat and Sangat*, which required everyone who wanted to meet the *Guru* to first share a meal at the *langar*. The goal was to solidify the concept of *Raja-Runk Barabari* (the rich and poor are equal in the eyes of Almighty God). Those who are unable to let go of their egos will not be able to meet the *Guru*. There are accounts of several kings, including Emperor Akbar, following this practice prior to meeting the *Guru*. Emperor Akbar became so interested in the *Guru* that he presented him with revenue from numerous villages to run the *langar*. The *Guru* politely declined, stating that divine power would run the service through devotee offerings. Before passing away at *Anandpur Sahib*, the 10th Sikh *Guru*, *Guru Gobind Singh Ji*, directed his followers to always keep the *langar* open. The *Guru* writes in the *Dasam Granth* (scripture of *Guru Gobind Singh*): *Deg Tegh Jag Me Dou Chalai* (the cooking utensil [*langar*] and sword will rule the world together). As a result, the *Guru's* maxim, *Deg Tegh Fateh*, was engraved on the first Sikh coin minted in the eighteenth century (may *langar* and sword be ever triumphant). Even today, Sikhs pray to the Almighty for *Loh Langar Tapde Rahan* (may the fires of the *langar* remain ever lighted).

The *Khalsa* Army soldiers had a tradition of calling out *Guru Ka Langar Tayaar* (food of the *Guru*) once the *langar* was ready. Even enemies were welcome to partake in the *langar* before the *Khalsa*, and sometimes the *Khalsa* went hungry because there was no food left. The Sikh Emperor of Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, granted *Gurdwara Jagirs* (lands) for the upkeep of *langar*. Other Sikh rulers

established similar endowments. Today, almost every *gurdwara* has a *langar* that is supported by the local community. *Guru Ka Langar* has thus been and continues to be a Sikh tradition in which the community takes great pride and adheres with zeal. *Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha*, a famous Sikh poet and scholar, once stated that sharing food and *langar* is an essential part of Sikh culture and values.

There is no distinction in the operation of a *langar* between those who wish to contribute materially or by *seva*. *Sevadars*, who provide selfless service for free, make the preparation. There is only simple, hygienic and vegetarian food that is served in the *langar*. Those who prepare food do not wear shoes and cover their heads. *Gurbani* (the *Guru's* holy words) are recited throughout the preparation and distribution processes. *Langar*, as a result, is a *prasad* (sacred food). In order to partake in the *langar*, people sit in rows without knowing who the person sitting alongside them is or what his or her caste or creed is. Food is served by *Sevadars*, and utensils are then washed and kept in a designated place by the person who has partaken of the holy food. *Guru Ka Langar* has thus demolished caste barriers and gender prejudices in their entirety.

This practice has been a fundamental component of the Sikh religion. Giving is a wonderful act when done without bias. True kindness is blind to race, ethnicity and religion. The virtue of charity gives people hope in their most difficult and depressing circumstances. True Sikh ethics are fundamentally about one's duty and responsibility not only to the creator but to all of creation. Surrounded by Hinduism and Islam, Sikhism emerged in the context of the Sikh *Guru's* message addressed to all mankind. Ethical relationships depend on the responsibility one person has for the other. Sharing is an essential part of *Sikhi*, as altruism is a prerequisite for serving the Creator and creation. By sharing, one begins to recognise the important divine quality of selflessness. However, it is important to note that man can only know God through love. When sharing is approached from this type of stance of love, the very concept of no longer sharing is incomprehensible. Sharing must arise as a mutual alternative through dialogue, engagement and prayer. It is vital that we deliver without wanting something in return. And, above all, one must not be selfish when sharing. As *Guru Nanak* explains, in order to share, it is essential that 'I dedicate my body, mind, wealth and all to Him. I totally sacrifice my soul to Him' (Khalsa & Thind, n.d., p. 47).

This is perhaps best explained by the Sikh practice of offering *langar* (blessed food). *Guru Nanak Dev Ji* started

practicing *langar* when his father gave him 20 rupees to start a business. Against his father's expectations and to his dismay, Guru Nanak Dev Ji used this money to provide food for the holy people. This profound and eternal act came to be known as *Sacha Sauda*, or the righteous way. Since then, *langar* has become a cornerstone of Sikh religious practice and embodies the spirit of oneness today.

Langar is an institution that provides unconditionally blessed meals to all. What sets *langar* apart from other foods is that it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In a *gurdwara* (a Sikh place of worship), every hour is the time to eat, so the notion of having fixed mealtimes such as lunch and dinner is irrelevant. *Langar* is above all a labour of love, a communal kitchen that is an integral part of serving both the Almighty and God's creations. The three mottos of *Naam Japo*, *Kirat Karo* and *Vand Chhako* are embodied in the practice of *langar*, which is inseparable from prayer at every stage. It should be financed by an honest life and shared among all. It is not only a benevolent and charitable act, but it also aims to embody humility, equality and love for all involved in its preparation, serving and consumption. A living example of this tradition was the *langar* service conducted by the Sikh community at the 24th Congress of the World Council of Religions in Barcelona. What did not stand out here was that Sikhs were serving *langar*. More important was the effect of this far-reaching act (Goyal, 2019). As a result, people of all faiths came together to participate in the preparation, serving of *langar* and cleanup. In Barcelona, *langar* was no longer just a Sikh institution; it became a way for the community to be together. It has become a tangible way of sharing. This is an example of how faith communities give and receive from each other in a responsible way.

Management in Gurdwaras

Sikhs are supposed to donate 10% of their income for charitable causes, which is called *Daswandh* (tithe). A part of *Daswandh* also goes to *langar*. This *Daswandh* money plays a major role in keeping the *langar* going. This is not limited to *langar* or *gurdwara*; it goes far beyond it. Sikhs reach out to any community if there is a natural disaster or community emergency. They are serving *langar* in Australia now to feed those who are trying to put out horrible jungle fires that have killed over one billion animals and living beings. They also reach out to other communities with money, blankets, medicines, etc., in times of natural calamities. When a Sikh or a devotee goes to a *gurdwara*, he/she almost never goes

empty-handed (Nahal, 2017). As per the Sikh tradition, he/she (including children) almost always donates some amount of money by putting it in the Guru's *Golak* (a donation box set aside in Guru's name for *panthic* causes and *langar*) while paying obeisance to *Guru Granth Sahib* and before taking a seat. That amount is not fixed and can be any amount that one feels comfortable donating. There is no minimum, it is not mandatory and no one will ask for it. During old times, when women from the villages went to the village *gurdwara*, they would take small amounts of grain, jaggery, pulses, milk or other food provisions and use them as donations for *langar* in place of cash. This way of life continues to this day. Now it might be in the form of a bag of groceries, a container of milk, sweets or some other food items. So, the *langar* institution is self-sustaining.

Khadoor Sahib Gurdwara in Punjab has a long list of neighbouring villages (almost 30) who have volunteered to send fresh milk every day for *langar*. The *Langar* of *Khadoor Sahib* is legendary. There are 31 clusters of villages that provide *Langar at Khadoor Sahib* on a continual basis. In addition, thousands of devotees (Sikhs and non-Sikhs) visit that historical place daily, where they enjoy the *langar* and donate a significant amount of money. While some *gurdwaras* might have better or larger *langar* facilities, there is no difference in the quality of food between small or large *gurdwaras* and the spirit in which it is served, thus it is consistent. In some countries, they might have a local food flavour depending on the taste preference and availability of the type of food, but it is always vegetarian. A *gurdwara* is established after a thorough study, keeping in mind the concentration of the Sikh population in a particular geographic location and their spiritual needs.

It is not uncommon for a single Sikh family to host *langar* for thousands of people on a particular day in a *gurdwara*. It happens all the time. Some individuals or families take responsibility to provide a particular item for a particular day (tea, *jalebis*, sweets, *pakorras*, *chhole bhature*, snacks, fruits, juice, etc.). After the Bhuj earthquake, truckloads of food and provisions from Punjab and other areas started to reach the affected areas in a matter of a few days. The same thing happened when the tsunami hit about 10 years ago in Asia.

As rightly explained by Singh and Bansal (2018), Success of management lays on traits of leadership to motivate subordinates, gain confidence of seniors, utilization of resources available. Motivation comes through watching activities of leaders and understanding their success stories. Sikh religion has a very vast and rich history of

such leaders, who not only motivated their disciples to rewrite the history, but laid best practices namely *Kirat Karo*, *Wand Ke Chakko*, *Naam Japo*, *Langar* (free kitchen), *Dasvandh*, *Kar Seva*, speak the truth, stand for the right and don't harm anyone, which are derived from the guidelines of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *Sikh Gurus* and other leaders. *Naam Japo* means reciting *Gurbani* as per the time of the day while doing daily chores, which shall keep a leader's soul free of greed, lust, ego, anger and favouritism.

The management of *langar* in a *gurdwara* also depends on the leaders who manage it and how selflessly they perform this charitable service. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) is an autonomous organisation responsible for managing gurdwaras in Delhi state, including educational institutions, old age homes, hospitals and libraries. Established in 1974, it was replaced by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1971, which established a committee elected by Sikh vote, with elections held every 4 years (DSGMC, 2017). The management of *langar* in *gurdwaras* has evolved over the years, from making everything by hand in the community kitchen to currently having the most advanced technology available to help the community kitchen is truly a work of art. The kind of management it requires is one of a kind, as *langar* in even the local *gurdwaras* feeds almost 10,000 people a day. The author is just providing a very small, minute figure compared to what *gurdwaras* such as *Gurdwara Bangla Sahib*, *Sis Ganj Sahib* or *Sri Harmandir Sahib*, which approximately feeds about 100,000 people every single day (Eplett, 2016). Every day around 700 kg of *daal*, 250–300 kg of rice, 1,000 kg of vegetables and 80,000 to 1 lakh *rotis* are prepared. The two big iron *kadhais* (wok) make around 500 kg of *sabji* and 300 kg of rice at a time, while each of the six copper pots churn out around 150 kg of *daal* (Baru Sahib, 2021). Aside from the technology and 24/7 volunteer services that help to maintain the community kitchen, there is no barrier of age, caste, colour or creed to who can help or eat in the community kitchen. From children to old people, everyone works together to help in these kitchens. *Langar* has been a saviour during destitute times; the free community kitchens that are the indispensable part of Sikh religion have become professionally managed and established 'Free Food Management Centres' across the world (Singh & Singh, 2021). The management of *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, like any other *gurdwara*, is done by volunteers and *sevadars* who work selflessly to ensure that the *langar* is prepared, served and cleaned up efficiently. The *Langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* is one of the largest *langars* in India, which serves around 50,000 people every day.

The maintenance of *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* requires a lot of planning and execution. Volunteers and *sevadars* prepare the food in groups, serve it to the devotees and clean the place after the *langar* is over. At *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, the preparation of the *langar* starts in the morning, and volunteers work in the kitchen till late to prepare the food. The menu for the day is usually planned, with plenty of food to ensure there is enough for everyone. *Langar* usually consists of food like dal, rice, vegetables, bread, kheer, etc. Once the food is ready, it is served to the devotees in the *langar bhawan*, which is a large hall with couches and long blankets spread out on the ground. The *sevadars* follow the tradition of *Guru Ka Langar* and treat the food with the utmost respect and humility. Once the *langar* is over, the *sevadars* clean the place, wash the dishes and make sure everything is left neat and tidy. The entire process of maintaining the *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* is a well-honed effort, with hundreds of volunteers and *sevadars* working tirelessly to serve the devotees. The Sikhs have a tradition of donating 10% of their income to charity, including *langar*, free cooking at gurdwaras. They donate money or food provisions, and the *langar* institution is self-sustaining, with some *gurdwaras* receiving truckloads of grains and food provisions from all over Punjab and other areas. The *langar* in *gurdwaras* has evolved over time, with the help of advanced technology, to feed around 10,000 people a day. Sikhs reach out to any community in times of natural disasters or community emergencies, providing money, blankets, medicines, etc. In addition, they host *langar* for thousands of people in a *gurdwara*, and during Sikh parades, *langar* is available almost every 50–100 m. Even though some *gurdwaras* might have better or larger *langar* facilities, the quality and spirit in which it is served are consistent even in the biggest *langar* halls in the world.

It is important to note that *langar* is not just a Sikh tradition, but also a universal concept of sharing and serving food with others. In fact, many non-Sikhs have also contributed to *langar* at gurdwaras and other places. In the demonetisation of 2016, when the workers could not afford anything to eat, the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* opened its doors and helped with the *langar* to provide free food to these labourers. Even during the pandemic, *Guru's langar* provided food and other essential supplies to the poor, vulnerable and everyone in need (Nath, 2016). *Oxygen langar* was another very impressive service the Sikh community performed during the second wave of COVID in India. The DSGMC has provided on-ground support since March 2020, when the pandemic began affecting the lives of people adversely. With the second wave creating greater havoc, they ramped up their

efforts by providing oxygen *langars* and beds, among other things. A 400-bed COVID-19 care centre was opened at Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib, located in New Delhi's main government district. The facility was equipped with essential oxygen support and medicines. If patients developed symptoms, they could be shifted to the Lok Nayak Hospital that the centre was affiliated with. It was one of the three makeshift hospitals DSGMC wanted to establish. The other two were currently being set up. Gurudwara's provided 'oxygen *langars*' to severely ill COVID-19 patients. Helplines were also functional to help people identify the facilities they could visit to get oxygen support until they were admitted to a hospital. Throughout the pandemic, the DSGMC and *Gurudwaras* have tirelessly worked round the clock, offering hope and timely aid to those affected by the pandemic. Their dedication and selflessness have played a vital role in supporting the community during these difficult times (Kaushik, 2021).

These services were and continue to be provided worldwide, wherever the community resides, irrespective of its size. Another aspect of *langar*'s productivity in society is its outreach and community-building activities. The *langar* is there because of Guru Nanak Dev's blessings and the Sikh community's resolve to help the needy, regardless of who might need help.

Methodology

In the light of the above-mentioned circumstances, research has been conducted on the volunteers of one of Delhi's oldest and most illustrious gurdwaras, Sis Ganj Sahib, to gather data on the management of *langar* and its impact on the volunteers and the gurdwara during challenging times, such as demonetisation, COVID-19 and other difficult circumstances. The survey has a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Thematic

analysis has been used for qualitative data, which involves reviewing literature, books, religious scriptures and research papers related to Sikh *langar*, while quantitative data will be analysed using statistical methods. This combined approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the steps taken to sustain the tradition, the psychological and emotional impact on the gurdwara and its volunteers, and the overall significance of *langar* in the Sikh community and society at large.

Results and Discussions

Lack of awareness can be a major issue faced by gurdwaras trying to find a source of *langar* income. This lack of knowledge can be due to a variety of factors, including low disclosure, a lack of education and cultural differences. According to the statistics conducted through the survey (Figure 1.1), the majority of the people either went once a month or rarely to the Sis Ganj Gurdwara, and when asked, the answer mentioned a lack of awareness and cultural differences. From the expert's perspective, there are several reasons for this ignorance, which can be another topic to study in detail going forward when it comes to how this lack of knowledge and cultural differences play such a major role in the community's involvement when it comes to *langar*.

Aside from a lack of knowledge, we must understand that maintaining the management of a gurdwara requires some basic elements that contribute to its smooth and efficient flow, but often some direct or indirect factors can interfere with its management and functional mode. All the problems and issues mentioned below have also had an impact on the number of volunteers working at the gurdwara. Although the impact is not severe by any means, it has shown that there are fewer people than before. Some of these factors may coincide with problems in managing the *langar* supply chain, such as

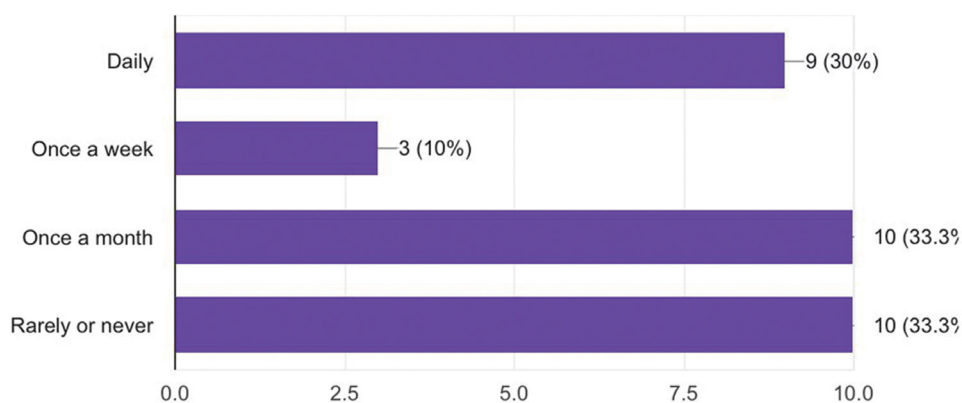


Figure 1.1. Duration of Participation in *Langar*.

GST prices, COVID-19, political instability, migration, increased catering consumption and the philanthropic ethical fabric deteriorating in the region (Figure 1.2).

One of the most important factors in managing the supply of *gurdwaras* is the availability of infrastructure and raw materials. As the *langar* serves thousands of people daily, it requires a constant supply of fresh vegetables, rice, spices and other ingredients. Any problems with the raw materials can affect the quality of the food served. This increased the cost of raw materials, increasing the cost of food production in *langar*. The introduction of GST further complicated tax compliance for an efficient management. The *gurdwara* must register under GST and file returns, which requires additional resources and expertise. Under the GST regime, raw materials such as grains, vegetables and cooking oil used in the *langar* are taxed at higher rates than before. Input credit is a method of charging GST paid on the purchase of inputs and other goods against GST paid on the final product. However, the input credit system does not apply to input goods and services, including *langar*. This resulted in a breakdown in the input credit system, resulting in higher costs. Donations to *langar* are exempt from GST. However, the high cost of food preparation due to higher tax rates on goods may discourage donors from contributing to *langar*. This can have an impact on the overall supply chain management of the *langar*, which is visible from the survey conducted. All these problems have significantly reduced the number of volunteers helping with the *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on *langar* management at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, as it has affected all aspects of *langar* access, including the availability of raw materials, transportation, infrastructure, skilled labour, sanitation and food safety. In the survey, when asked how COVID-19 has impacted the management at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, the responses often

mentioned were that the most important was an increased workload due to safety and sanitation measures, which furthermore resulted in reduced volunteer participation due to health concerns, which was extremely important to be considered, and also the financial challenges that people were facing due to increased costs and reduced donations, which was also a major point that was given importance. All of this had a very significant impact on the management of *langar* at the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*.

Political instability can have a significant impact on the maintenance of *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* as it can affect the availability of raw materials, transportation and the safety and security of pilgrims and staff. In 1984, the Sikh community in India faced violence in the riots that followed the assassination of then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. This resulted in extensive destruction and loss of life, and several *gurdwaras*, including the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, were targeted. The riots disrupted the *langar* supply chain, as it became difficult to transport raw materials and ensure the safety of workers and guests. Political tensions and disputes can also disrupt the *langar* supply chain. For example, in 2016, protests in Delhi against the implementation of a new water policy by the government resulted in the disruption of water supply to the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. This had affected the *langar* performance, as water is an integral part of the *langar* preparation process. *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* receives donations and raw materials from different parts of India and neighbouring countries like Pakistan. Border clashes and disputes can disrupt the supply chain and affect the availability of raw materials. Political interference in the management of *Gurdwaras* can also affect the use of *langar*. In 2015, for instance, the DSGMC was accused of mismanaging the funds allocated for *langar* and diverting them from political sources. This caused a public outcry and affected the donations received for the *langar*. The recession also affected the contributions of the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. Many of the people who used to donate to

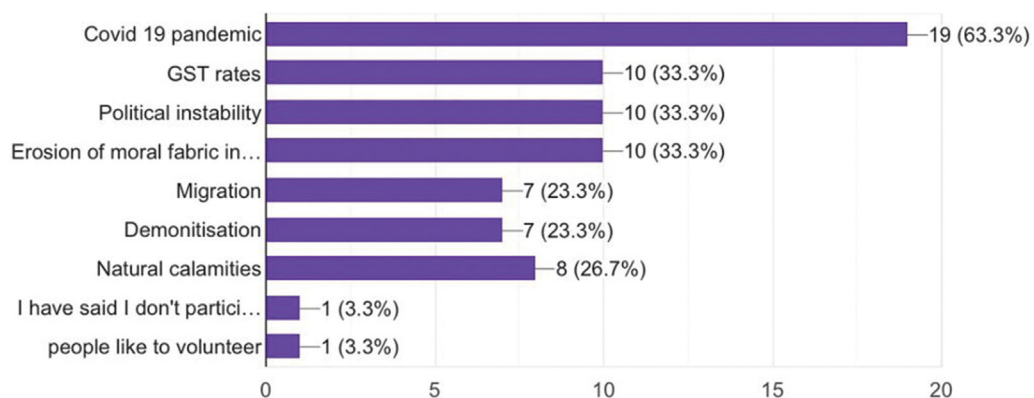


Figure 1.2. Causes for the Change in the Number of Volunteers in Gurdwara.

the *gurdwara* came from other villages or countries, thereby reducing the funds available for the *langar*. This had affected the availability of raw materials and maintenance of infrastructure.

The deterioration of the moral fabric of aid in the region has had a significant impact on the maintenance of *langar* at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*, as it has made it very difficult to maintain it with reduced community support. In the past, volunteers played an important role in running the *langar* service at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. However, as the morality of charity is being eroded, many people are reluctant to give their time and efforts for the benefit of the community. This has led to a shortage of volunteers and increased workload. The violation of the moral fabric of the services has also been attributed to the misuse of donations received from the *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. Some individuals and organisations have used the name of the *gurdwara* to collect donations for their own benefit, leading to a loss of trust among the community. The deterioration of the charity's moral fabric has also led to a reduction in the amount of donations received at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara*. Now, some people are reluctant to donate to charitable organisations, including *gurdwaras*, due to concerns about misuse of funds or a lack of healthcare. Earlier, *langar* was

seen as an act of communal harmony and selflessness. However, when the moral fabric of charity is broken, some people lose respect for the *langar* and may not follow the traditional norms of cleanliness and reverence when visiting the *gurdwara*. Not only that, when it was asked to the people whether the traditional values of *langar*, such as selfless service and communal harmony, are still relevant and meaningful today (Figure 1.3), 66.7% said yes, 26.7% said that they were somewhat important and the rest 6.6% did not believe it on the grounds that they had any meaningful role.

Due to all these factors, this has led to psychological and emotional burnout amongst the volunteers and the management staff of the *gurdwara*, according to the responses based on the questionnaire that was conducted for the case study. Although emotional or psychological burnout is not significant, it is still somewhat present amongst people. All the factors mentioned above have played a significant role in this problem. Despite all of these significant issues that are mentioned above, the *gurdwara* management or the volunteers have not lacked in their dedication and beliefs towards the tradition of *langar* and have contributed throughout the difficult times.

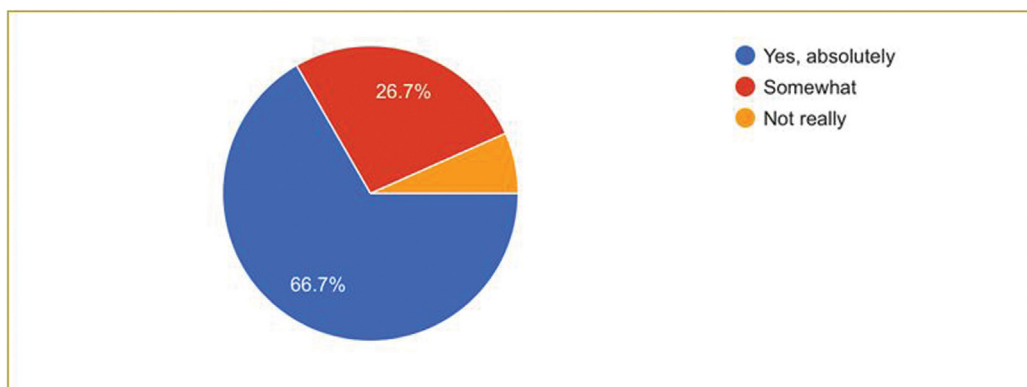


Figure 1.3. Importance of Traditional Values of *Langar*, Such as Selfless Service, Communal Harmony in Today's Society.

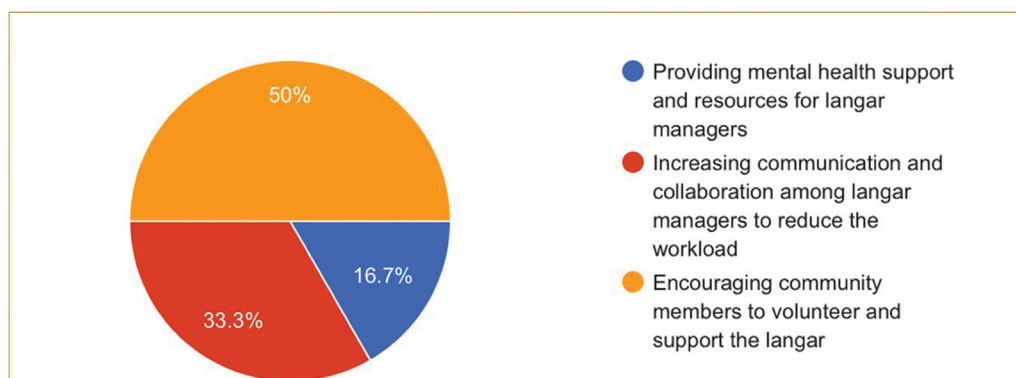


Figure 1.4. Suggestions to Address the Emotional and Psychological Challenges Faced by *Langar* Managers?

By the end, when the suggestions for how the management of langar in Sis Ganj Gurdwara would address the emotional and psychological challenges (Figure 1.4) faced by langar managers were received, 50% of the suggestions were about encouraging community members to volunteer and support the langar, 16.7% were about providing mental health support and resources for langar managers/volunteers and the rest (33.3%) were about increasing communication and collaboration among langar managers and volunteers to reduce the workload for the people.

Conclusion

The Sikh community's *langar* has been a model of selflessness and communal harmony for centuries. *Langar* is a free communal kitchen serving simple, clean vegetarian meals for everyone, regardless of their social, religious or ethnic background. *Sevadars*, or volunteers, work selflessly for free to carry out the system, and Gurbani is taught throughout the system and distribution, making *langar* a sacred meal. *Langar* has broken down caste and gender barriers. It is a testament to the Sikh values of equality, service and community. Anchor management is an example of community participation and self-sustainability.

Finally, to conclude, the *langar* programme at *Sis Ganj Gurdwara* faces many challenges that affect its delivery, such as lack of awareness, political instability, the COVID-19 pandemic and food shortages. Proper maintenance requires supplies and infrastructure. The introduction of GST complicated tax laws, increased costs and confused the tax system. Political struggles, protests, border disputes, money laundering and other disputes can hinder the availability of funds. The decreased morality of the people has severely affected the management, resulting in staff shortages and overwork, reduced contributions and a loss of public confidence that affects the economy.

Thus, all these factors combine, causing stress and tension between the management and the people who volunteer on a daily basis in the *gurdwara*. The combination of these factors has mentally and emotionally drained the *gurdwara's* management and staff. Overall, effective management of the *gurdwara's* supply chain requires a holistic approach that addresses these challenges and ensures the sustainability of this important community service. The Sikh tradition of *langar* has not only fed millions of people but has also served to transmit beliefs and cultures of sharing and volunteering. The management of the *langar* has been an example of

community participation and interdependence for centuries, where everyone contributes to its well-being, and will continue to do so.

Competing Interest Statement

The author has read and approved the manuscript and takes full responsibility for its contents. No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Inference on Business Best Practices Affinity Despite Conceptual AI Exposure

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ABSTRACT

The background of the study was the experience of the major difficulties that IT compliance professionals face in light of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI). For this purpose, an in-depth analysis of the current situation and future focus points are provided by a prime coverage of 1,000 survey respondents who are industry cyber practitioners. One in two businesses with between 1000-5000 workers experienced a security breach in 2022, showing that threat actors are still driven to obtain valuable and sensitive data. In contrast to last year's 35% and 57%. Firms anticipate spending more effort on risk compliance management in 2023. The chosen methodology for analyzing this topic is a qualitative retrospective casual comparative positivism approach. Through this analysis, the paper aims to determine whether the C-Suite and board are actively addressing the escalating incidents of security breaches. It is widely recognized that businesses are prepared to enhance their risk and compliance management practices in the future. The paper intends to provide conclusive insights into the current handling of risk and compliance, with indications that these areas are often managed independently and in isolation. Further details on these findings will be presented in the paper.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), IT risk, IT compliance, risk compliance

Introduction

As companies continue to accelerate their digitization efforts, those with an early adopter mindset may be tempted to jump on the next big thing out of curiosity and hype. In recent years, new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud services, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have proliferated and seen significant adoption. One factor may be the growing number of digital natives among the world's population who are more knowledgeable about digital technologies and the adoption of new technologies. From an organizational perspective, managing the security and risks associated with new technologies can be challenging. Companies may feel pressure to adopt these new technologies without conducting a detailed and

balanced risk/benefit assessment to stay ahead. However, the risks associated with using these technologies must be understood and considered so that potential threats do not catch you off guard.

Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, has emerged as a popular technology in recent times. McKinsey defines generative AI as algorithms capable of producing diverse content like audio, code, images, text, simulations, and videos. [Vincent, 2023] The introduction of ChatGPT to the public in November 2022 has sparked a global sensation, attracting a staggering 100 million monthly active users within just two months. This rapid adoption has set a record for the fastest-growing platform. Consequently, companies must anticipate that their employees will engage with ChatGPT or other generative AI services in some capacity.

The utilization of generative AI technology offers users various advantages. For one, it enhances user productivity by generating content based on prompts, eliminating the need for human expertise. Different generative AI services cater to various purposes, such as artistic creation, coding, explanatory tasks, and knowledge acquisition. However, amidst the hype surrounding new technology, it is imperative for management to acknowledge the potential negative impacts and risks that may arise within their organization. OpenAI's ChatGPT, for instance, experienced a 10-hour shutdown following a data breach, which allowed users to view other users' chat history titles [Robinson, 2020]. Furthermore, personal information belonging to approximately 1.2 million subscribers of ChatGPT Plus may be exposed.

As seen above, organizations must be comfortable with both embracing these technologies and managing the uncertainties that come with adopting them to avoid falling into the hype trap. By being motivated by these issues; in this research, we pose the following questions.

- What's your experience with using AI for Risk oriented assessments and business decisions?
- How have you considered the risks arising from this emerging technology?
- Is it a single line item or are there multiple risks identified in your risk register?
- How do the top level executives view such risks?

With these research questions in hand the two main objectives or the aims drawn for the work would be:

- 1) Exploring the impact of C-suite involvement on budget prioritization and allocation.
- 2) Examining the effectiveness of unified risk management and compliance operations.

In other words, it is to know if the company is taking a risk-informed approach, where security and risk professionals can navigate the path forward in such a way that balances the potential benefits of emerging technologies with the risk they may pose.

Literature Knowledge on Recent Key Trends

The first section of the literature is solely focused on to see the latest performing trends in the ever-evolving compliance and risk landscape.

85% of company practitioners say their company has a board member with cybersecurity expertise. As the board

takes a magnifying glass to cybersecurity, compliance operations, and risk management, security and compliance professionals will need to brace themselves for a barrage of requests for detailed reporting, more internal assessments, and more frequent communication with the board around cybersecurity risk [Robinson, 2020].

A large 51% of practitioners struggle with identifying critical risks to prioritize remediations. Although respondents were highly confident in their abilities to address risk, practitioners also noted that they are still struggling to identify and prioritize risks [Vincent, 2023]. This means that while respondents felt they were doing an adequate job of addressing risk, they still struggle with finding risk related information when they need it and must switch between multiple systems throughout the risk management process. While risk management is improving for many organizations, there are opportunities for further improvement.

In 57% of cyber users anticipate spending more time on IT risk management and compliance in 2023. 32% of respondents said they would postpone adding additional compliance frameworks and/or certifications due to lack of capacity to take on new work and to mitigate stress in the coming months, but this can only happen for so long [Hu, 2023]. With security breaches on the rise and increasing pressure to keep companies safe, compliance managers will need to find ways to reduce their manual administrative tasks to better focus on IT risk management.

70% companies plan to grow their compliance team over the next two years. In a volatile economy, spending on compliance operations and risk management is still expected to increase, as all eyes are on CISOs (Chief Information Security Officer) to prevent data breaches. This willingness to invest in risk management is in sharp contrast to other categories of corporate spending in the current down economy. Yet, this trend to hire more staff is logical, given that 32% of respondents said they had to postpone the pursuit of new compliance frameworks/certifications due to insufficient resources [Hu, 2023].

Literature Study on Defining Risk Appetite

The goal of risk management is to reduce an organization's risk below an acceptable level. This tolerance level is determined based on the organization's risk appetite and tolerance for certain risks. Risk appetite is how much an organization is willing to lose if the risk materializes or

if the project fails to meet its goals. Risk appetite varies from organization to organization based on industry, culture, diversity, size and goals. An organization's risk appetite changes over time[Cao et.al, 2023].

One of the advantages of taking risks is that management considers various potential risks and evaluates the possible loss of investment in the event of project failure. This evaluation helps determine the organization's risk appetite, which is crucial in determining the margin for investing in new projects. However, many companies struggle with defining their risk appetite, with a study revealing that only 26% of organizations have a clear risk appetite statement. It is important for an organization to have a well-defined risk appetite statement as it aligns with the overall business strategy and should be expressed in quantitative terms in order to effectively manage risks. [Cao et.al, 2023].

However, it may also contain qualitative statements. An organization's risk appetite depends on its risk culture.

Characterizing risk hunger is the obligation of the governing body and, while characterizing risk appetite, the accompanying perspectives are to be viewed as by the board [John, 2022]:

- Absolute income of the association and the value capital that will choose as far as possible
- Consistence prerequisites, especially legitimate and administrative
- Level of accomplishment of business targets and the effect of hazard on them
- Partner assumptions from the association.
- Verifiable information and experience on risk appearance
- Risk situation investigation

Additionally, certain aspects need to be part of an ERM framework to ensure the effectiveness of risk appetite and, in turn, the risk management process [John, 2022].

- Increment risk mindfulness and construct the ideal risk culture
- Adjust business procedures with the board and empower planning among monetary and risk reaction activity plans
- Guarantee remaining gamble is fine
- Key risk development indicators (KRIs), key performance indicators (KPIs) and checking processes
- Value creation, risk advancement, security and monetary supportability Understanding partner assumptions connected with potential outcomes

Literature- Related Work on Study of Ai Uncertainties

While privacy and fairness remain central to the AI debate, others are harnessing the power of AI to transform the way nations conduct military operations. It can be used as training input and attract the attention of malicious attackers. When discussing generative AI within the enterprise, keep in mind six messages that can support the discussion of AI opportunities and risks. Increased technological capabilities inherently carry risk. While many GPT risk areas are documented, there will undoubtedly be more given the recency of GPT-4 (latest version). Misuse of technology—intentional or otherwise—is inevitable. Preemptive planning, governance, risk management and continued research are imperative [Chui et.al, 2022].

1. Advancements in technical capabilities come with inherent risks, particularly in the case of GPT-4. While some risk areas in GPT technology have been identified, there are likely numerous others that have not yet been documented. It is inevitable that technology will be misused, whether intentionally or unintentionally. To mitigate these risks, prevention planning, governance, risk management, and ongoing research are crucial.
2. One area of concern is that language models can reinforce biases and stereotypes, perpetuating societal prejudices. Current focus is primarily on computational factors such as data and fairness, while overlooking human and organizational biases and social factors. It is important to recognize that the input provided by users to generative AI tools is often already biased, which influences future results.
3. Furthermore, legal frameworks have lagged behind technological advancements for an extended period. The rapid growth of generative AI has brought to light various intellectual property issues and has underscored the urgent need for effective privacy laws and oversight, particularly in the United States.
4. Automated systems carry risks not only during processing but also when they are poorly designed, implemented, operated, or lacking proper oversight. It is crucial to provide users with clear and concise notifications that offer accessible and understandable documentation of automation's functionality and role across various systems. These notifications should be on par with those provided for human alternatives. Additionally, companies have a responsibility to establish clear guidelines for the use of technology in the workplace.
5. There has been a historical mismatch between the supply and demand for technical talent, leading to the

emergence of vendor solutions claiming to solve all business problems. Currently, the usefulness of GPT-4 in cybersecurity is limited. GPT-4 is anticipated to make phishing emails more convincing, making it harder to contain social engineering attacks and necessitating the need for cybersecurity education and awareness.

6. Fear, uncertainty and doubt (FUD) around AI replacing human jobs is nothing new, but the emphasis seems to be on augmenting human capital now, but that won't always be the case. Importantly, how good an AI is depends on the data you use to train it. Humans therefore still play an important role in situational awareness, creativity and communication. AI may replace some roles, making global and national policy decisions more important. In IT-related areas, the explosion of technologies like GPT-4 is likely to result in job restructuring and redeployment of specific business functions rather than worker mobility[Walters, 2020].

The emergence of technologies like GPT-4 in IT-related fields is more likely to result in job restructuring and the reassignment of specific business functions rather than widespread worker displacement.

Generative AI and Digital trust serves as the foundation for AI insights and plays a critical role in the digital transformation process. However, recent advancements in AI technology have made achieving digital trust more challenging. AI systems are not immune to errors and violations, highlighting the need for organizations to earn and maintain digital trust. Developing, operating, and securing technology without proper visibility can lead to significant issues, ranging from operational challenges to irreversible damage to a brand's reputation. Currently, consumers often have to compromise their privacy in exchange for access to all-or-nothing services. Unfortunately, we heavily rely on legal frameworks to regulate business practices that exploit individuals who may be careless or unaware of the risks involved. [Chui et.al, 2022].

Security Professionals and Regulatory Changes (Relevant Study)

All of the above advances pressure the InfoSec professionals to brace regulatory changes, many of which either went into effect on January 1, 2023 or will go into effect this year. Some of the highest-impact regulatory changes are outlined below [McKinsey, 2023].

- Data Privacy in USA

In 2023, nearly 30 states have some form of privacy protection law in place or in draft for debate and passage. Five states already have comprehensive policies in place: California, Utah, Colorado, Connecticut, and Virginia. California has already implemented GDPR-inspired standards statutes, and Colorado, Connecticut, Utah, and Virginia are following close behind. Additionally, California, Colorado, and Virginia are set to make important updates in 2023 that are shifting the underlying philosophical framework regarding data privacy protection [Heikkilä, 2022].

- Privacy regulations in China

The introduction of China's Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) in November 2021 has had a widespread impact on global industries. While there are some similarities between PIPL and regulations like the European Union's GDPR regarding data subject rights, such as access, withdrawal, and deletion, there are also significant differences. Unlike other privacy regulations, PIPL is overseen by the state-based agency, The Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), which deviates from the norm of independently operated agencies for compliance oversight. The specific applicability terms of PIPL are not yet clear, but it is expected that many medium to large-sized entities will be required to comply. Additionally, as neighboring countries work on their own privacy laws, the influence of PIPL on future regulation in parts of Asia could be significant.

- NIST Cybersecurity framework potential updates

In January 2023, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) announced its intent to make new revisions to its Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) document, with an emphasis on cyber defense inclusivity across all economic sectors. The new CSF could see protocols surrounding increasing international collaboration in cybersecurity efforts while still retaining the level of detail within the existing standards and guidelines to ensure the framework is scalable and useful for as many organizations as possible. Current recommendations for updates include a request for the new CSF to more clearly relate to other NIST frameworks, making improvements to the CSF's website, and expanding coverage and governance outcomes to supply chains.

- New Directives from the EU

The EU Data Governance Act (DGA) will become applicable in late 2023 and will facilitate data access and sharing with the public sector, adding another layer

of complexity as organizations try to understand what it takes to facilitate compliant data transfers. The DGA will establish robust procedures to facilitate the reuse of certain protected public sector data and foster data altruism across the EU. It will define a new business model for data intermediation services that would serve as trusted environments for organizations or individuals to share data, support voluntary data sharing between companies, facilitate the fulfillment of data sharing obligation set by law, enable individuals to exercise their rights under GDPR, and enable individuals to gain control over their data and share it with trusted companies.

Research Methodology

It is attempted to outline a type of Qualitative analysis as usage for data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data of this research. Also, explanation on the data in graphs and diagram to know the details on how risk systems and monitoring around it could be prioritized for implication.

I. Methodology and Method

Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numeric data, while quantitative research focuses on numeric data. Both approaches utilize methods like field notes, surveys, and interviews to gather information, providing valuable insights into various subjects or experiences [John, 2021]. Although the qualitative approach may be less widely accepted in certain fields, such as psychology, it has grown and developed over time, even amidst debates within the field [Zohny et al., 2023]. In the current study, a qualitative iterative approach is employed to retrospectively examine and compare causal relationships.

For effective statistical analysis of the data collected through these methods, it is important to assess the impact through intervention experimentation [Jackson et al., 2007]. Qualitative methods and the experimentation of those methods require an iterative approach. An example of this approach is illustrated in Figure 1.

The conducted research adopts a qualitative retrospective casual comparative positivism approach and relies on primary data. This approach was selected due to its emphasis on risk issues and performance data [Jackson et al., 2007].

Effective research planning is pivotal in aligning goals, objectives, resource needs, and anticipated outcomes, thereby providing clarity and direction to the research process [Brynjolfsson et al., 2023]. In this regard, the qualitative retrospective casual comparative approach is aligned with the research objectives to ensure appropriate conclusions can be drawn.

II. Data source

Figure 2 displays the categories or the number of companies involved in the research, which served as the primary data source for this study [Robinson, 2023]. The data was gathered through the IT Compliance and Risk Survey, with a total of 1010 responses collected between December 2022 and January 2023. The participating organizations belong to various industries.

Furthermore, the research also collected the profile of the participants in terms of their job functions, as shown in Figure 3. Among all respondents, 83% stated that they are directly involved in making decisions related to cybersecurity and data privacy risks for their organizations. Additionally, 16% reported having sufficient knowledge

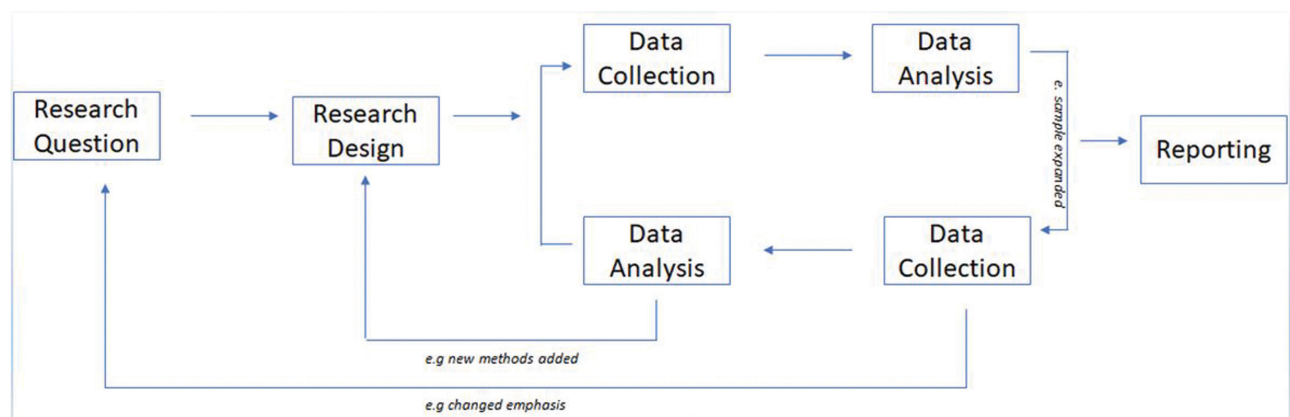


Figure 1. Qualitative Iterative Research Approach [Busetto et.al, 2020]

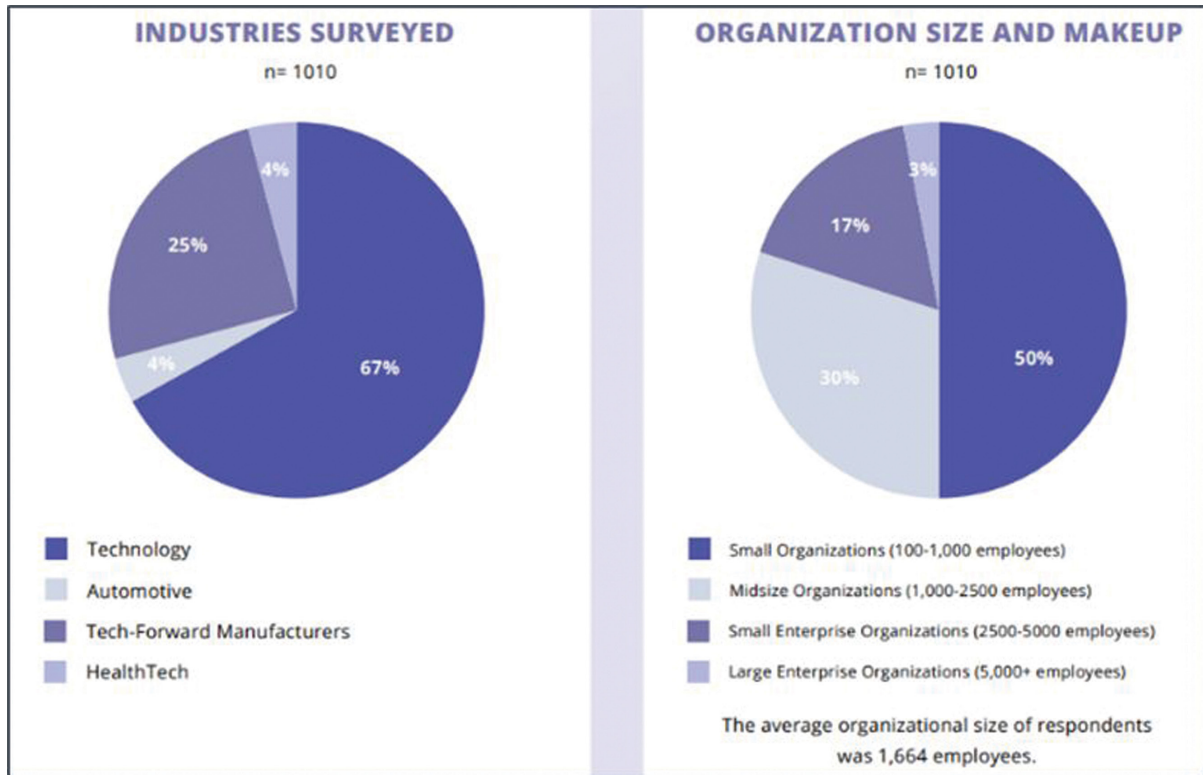


Figure 2. Profile of the Organisations in research

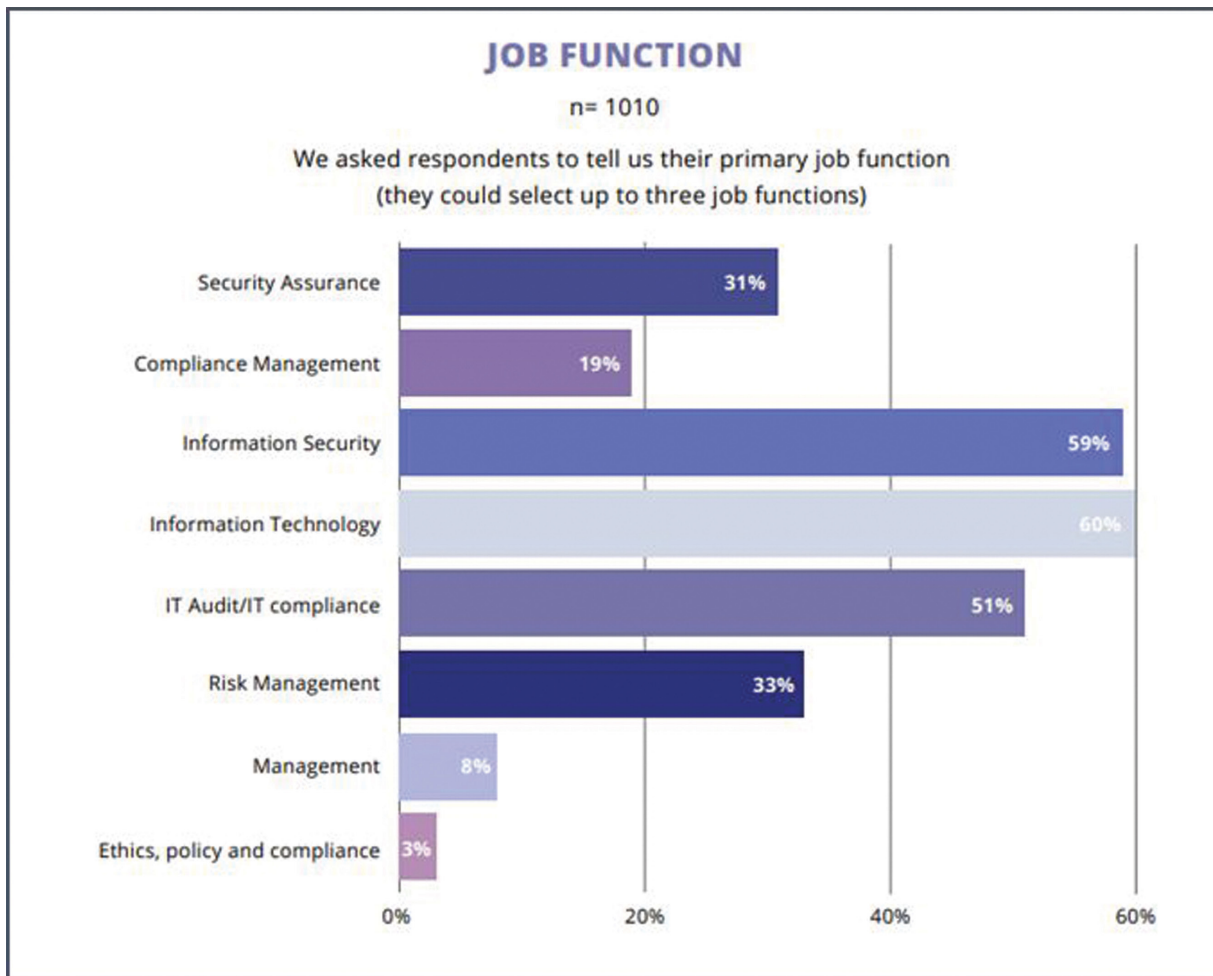


Figure 3. Job profile of participants

to understand the requirements and needs pertaining to cybersecurity and data privacy within their organization. Only 1% mentioned that they do not participate in decision-making but are responsible for maintaining IT security and data privacy. When it comes to decision-making authority for data security and privacy compliance, 81% of respondents claimed to be the sole decision-maker, 16% stated that they are part of a decision-making team within their organization, 2% mentioned being part of a committee, and 1% indicated that their role involves gathering information and conducting research on data security and privacy compliance.

III. Research Limitation:

Like any study, this research had certain limitations that need to be acknowledged.

- Firstly, the qualitative research approach used in this study does not allow for precise measurements of the problems under examination.
- Secondly, some participants were reluctant to provide the exact data requirements needed for the research.

Research Findings

This section is directly going to address the research objective identified in the first hand to find out how the new Generative AI trend have changed the way in which organizations refer the security budget plans and risk management purview, thereby unifying the C-suite level and Board for a collective responsibility. Analysis of the 1010 responses is produced for results as below.

1. Exploring the impact of C-suite involvement on budget prioritization and allocation

When most western companies are preparing for a recession, most security, compliance, and risk management departments are actually planning to level up their efforts and expand their budgets in 2023. This is likely due to mounting stress over cybersecurity risks, which was the largest stressor reported for InfoSec professionals at 36%. Notably, cybersecurity risks were also the highest reported cause of stress in 2022. This requires InfoSec professionals to stay up-to-date on security best practices and adds to the already growing pressure of preventing an attack.

Based on Figure 4, the most commonly reported financial loss resulting from data breaches in both 2022 and

2023 fell within the range of \$1M-\$5M. However, when examining the data more closely, it becomes evident that there are distinct trends in the cost of data breaches based on the size of the company.

Companies with more than 2,500 employees were found to be more prone to experiencing financial losses ranging from \$5M-\$20M as a consequence of data breaches. On the other hand, smaller companies with less than 2,500 employees were more likely to incur financial losses within the range of \$100k-\$1M.

For an average organization from our dataset, spending on technology represents a greater proportion of their organization's GRC (Governance, Risk and Compliance) spend than any other category as in Figure 5. The greater emphasis on technology shows that organizations are attempting to gain efficiencies in managing risks and compliance processes.

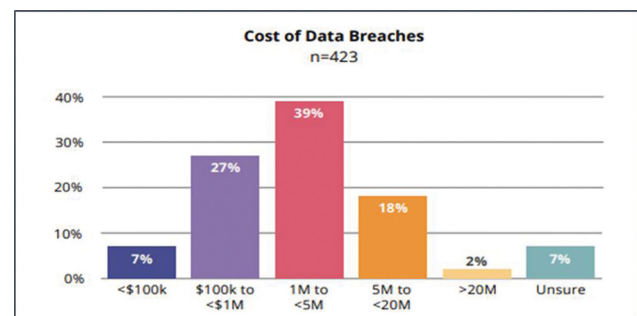


Figure 4. Cost of breaches

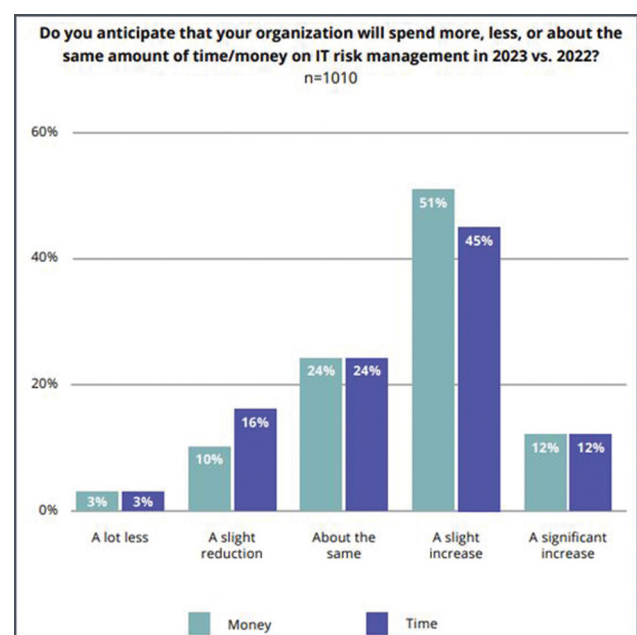


Figure 5. Spending on IT Risk Management

In the upcoming year, 63% of companies plan to allocate more funds towards compliance and risk, a significant increase compared to 45% in the previous year. On average, these companies estimate a 25% increase in their Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) budgets over the next 12 to 24 months. Among those who intend to increase their budgets, 76% expect a minimum 10% increase in spending.

Only 13% of respondents claimed they would reduce their spending, while a mere 3% indicated a substantial decrease in IT risk management and compliance investments for 2023. Additionally, 57% of participants stated their intention to dedicate more time to IT risk management and compliance in the coming year. The heightened level of involvement from the C-Suite is evident, as compared to the previous year where only 35% expected to allocate more time to these areas.

II. Examining the effectiveness of unified risk management and compliance operations

Notably in the survey, 29% of respondents do not have established KRIs (Key risk indicators) linked to their KPIs (Key performance indicators) for any identified high or critical risks, indicating that risk and compliance could still be operating in silos, or respondents haven't figured out how to measure meaningful changes to risk level. Unifying risk and compliance efforts can help solve each of these pervasive challenges. 68% of respondents using integrated tools with both manual and automated processes did not experience a breach in 2022, and 72%

of respondents who have tied their risk and compliance activities together did not experience a breach. With 31% of respondents said they manage IT risk in siloed departments, processes, and tools, followed by 24% that manage IT risk in an integrated approach where their processes are mostly automated (Refer Figure 6). These numbers are striking; while respondents clearly see the value in unifying risk management and compliance operations, the overwhelming majority of those surveyed aren't following this best practice. Even the most powerful IT risk management tool can produce inadequate results if critical processes are not in place.

The adoption of compliance tools has witnessed significant growth over the past year, with 65% of respondents in 2023 utilizing integrated risk management solutions, compared to 57% in 2022. The usage of these tools has transitioned from being a mere luxury to a necessity due to the transformative changes in the landscape, driven by the emergence of more advanced and powerful technology tools that are both beneficial to companies and threat actors.

In terms of tracking risks, the usage of spreadsheets has decreased from 35% in 2022 to 25% in 2023. Conversely, the use of the risk module in cloud-based GRC software has seen a slight increase from 57% last year to 60% this year. When it comes to identifying and managing IT risks from third parties, the utilization of spreadsheets has decreased from 31% in 2022 to 23% in 2023. On the other hand, the use of dedicated IT solutions has risen from 69% last year to 77% this year. The reliance on spreadsheets to manage IT compliance efforts has

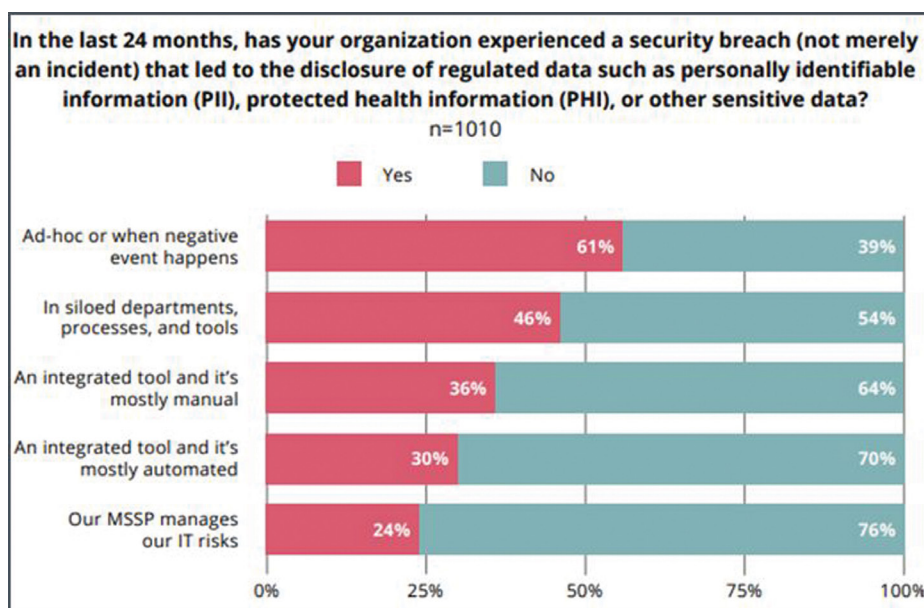


Figure 6. Experience of security breaches

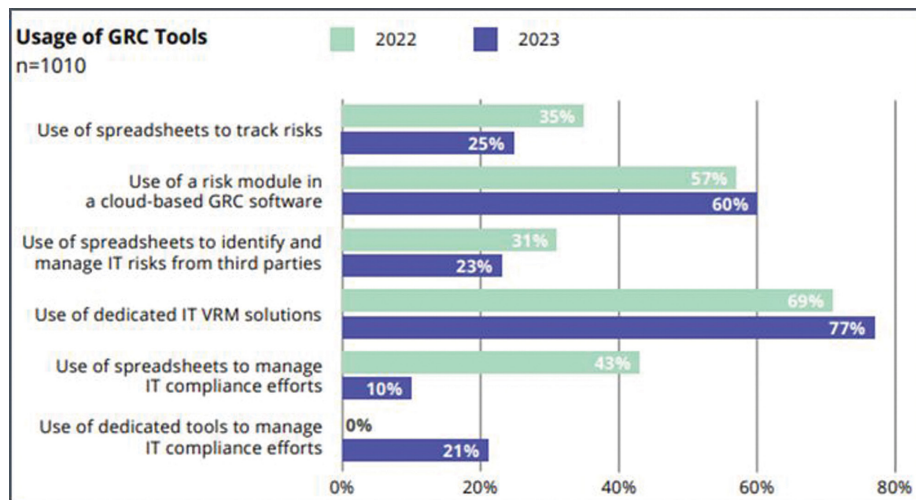


Figure 7. Experience of security breaches

notably reduced from 43% in 2022 to only 10% in 2023, as depicted in Figure 7.

This adoption of new tools aligns with the Technology sector's rapid increase in digital platform usage and Cloud technologies in response to the pandemic, and, as a result, this new mix of GRC tools has helped operationalize compliance efforts and adapt to new compliance requirements. However, the usage of Cloud technology has its downsides: third-party risk vulnerabilities, siloed views of risk and compliance and fractured reporting across multiple solutions.

Conclusions and Results

With the escalating concerns surrounding cybersecurity and the increase in regulatory measures, incidents of security breaches have gained significant attention in the media. Regulatory bodies now place greater emphasis on holding individuals accountable, particularly senior corporate officers and other influential figures within organizations. This shift, coupled with the findings of the survey, indicates a move towards stricter enforcement, particularly for organizations that lack adequate measures to safeguard and dispose of consumer data [Rothwell et al., 2022].

Implementing an integrated approach to risk and compliance operations enables organizations to effectively manage individual risks without duplicating processes. This approach begins by conducting a comprehensive risk assessment and formulating a robust security policy, followed by the implementation of internal controls aligned with the assessment outcomes. Embracing this integrated approach enhances

coordination throughout the organization, involving input from all stakeholders and seamlessly integrating compliance into risk operations.

A recent study conducted by Hacker et al. (2023) examined the impact of embracing an integrated approach to Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC) on security and business performance outcomes. The research aimed to determine if there was substantial evidence suggesting that organizations adopting this approach achieve better security postures compared to those viewing compliance as a separate oversight function.

The study findings revealed that organizations practicing an integrated approach had a lower likelihood of scoring poorly in risk management and were less susceptible to security breaches compared to those perceiving compliance functions solely as rule enforcers. Moreover, organizations that embraced integration spent less time on repetitive administrative tasks, contrasting with those placing a primary focus on rule enforcement.

Overall, the study supports the proposition that organizations seeking superior security and business performance outcomes should adopt an integrated approach to GRC, recognizing the interconnectedness between governance, risk management, and compliance functions.

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Truthful Living: A Perspective from Sikhism**Devinder Pal Singh****Center for Understanding Sikhism, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada***ARTICLE INFO***Article history***RECEIVED:** 23-Apr-23**REVISED:** 22-Aug-23**ACCEPTED:** 12-Sep-23**PUBLISHED:** 01-Dec-23

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**ABSTRACT**

Truthful living involves aligning one's thoughts, words, and actions with the ultimate truth. It is a way of living in accordance with one's true nature, being honest, living with integrity, and practicing humility and selflessness. Sikhism emphasizes the importance of truthful living as a life of purpose, service, and ethical behavior. It is a pathway of connecting with the Divine and achieving spiritual growth and fulfillment. According to Sikh doctrines, truthful living is a holistic approach to life that emphasizes spiritual growth and fulfillment through ethical and sustainable living. Moreover, it is crucial in the modern context because it promotes trust, transparency, accountability, social justice, equality, sustainability, and environmental protection. By living with honesty and integrity, individuals and institutions can create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world for future generations.

Keywords: Truthful Living, Sikhism, Sikh Gurus, Spiritual Growth, Integrity, Authenticity, Sustainability, Social Justice

Introduction

Truthful living (Singh, 2019) refers to living a life based on honesty, integrity, and authenticity. It means being true to oneself and others in thoughts, words, and actions. Truthful living involves being honest about one's beliefs, values, and feelings. It also means being transparent in one's communication and interactions with others. It can include being straightforward in conversations, admitting mistakes, and not hiding one's true intentions. Living truthfully can also mean being accountable for one's actions and taking responsibility for their consequences. Finally, it involves making ethical and moral choices and aligning one's actions with one's beliefs and values. Ultimately, truthful living promotes trust and respect in relationships and helps individuals live a fulfilling and authentic life.

Research Methodology

This article employs a qualitative research methodology to delve into the intricate doctrines of Sikhism regarding

truthful living. The study is rooted in a comprehensive literature review of Sikh religious texts, scholarly works, and articles on Sikh philosophy and ethics. To explore the multifaceted dimensions of truthful living within Sikhism, the research incorporates textual analysis of primary sources such as Sri Guru Granth Sahib ("Sri Granth," n.d.), the central scripture of Sikhism, as well as secondary sources that provide insights into Sikh teachings. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are conducted with Sikh scholars and practitioners to understand better how truthful living principles are interpreted and practiced in contemporary contexts. Through an iterative data collection and analysis, the study aims to construct a coherent framework that illuminates the core tenets of truthful living according to Sikh doctrines. By engaging with the depth of Sikh wisdom and dialogues with the Sikh community, this research contributes to a nuanced comprehension of truthful living and its relevance in fostering ethical conduct within the Sikh faith and society.

Guru Nanak's Teachings

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, in his hymns, proclaims ("Sri Granth," n.d.) that truthful living is an essential aspect of leading a virtuous and fulfilling life. Truthful living or being "*Sachiar*" is one of the core values in Sikhism and is considered a fundamental principle for achieving spiritual and moral excellence (Singh, 1983; Singh, 1990). Emphasizing the importance of truthful living, Guru Nanak proclaims:

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

Truth is the highest virtue, but higher still is truthful Living.
(Mahalla 1, SGGS, p 62)

Guru Nanak emphasized the importance of truthful living to attain spiritual enlightenment and connect with the Divine.

ਸਚੁ ਮਨਿ ਸਜਨ ਸੰਤੋਖਿ ਮੇਲਾ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਸਚੁ ਜਾਣਿਆ ॥

The way of truthfulness and contentment leads to the union with the True Lord (God). Following the Guru's Teachings, the Lord is known. (Mahalla 1, SGGS, p. 242)

Guru Nanak believed that living truthfully means being honest with oneself and others, speaking the truth, and following one's values and beliefs (Dhillon, 2021). Truthful living also involves being compassionate, respectful, and considerate towards others, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs. It is about treating others with kindness, fairness, and empathy and living in harmony with the world (Kaur, 2022; Singh, 2022). Basically, truthful living is a way of life that encompasses honesty, integrity, and morality, essential for achieving inner peace and spiritual growth (Singh, 2018).

Five Spiritual Realms (*Panj Khands*) of *Jap* Hymns and Truthful Living

The concept of the five spiritual realms (*Panj Khands*) in *Jap* hymns of Guru Nanak is closely related to truthful living. According to Sikhism, spiritual evolution occurs through a series of stages (realms), each representing a higher level of consciousness and spiritual awareness. Therefore, the concept of *Panj Khands* (Singh, 2019) emphasizes the importance of truthful living as a foundational principle for spiritual growth and evolution in Sikhism.

The first realm, *Dharam Khand*, is characterized by a focus on righteous living. As one progresses through the other realms, including *Gyan Khand*, *Saram Khand*,

Karam Khand, and *Sach Khand*, truthful living remains an important principle. *Panj Khands* stanzas of *Jap* verses of Guru Nanak delineate the different phases of progression of a devotee on the path of Truthful living, tracing the evolution of his thought, emotions, and action in each phase. In stanzas 34-37 of *Jap* composition, Guru Nanak touches upon the core characteristics of each domain. In each domain, the status of the individual is set forth in a social setting (Singh, 2004; Talib, 1977). The devotee is not conceived as a recluse or ascetic. On the contrary, the devotee's social obligations and moral qualities form an essential core of this path. Guru Nanak has described the spiritual journey of the devotee in the five realms as follows:

- 1 **Realm of Righteousness (*Dharam Khand*):** This is the first spiritual realm. It is characterized by a focus on living a life of *dharma*, or righteousness, which includes truthful living. In this realm, individuals learn to follow their values and principles and strive to be truthful in their thoughts, words, and actions. Truthful living is essential to this realm, as it lays the foundation for all the other realms.
- 2 **Realm of Knowledge (*Gyan Khand*):** It is a realm of knowledge. In this realm, individuals gain a deeper understanding of spiritual truths (Chahal, 2023) and learn to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Truthful living is crucial in this realm because it allows individuals to align themselves with the truth and separate themselves from falsehood and ignorance.
- 3 **Realm of Endeavor (*Saram Khand*):** In this realm, individuals practice self-discipline and self-control, which requires them to be truthful with themselves and others. It is a realm of effort and struggle, where individuals strive to overcome their ego and attachments to the material world. Truthful living is necessary for this realm because it helps individuals cultivate the self-awareness and self-control necessary to progress.
- 4 **Realm of Grace (*Karam Khand*):** This realm is focused on selfless service, which also involves living truthfully and with integrity. It is a realm of action where individuals work to serve others without considering personal gain or reward. Truthful living is imperative in this realm because it enables individuals to serve others with honesty and sincerity, without any hidden agenda or ulterior motives.
- 5 **Realm of Truth (*Sach Khand*):** This is the final spiritual realm, representing the final goal of spiritual awakening. In this realm, individuals become one with the Divine and experience the highest level of

spiritual awareness and understanding. Truthful living is vital in this realm because it allows individuals to align themselves with the truth and the divine will, which is the ultimate goal of spiritual perfection in Sikhism.

Concisely, the concept of *Panj Khand* emphasizes the importance of truthful living as a foundational principle for spiritual growth and evolution in Sikhism. By living truthfully and following one's values and principles, individuals can progress through the spiritual realms and ultimately achieve union with the Divine (Singh, 2018).

Daily Practices for Truthful Living

Living a truthful life is an essential aspect of the Sikh faith. Here are a few daily practices of a truthful living as per Sikhism:

- 1 **Meditation:** A daily meditation, which involves reflecting on the attributes of God or reciting a specific prayer, helps to attain internal purity, leading to calm the mind and focus on the truth.
- 2 **Daily Prayer:** A daily prayer to seek guidance and wisdom from God helps to align oneself with the divine truth.
- 3 **Honest living:** Living an honest and ethical life in all aspects, including one's work, personal relationships, and interactions with others, helps to lead a stress-free, worthwhile life.
- 4 **Selfless Service:** Selfless service (Seva) involves helping others without expecting anything in return. It helps to cultivate a truthful and compassionate nature.
- 5 **Simplicity:** Living a simple and honest life, avoiding excess or extravagance, helps to focus on what is essential and promotes honesty and humility.
- 6 **Truthful speech:** Speaking truthfully and avoiding lying or spreading rumours, helps to build trust and respect among others.
- 7 **Humility:** The practice of humility and avoiding ego and pride helps to stay truthful and compassionate towards others.
- 8 **Reading and reflecting on the holy Scripture:** The Guru Granth Sahib is the holy scripture of Sikhism, which contains the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and other saints. The daily practice of reading and reflecting on the Scripture helps to gain wisdom and insight into the truth.
- 9 **Forgiveness:** The practice of forgiving others and seeking forgiveness when a person has done wrong

promotes honesty and compassion towards oneself and others.

- 10 **Equality:** The practice of treating all people with respect and dignity, regardless of their social status, religion, or race, helps to cultivate a truthful and compassionate nature.
- 11 **Compassion:** The practice of compassion towards all living beings helps to develop a truthful and empathetic nature.
- 12 **Self-examination:** Regularly reflecting on one's thoughts, words, and actions to ensure they are aligned with the truth helps cultivate self-awareness and promotes personal growth.

Thus, truthful living, as per Sikhism, involves a daily commitment to meditation, prayer, selfless service, honesty, humility, forgiveness, equality, and compassion. By cultivating these habits, one can strive to align oneself with the divine truth and selflessly serve others.

Truthful Living – Examples from Sikhism

According to Sikhism, a cosmic struggle between Good and Evil has been going on since time immemorial; the mission of Sikhs is to stand up for the cause of righteousness without fear and favor. That is why social and spiritual concerns are inseparable in the Sikh Panth (Singh & Fenech, 2014). The Value of Truthful Living encompasses the whole gamut of the living world.

Guru Nanak had unequivocally criticized the contemporary ruling class for moral degeneration, its atrocities and injustice meted out to the people, indulgence in intolerance, violation of human rights, and restrictions on freedom of worship, besides criticizing Mughal invader Babur in severest terms for his utter disregard for the modesty of women; death and destruction caused to the defenseless and innocent civilians. Human dignity and self-respect were not to be compromised. The Sikh Gurus had not forfeited their right to comment, oppose, and protest against the unjust attitude of the ruling class. That is why the 5th and 9th Guru courted martyrdom to vindicate their cause for righteousness, and the 6th and the 10th Gurus had to take up arms to defend the community.

The Sikh Panth has responded to the call of humanity in distress at different stages of history, demonstrating its commitment to uphold the value of righteousness/truthful living. Sikh history is replete with shining examples of many truthful beings who have inspired generations to live more truthful and meaningful lives. A few examples may suffice.

- 1 **Guru Nanak:** The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, is considered a paragon of Truthful living. He dedicated his life to spreading the message of truth, equality, and compassion and inspired countless people to live more truthful and meaningful lives. He emphasized the importance of living truthfully and spoke out against social injustices such as caste discrimination and gender inequality.
- 2 **Bhai Kanhaiya:** Bhai Kanhaiya was a devout Sikh who lived during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth Sikh Guru. He was famous for his firm commitment to truth, compassion, and service to humanity. He is known for providing care and comfort to people of all faiths and backgrounds without discrimination.
- 3 **Baba Deep Singh:** Baba Deep Singh was a revered Sikh warrior and scholar who lived during the 18th century. He was known for his fierce devotion to truth and justice and his bravery on the battlefield. He fought to defend the rights of the oppressed and marginalized and dedicated his life to upholding the principles of Sikhism.
- 4 **Bhai Taru Singh:** Bhai Taru Singh was a devout Sikh who lived during the 18th century. He was known for his steadfast commitment to truth and his willingness to make great sacrifices for his faith. He refused to cut his hair, a requirement imposed by the Mughal authorities and was brutally tortured and martyred for his refusal to compromise his principles.
- 5 **Mata Sahib Kaur:** Mata Sahib Kaur was a prominent figure in Sikh history who played a critical role in the growth and advancement of the Sikh community. She was known for her devotion to truth and her unwavering commitment to the principles of Sikhism. She was a strong proponent of women's rights and equality. She played a crucial role in establishing the Khalsa Panth, a community of baptized Sikhs who uphold the principles of Sikhism.
- 6 **Bhai Mati Das:** Bhai Mati Das was a devout Sikh who lived during the 17th century. He was a close associate of the Ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, and was known for his firm commitment to truth and justice. He refused to convert to Islam, even under the threat of death and was executed by the Mughal authorities for his refusal to compromise his principles.
- 7 **Baba Buddha:** Baba Buddha was a revered Sikh elder who lived during the time of the first six Sikh Gurus. He was known for his deep spirituality and his commitment to living truthfully. He played a critical role in advancing the Sikh community and was a mentor and guide to many early Sikh leaders.
- 8 **Bhai Gurdas:** Bhai Gurdas was a prominent figure in Sikh history who played a significant role in the

growth and evolution of the Sikh community. He was known for his profound knowledge of Sikh scripture and unwavering commitment to truth and justice. He was a close associate of the early Sikh Gurus, and his writings continue to be revered by Sikhs worldwide.

- 9 **Mata Bhag Kaur:** Mata Bhag Kaur was a prominent Sikh leader who lived during the 18th century. She was known for her unwavering commitment to truth and justice and for her leadership in the Sikh community. She played a vital role in the defense of the Sikh community against the Mughal authorities and was a powerful advocate for the rights of women and marginalized communities.
- 10 **Bhai Jivan Singh:** Bhai Jivan Singh was a devout Sikh who lived during the 17th century. He was a close associate of the Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, and was known for his steady commitment to truth and justice. He played a critical role in the defense of the Sikh community against the Mughal authorities and was a powerful advocate for the rights of oppressed and marginalized communities.

Relevance of a Truthful Being in the Modern Context

The relevance of being truthful, as outlined in the hymns of Guru Nanak, is just as significant today as it was in the past. In fact, it is even more important today, given modern life's many challenges and complexities. Some of the reasons why truthful living remains relevant in the modern context are as follows:

- 1 **Building trust and integrity:** In today's world, trust and integrity are more important than ever. People want to do business with individuals and companies that are honest and trustworthy, and they want to build relationships with people who are authentic and sincere. By living truthfully, individuals can build trust and integrity in their personal and professional lives.
- 2 **Fostering respect and understanding:** Living truthfully in an increasingly diverse and interconnected multicultural world can help foster respect and understanding between people of different backgrounds and beliefs. By speaking the truth and acting with honesty and integrity, individuals can create an environment of mutual respect and understanding where people can come together to find common ground and work towards common goals.
- 3 **Improving mental and emotional well-being:** Truthful living can also improve mental and

emotional well-being. By being honest with oneself and others, individuals can reduce stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions that can arise from dishonesty and deceit. Living truthfully can also help individuals develop a sense of contentment and inner peace as they align themselves with their values and principles.

- 4 **Advancing social justice and equality:** Truthful living is crucial for advancing social justice and equality. Individuals can create a more just and equitable society by speaking up for the truth and standing up against injustice. Living truthfully can also help expose and challenge oppression and discrimination systems.
- 5 **Promoting ethical leadership:** Truthful living is essential for ethical leadership, which is especially important in the modern context. Living truthfully in a world where leaders often face complex ethical dilemmas can help leaders make decisions grounded in honesty, integrity, and moral principles. In addition, it can help create a culture of ethical leadership that is essential for the success of businesses, organizations, and societies.
- 6 **Building stronger communities:** Living truthfully can also help to build stronger communities. By being honest and transparent, individuals can create an environment of trust and openness where people can feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In addition, it can help to create a sense of belonging and connectedness, which is essential for building strong and resilient communities.
- 7 **Nurturing personal growth and development:** Living truthfully is also vital for personal growth and development. By being honest with themselves, individuals can recognize their capabilities and shortcomings and work towards personal growth and self-improvement. Living truthfully can also help individuals develop a sense of purpose and meaning as they align themselves with their values and principles.
- 8 **Combating fake news and disinformation:** In the age of social media and digital communication, truthful living is essential for combating fake news and disinformation. By speaking the truth and sharing accurate information, individuals can help to counteract the spread of false information and misinformation, which can have negative consequences for individuals and society.
- 9 **Enhancing personal and professional relationships:** Truthful living is also essential for enhancing personal and professional relationships. By being honest and transparent with others, individuals can build trust and respect, which can help to strengthen

relationships and promote cooperation and collaboration. Again, it is critical for success in both personal and professional settings.

- 10 **Fostering a culture of accountability:** Truthful living is essential for fostering a culture of accountability, where individuals are held responsible for their actions and decisions. By being honest about their mistakes and shortcomings, individuals can take responsibility for their actions and work towards making things right. Creating a culture of accountability that promotes transparency, fairness, and justice is necessary.
- 11 **Supporting environmental sustainability:** Living truthfully is also crucial for supporting environmental sustainability. By being honest about the impact of human activities on the environment, individuals can work towards creating a more sustainable future. It includes being honest about reducing carbon emissions, conserving natural resources, and protecting biodiversity. Living truthfully can also help to promote ethical consumption and responsible stewardship of the planet.
- 12 **Encouraging open and constructive dialogue:** Truthful living is imperative for encouraging open and constructive dialogue, where people can communicate honestly and respectfully to address complex issues and challenges. Moreover, it is essential for building understanding and finding solutions to complex problems, such as climate change, social inequality, and global health crises.

Thus, the relevance of truthful living in the modern context is highly significant. By living truthfully, individuals can build trust and integrity, foster respect and understanding, improve mental and emotional well-being, and advance social justice and equality. These are all essential values for creating a better world for us and future generations.

Challenges to Living a Truthful Life

Living a truthful life, or "*Sachiar Jeevan*," is highly emphasized in Guru Nanak's hymns. It involves embodying and practicing truthfulness in all aspects of one's life. However, adhering to this principle can present several challenges. Here are some challenges to living a truthful life, as per Gurbani:

- 1 **Overcoming the Ego:** The ego, or "*Haumai*," is the root cause of all falsehood and illusions. It creates a false sense of identity and separates individuals from the Divine Truth. Overcoming the ego and aligning

oneself with the truth requires self-awareness, humility, and constant self-examination.

- 2 **Peer Pressure and Societal Expectations:** Society often imposes certain expectations and norms that may deviate from the path of truth. It can be challenging to resist societal pressures and make choices based on honesty and integrity, especially when they conflict with popular opinions or conventional wisdom.
- 3 **Fear and Consequences:** Speaking and living the truth can sometimes result in adverse consequences or conflicts. Fear of backlash, rejection, or adverse outcomes can tempt individuals to compromise their truthfulness. It takes courage and conviction to stand firm in one's values, even when faced with difficult circumstances.
- 4 **Inner Dishonesty and Self-Deception:** True honesty starts within oneself. It requires confronting and addressing one's biases, prejudices, and internal conflicts. Individuals often deceive themselves by rationalizing their actions or ignoring their shortcomings. Recognizing and acknowledging these inner falsehoods is crucial for living a truthful life.
- 5 **Temptations and Moral Dilemmas:** Life presents various temptations and moral dilemmas that can challenge one's commitment to truthfulness. Material desires, personal gains, or ethical dilemmas can sway individuals away from the path of honesty. It requires a strong moral compass and ethical decision-making to navigate these challenges.
- 2 **Cultivate Self-Awareness:** Develop self-awareness through introspection, self-examination, and mindfulness practices. Regularly examine your thoughts, emotions, and actions to identify any discrepancies or areas where you may be straying from truthfulness.
- 3 **Practice Humility:** Cultivate humility to overcome the ego's influence. Recognize that embracing truthfulness requires letting go of pride, arrogance, and the need for validation. Humility allows you to be receptive to feedback, acknowledge mistakes, and continually strive for self-improvement.
- 4 **Stay Firm in Values:** Clarify and reaffirm your personal values and commit yourself to upholding them. Write down your principles and ideals to serve as reminders when faced with challenging situations or temptations that may lead you away from truthfulness.
- 5 **Develop Courage:** Develop inner strength and courage to stand up for truth, even in adversity. Understand that speaking the truth may sometimes bring discomfort or opposition, but staying true to your values is essential for personal growth and spiritual well-being.
- 6 **Practice Mindful Communication:** Cultivate mindful communication by choosing your words carefully, speaking with sincerity and compassion, and avoiding harmful or deceptive speech. Practice active listening and empathetic understanding to foster authentic and truthful dialogue.
- 7 **Embrace Inner Honesty:** Engage in self-examination to identify and confront your biases, prejudices, and inner conflicts. Be honest with yourself about your strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Embrace personal growth and commit to aligning your inner self with the principles of truthfulness.
- 8 **Surround Yourself with Truthful Influences:** Associate with individuals who prioritize truthfulness and integrity. Surrounding yourself with like-minded individuals can create a supportive environment that reinforces and encourages your commitment to living a truthful life.
- 9 **Seek Inner Guidance:** Develop a connection with your inner self through prayer, meditation, or contemplation. By seeking guidance from within, you can access your inner wisdom and intuition, which can guide you on the path of truthfulness.
- 10 **Practice Forgiveness:** Forgive yourself and others for past mistakes or instances where truthfulness was compromised. Holding onto grudges or resentment can hinder personal growth and prevent you from moving on the path of truth. Embracing forgiveness allows you to cultivate compassion and maintain healthy relationships.

Living a truthful life is not an easy task; however, in Sikhism, it is considered fundamental for spiritual progress and attaining union with the divine. Despite the challenges, Sikh teachings inspire individuals to strive for truthfulness, maintaining a steadfast commitment to honesty, integrity, and authenticity in all aspects of life.

Overcoming the Challenges to Lead a Truthful Life

Overcoming the challenges to lead a truthful life, as per Sikh doctrines, requires conscious effort and spiritual practice. Here are some ways to navigate and overcome these challenges:

- 1 **Seek Spiritual Guidance:** Seek guidance from spiritual teachers, mentors, or individuals who embody truthfulness in their lives. They can provide valuable insights, support, and guidance on living truthfully. Attending a holy congregation (*sat sangat*) can help to achieve this goal.

11 Continuous Learning and Improvement: Embrace a lifelong learning and improvement mindset. Be open to new perspectives, challenge your beliefs, and remain receptive to feedback. Continually strive to deepen your understanding of truth and integrate it into your daily life.

Remember, living a truthful life is a journey that requires commitment, self-reflection, and perseverance. It is a process of continuous growth and transformation. By embracing these practices and remaining steadfast in your pursuit of truth, you can overcome the challenges and lead a life of honesty, integrity, and authenticity.

Conclusions

Truthful living is a way of life that encompasses honesty, integrity, and morality. It is a journey that requires commitment, self-reflection, and perseverance. Sikh doctrines emphasize that truthful living promotes trust and respect in relationships and helps individuals live fulfilling and authentic lives. It is essential for achieving inner peace and spiritual growth. *Sat Sangat* is an institution that can help to build up a truthful life among devotees.

Moreover, truthful living is vital for addressing many of the challenges and complexities of the modern world. By living truthfully, individuals can build trust and integrity, foster respect and understanding, improve mental and emotional well-being, advance social justice and equality, promote ethical leadership, build stronger communities, and nurture personal growth and development. Furthermore, truthful beings can combat fake news and disinformation, enhance personal and professional relationships, foster a culture of accountability, support environmental sustainability, and encourage open and constructive dialogue. These are all essential values for creating a better world for us and future generations.

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Emerging Trends in Research Publications Among University Students in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the increasing trend of research publications among university students in Vietnam. It offers insights into the trends, challenges, and implications of student-driven research output in the Vietnamese higher education landscape. Drawing from empirical data and case studies, the article highlights the factors influencing students' research engagement, the impact of mentoring, and the role of institutional support. It also sheds light on the publication outlets favored by students and their contribution to the broader academic community. Furthermore, it discusses the significance of research publications in shaping students' academic and professional trajectories in Vietnam. With the evolution of higher education, Vietnamese universities are promoting research culture, and students are engaging in research activities more than ever before. The article delves into the factors facilitating this growth, the challenges faced, and its implications on Vietnam's academic landscape. The article concludes with recommendations for fostering a culture of research publication among university students, emphasizing its vital role in advancing knowledge dissemination and academic excellence in Vietnam.

Keywords: Academic Growth, Academic Trends, Higher Education, Research Publications, University Students, Vietnam

Objectives

To Identify Key Drivers: The primary objective is to identify the key factors driving the increasing trend of research publications among university students in Vietnam. This includes exploring government support, university initiatives, and international collaborations.

To Assess Challenges: Assess the challenges faced by students in balancing research commitments with academic coursework and ensuring the quality of publications.

To Examine Mentoring: Investigate the role of mentoring in enhancing the quality of research output and guiding students through the research process.

To Analyze Preferred Publication Outlets: Analyze the publication outlets favored by students and their contribution to the broader academic community.

To Understand Implications: Understand the implications of research publications on students' academic and professional trajectories, as well as their impact on Vietnam's higher education sector.

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Research Methods

Literature Review: Conducted an extensive literature review to understand existing research on student-led research publications, both in Vietnam and globally.

Case Studies: Selected several universities in Vietnam known for their research programs and interview students and faculty members involved in research publication. These case studies will provided in-depth insights into specific institutional practices.

Implications and Recommendations: Based on the research findings, drew conclusions regarding the objectives and propose recommendations for fostering a culture of research publication among university students in Vietnam.

Peer Review: Subject the research findings and recommendations to peer review by experts in the field to ensure the validity and reliability of the study's conclusions.

Report Writing: Compiled the research findings, analysis, and recommendations into a comprehensive research report.

Feedback and Revision: Obtained feedback from peers and experts and revised the article as necessary.

By following the above research methods and procedures, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the emerging trends in research publications among university students in Vietnam and offer practical recommendations for the integration of research culture in higher education.

Introduction

Research publications have long been recognized as a hallmark of academic excellence (Nguyen & Pham, 2018, p. 105). Vietnam, a nation characterized by rapid economic growth and a burgeoning education sector, is witnessing a notable surge in research publications authored by university students (Pham & Fry, 2019, p. 7). The surge in research publications by university students in Vietnam reflects a transformative phase in the country's higher education journey. These scholars have been making significant strides in the realm of research. This article offers an in-depth examination of this emerging trend, shedding light on its underlying factors, the challenges that it presents, and its potential ramifications for Vietnam's higher education sphere.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to provide a holistic understanding of this emerging trend by examining the multifaceted factors contributing to it, the challenges encountered, and the potential implications for Vietnamese higher education. It draws upon a variety of scholarly sources to offer a comprehensive perspective.

It provides a comprehensive analysis of the increasing trend of research publications among university students in Vietnam. It examines the key drivers, challenges, and implications of this phenomenon in the context of Vietnam's higher education landscape. Drawing from a range of scholarly sources, this article explores the role of government support, university initiatives, international collaborations, mentorship, and preferred publication outlets in shaping the research culture among Vietnamese students. Furthermore, it delves into the implications of this trend on students' academic and professional trajectories and discusses potential strategies to further enhance a culture of research publication in Vietnam.

Promoting a Research Culture

With Vietnam's increased emphasis on quality higher education, universities are fostering an environment conducive to research (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2021). The government's investment in research infrastructure, grants, and collaboration with international institutions has played a pivotal role in promoting a research-oriented culture. This is a key assertion highlighting the factors contributing to the development of a research-focused environment in Vietnamese higher education. To better understand why and how research infrastructure, grants, and collaboration with international institutions has played a pivotal role in promoting a research-oriented culture, it is further explained as follows:

Causality: The statement suggests a causal relationship between investments in research infrastructure, grants, and international collaborations and the promotion of a research-oriented culture. However, it does not explicitly explain how these factors lead to such a cultural shift.

Clarity: The role of research infrastructure, grants, and international collaborations in fostering a research culture might not be immediately evident to all readers. Further clarification can make it clearer why these aspects are pivotal.

Specifics: The statement is relatively broad. It would benefit from providing specific examples or evidence of how research infrastructure, grants, and international

collaborations have directly impacted the development of a research-oriented culture in Vietnamese universities.

Concrete Examples: Providing concrete examples of how investments in research infrastructure, such as laboratories, libraries, or research centers, have improved the research capabilities of universities can illustrate the point effectively.

Impact of Grants: Explaining how research grants have been used to support student research projects, faculty initiatives, or the acquisition of research equipment can demonstrate their role in fostering a research culture.

International Collaborations: Describing instances where Vietnamese universities have engaged in successful international collaborations, the outcomes of such collaborations, and how they have influenced local research practices can shed light on their significance.

Comparative Analysis: A comparative analysis of universities that have received significant research-related funding and those that haven't can help showcase the difference in their research culture, providing empirical evidence for the statement.

Policy Implications: Elaborating on how government policies and initiatives have been structured to encourage these investments and collaborations can provide insights into the mechanisms driving the shift toward a research-oriented culture.

In summary, while the statement in question highlights important factors in the development of a research culture, further research is needed to elucidate the mechanisms through which research infrastructure, grants, and international collaborations have played a pivotal role. Concrete examples, empirical evidence, and policy insights can help make the connection between these factors and the cultural shift more explicit and understandable to the readers.

Factors Driving the Surge

Several key factors contribute to the rising trend of research publications among Vietnamese university students:

1. **Government Support:** The Vietnamese government has prioritized higher education and research (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2021). Substantial investments in research infrastructure, grants, and international collaborations have been pivotal in fostering a research-oriented culture among students.
2. **University Initiatives:** Many Vietnamese universities have introduced dedicated undergraduate research programs (Pham & Fry, 2019, p. 9). These programs provide students with early exposure to research, encouraging the development of critical thinking and innovation.
3. **International Collaboration:** Exchange programs, joint research projects, and participation in international academic forums have become increasingly prevalent among Vietnamese students (Tran & Marginson, 2018, p. 401). These experiences offer invaluable opportunities for cross-cultural learning and exposure to global research standards.

Engagement of Young Minds

Several universities in Vietnam have initiated undergraduate research programs (Vu & Pham, 2020, p. 311). Such platforms allow students to delve into research early on, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and innovation. Workshops, seminars, and conferences provide students with opportunities to present their research, facilitating further academic discourse.

Universities in the ASEAN region, including Vietnam, have diverse research interests and programs. While there may not be specific research programs solely dedicated to “publications” as a standalone topic, various universities engage in research related to publishing, media, journalism, and related fields.

Here are some universities in the ASEAN region, including Vietnam, known for their research and programs in these areas (Table 1).

Table 1. Universities in the ASEAN Region Known for Research and Programs in Media, Journalism, and Communication

| No. | University | Description |
|-----|---|---|
| 1) | University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH), Vietnam National University, Hanoi | Leading institution in social sciences and humanities with programs and research in journalism, media studies, and communication. |
| 2) | Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities | Focuses on social sciences and humanities, including media and communication research, in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. |

| No. | University | Description |
|-----|---|--|
| 3) | Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore | NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information is known for its research in media studies, journalism, and communication. |
| 4) | National University of Singapore (NUS) | Offers programs and conducts research in communication and media studies through its Department of Communications and New Media. |
| 5) | Chulalongkorn University, Thailand | Faculty of Communication Arts at Chulalongkorn University is involved in media and communication research, including journalism studies. |
| 6) | University of the Philippines Diliman | UP Diliman has various research centers and programs related to media, journalism, and communication. |
| 7) | Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines | Offers communication programs and conducts research in media and journalism studies. |
| 8) | Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), Indonesia | UGM's Faculty of Social and Political Sciences includes communication science programs and research in media studies. |
| 9) | University of Malaya (UM), Malaysia | UM offers communication and media studies programs and conducts research in related fields. |
| 10) | Mahidol University, Thailand | Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Mahidol University includes programs and research in communication and media studies. |

Source: Author

These universities are recognized for their contributions to research and education in media, journalism, and communication across the ASEAN region.

Please note that the specific research areas and programs within these universities may vary. You can explore the departments or faculties within each institution to find more detailed information on their research initiatives related to publications, journalism, and media studies.

Collaboration and Exposure

Vietnamese students are gaining exposure through international collaborations. Exchange programs, joint research projects, and academic forums have expanded their horizons, enabling them to imbibe global research practices.

Here are some universities in the ASEAN region, including Vietnam, that have initiated specific research programs across various disciplines (Table 2).

Table 2. Universities in the ASEAN Region with relevant Research Programs

| No. | Country | University | Strengths | Research Focus |
|-----|-------------|--|--|---|
| 1. | SINGAPORE | National University of Singapore (NUS) | Renowned for its research programs across a wide range of fields. It consistently ranks among the top universities globally for research output and innovation. | Science, Engineering, Business, Humanities |
| | | Nanyang Technological University (NTU) | Established itself as a hub for research and innovation in Asia. It has several research institutes. | Robotics, Data Science, Sustainable Technologies |
| 2. | MALAYSIA | University of Malaya (UM) | A leading research-intensive university in Malaysia. It has numerous research centers and initiatives. | Medicine, Engineering, Social Sciences, Environment |
| | | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) | Known for its research contributions. | Medical & Health Sciences, Social Sciences, Environmental Studies |
| 3. | THAILAND | Chulalongkorn University | Actively promotes research in various domains, with a focus on science, technology, social sciences, and the arts. They have research centers and programs dedicated to specific fields. | Science, Technology, Social Sciences, Arts |
| | | Mahidol University | Prioritizes research in various fields and houses various research centers and institutes. | Healthcare, Life Sciences, Public Health |
| 4. | VIETNAM | Vietnam National University, Hanoi | Encompasses several member universities, each with its research focus. The institution as a whole engages in research activities across numerous disciplines. | Multiple Disciplines |
| 5. | Philippines | University of the Philippines Diliman | Robust research program with various institutes and centers dedicated to specific fields. | Marine Science, Public Health, Social Development |
| | | Ateneo de Manila University | Supports research through its Loyola Schools. | Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, and Management. |
| 6. | Indonesia | Universitas Indonesia | Encourages research across multiple faculties. They have research centers that drive innovation and knowledge creation. | Engineering, Economics, Social Sciences |

Source: Author

These universities in the ASEAN region, including Vietnam, known for their research programs across various disciplines. They are known for their commitment to advancing knowledge through research and innovation. They actively contribute to the academic and intellectual landscape of the ASEAN region and beyond.

Challenges and Concerns

While the number of publications is rising, ensuring the quality of these publications remains a concern (Table 3). Also, balancing academic coursework with research work can be overwhelming for many students. There's a need for structured mentorship to guide students effectively. While the rise in research publications is promising, it is not without its challenges:

1. **Ensuring Quality:** The quantity of publications must not overshadow concerns about their quality (Nguyen & Pham, 2018, p. 109). Maintaining rigorous standards for research, data collection, and analysis is paramount.
2. **Balancing Academic Workload:** Managing research commitments alongside academic coursework can be demanding (Pham & Fry, 2019, p. 11). Striking a balance and preventing burnout is a challenge that both students and institutions must address.
3. **Mentorship:** The availability of experienced mentors is crucial for guiding students through the research process (Vu & Pham, 2020, p. 316). Effective mentorship can significantly enhance the quality of research output.

Table 3. Growth in Research Publications Among Selected Southeast Asian Countries (*Hypothetical Data*)

| Sr. | Country/Region | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. | Vietnam | 1,000 | 1,200 (+20%) | 1,400 (+17%) |
| 2. | Thailand | 1,100 | 1,250 (+14%) | 1,350 (+8%) |
| 3. | Malaysia | 1,200 | 1,300 (+8%) | 1,450 (+12%) |
| 4. | Philippines | 900 | 950 (+6%) | 1,050 (+11%) |
| 5. | Indonesia | 850 | 920 (+8%) | 990 (+8%) |
| Average Global Increase | | | +9% | +10% |

Note: The above table is hypothetical and does not represent real data. The percentages represent the growth in the number of publications from the previous year.

Implications for Vietnamese Higher Education

This surge in student-led research publications is poised to place Vietnam at the forefront of academic research

in the region. Table 1 above clearly shows an increasing trend in the growth in Research Publications among university students in Vietnam for the period between 2019 and 2021. The fresh perspectives brought in by younger minds promise a vibrant academic future for the country. This surge also carries significant implications for Vietnam's higher education sector:

1. **Global Recognition:** Increased research output places Vietnamese universities on the global academic map (Tran & Marginson, 2018, p. 405), potentially attracting international collaborations and partnerships.
2. **Enhanced Academic Reputation:** The fresh perspectives and innovative contributions of young scholars have the potential to elevate the academic reputation of Vietnamese universities (Pham & Fry, 2019, p. 14).
3. **Innovation and Problem-Solving:** Student-led research can drive innovation and provide solutions to local and global challenges (Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, 2021).

Suggestions for academic development in Vietnam

- 1) **Mentorship Programs:**
Mentorship programs can be established within universities to guide and support junior faculty members and students. Professors can also share their experiences by organizing workshops or seminars on effective mentorship strategies and their impact on academic growth.
- 2) **Interdisciplinary Research:**
Faculty members should be encouraged to participate in interdisciplinary research collaborations that address complex societal challenges. Sharing experiences through interdisciplinary research forums allows professors to discuss successful projects and lessons learned.
- 3) **Research Funding and Grants:**
Actively seeking external research funding and grants from government agencies, foundations, and international organizations is essential. Professors can also share their experiences by offering grant-writing workshops and sharing successful grant applications as templates.

- 4) **Publication and Research Output:**
A focus should be placed on publishing research findings in reputable international journals and

conferences. Experiences can be shared by conducting writing and publication workshops, providing guidance on navigating the publication process.

5) International Collaboration:

Fostering international collaborations by partnering with professors and researchers from universities worldwide is beneficial. Sharing experiences can be facilitated through international symposia, joint research projects, and collaborative publications.

6) Teaching Excellence:

Investing in continuous professional development to enhance teaching skills and methodologies is crucial. Sharing experiences can be organized through teaching workshops, peer observations, and the sharing of innovative teaching practices.

7) Ph.D. Programs:

Developing and expanding Ph.D. programs to train the next generation of researchers and professors is a long-term strategy. Sharing experiences includes mentoring Ph.D. students, sharing research opportunities, and offering guidance on academic careers.

8) Technology Integration:

Embracing technology for research, teaching, and administrative purposes should be encouraged. Sharing experiences can be achieved through technology training sessions and the sharing of best practices in e-learning and research tools.

9) Language Proficiency:

Enhancing English language proficiency is essential for international collaboration and publishing. Sharing experiences can include offering language courses, conversation clubs, and English writing workshops.

10) Community Engagement:

Encouraging professors and students to engage with the local community through research and service is valuable. Sharing experiences may involve organizing community outreach programs and highlighting the impact of academic contributions on society.

11) Professional Networking:

Active participation in academic conferences, seminars, and networking events is beneficial. Sharing experiences can be facilitated by organizing academic conferences or symposia within Vietnam to connect scholars and researchers.

12) Open Access and Knowledge Sharing:

Promoting open access publishing and knowledge sharing can increase the visibility and accessibility of research. Sharing experiences can include advocating for open access policies within academic institutions and sharing open access resources.

13) Leadership Development:

Identifying and nurturing emerging academic leaders within the institution is important. Sharing experiences involves mentoring potential leaders and providing leadership training opportunities.

14) International Visiting Professors:

Inviting international visiting professors to share their expertise and experiences with faculty and students is enriching. Collaborating with visiting professors to organize lectures, workshops, and research collaborations can be mutually beneficial.

15) Collaborative Projects with Industry:

Encouraging collaborative projects with industry partners to address real-world challenges is practical. Sharing experiences includes hosting industry-academia forums, presenting case studies, and publishing joint research findings.

Sharing experiences can be achieved through various channels, including workshops, seminars, conferences, webinars, academic publications, and online platforms. Professors can also consider mentoring junior faculty and involving students in research projects to pass on their knowledge and experiences effectively. Additionally, collaboration with international universities and organizations can facilitate the exchange of expertise and best practices in academia.

As of my last knowledge update in September 2021, publishing scientific articles in international journals was often encouraged but not universally mandatory for Ph.D. students in Vietnam. However, please note that academic policies and requirements can change over time, and they can also vary between universities and specific Ph.D. programs.

To get the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding the specific requirements for Ph.D. students in Vietnam, I recommend contacting the relevant universities or academic institutions directly or checking their official websites. Academic regulations can change, and universities may have updated their requirements since my last update.

The impact of Vietnam's growing student research sector on Vietnam's general higher education

Certainly, to elaborate on the impact of Vietnam's growing student research sector on the country's general higher education, it's essential to delve into the potential consequences and benefits that this trend can bring. Here are some arguments and points to consider:

Enhanced Quality of Higher Education: The increasing focus on student research can elevate the overall quality of higher education in Vietnam. Engaging in research promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills among students. These skills are transferable and can improve the learning experience across various disciplines.

Alignment with Global Standards: As Vietnam's student research sector grows, universities may need to align their curricula and teaching methods with international standards. This can lead to improved academic programs that are more competitive on a global scale, attracting both local and international students.

Research as a Measure of Academic Excellence: Research publications and contributions are often used as measures of academic excellence for universities worldwide. As students contribute more to research, Vietnamese universities may gain higher rankings and recognition in global academic assessments.

Faculty and Student Collaboration: The emphasis on student research can foster closer collaboration between faculty and students. Professors can mentor and guide students, resulting in stronger relationships and more effective teaching methods.

Innovation and Problem-Solving: Student-led research can lead to innovative solutions to local and global challenges. This can have a positive impact on society and industry, driving economic and social development in Vietnam.

Attracting International Talent: A vibrant student research sector can attract international students and researchers seeking opportunities for collaboration and academic growth. This can contribute to a diverse and dynamic academic environment.

International Collaboration: To support student research, universities may seek more international collaborations. This can result in knowledge exchange, joint research projects, and the sharing of best practices with institutions worldwide.

Improved Research Infrastructure: To facilitate student research, universities may invest in better research

infrastructure, including laboratories, libraries, and online databases. These improvements benefit not only student researchers but also the entire university community.

Policy Changes: The growth of student research may influence government policies related to higher education. Increased investment in research and education could become a long-term priority, benefiting future generations of students.

A Model for Other Countries: Vietnam's success in promoting student research can serve as a model for other countries in the region and beyond. It demonstrates how a deliberate focus on research and academic excellence can transform higher education systems.

In conclusion, the impact of Vietnam's growing student research sector on the country's general higher education is multifaceted and holds significant potential. It can enhance the quality of education, align Vietnamese universities with global standards, foster innovation, and position Vietnam as a competitive player in the international higher education landscape. These potential benefits underscore the importance of continuing to support and nurture the culture of student research in Vietnamese universities.

Conclusion

The burgeoning trend of research publications among university students in Vietnam marks a transformative phase in the nation's higher education journey. While challenges persist, proactive measures by institutions, coupled with the enthusiasm of young scholars, herald a promising future for Vietnamese academia.

This article highlights the multifaceted nature of this trend and provides valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and researchers as they continue to shape the research culture in Vietnam's higher education sector.

Recommendations

Some Key Insights suggested for Vietnamese Education's Successful Integration with International Education:

The question of whether publishing scientific articles in international journals should be mandatory for Ph.D. students in Vietnam, or any other country, is a complex one. It involves multiple considerations, including the goals of the education system, the quality of research, the needs of the job market, and the capacity of students and institutions.

Some points to consider:

1. **Internationalization of Education:** Encouraging or requiring Ph.D. students to publish in international journals can be seen as a way to internationalize the education system and align it with global standards. It can enhance the reputation of Vietnamese universities and researchers on the global stage.
2. **Quality of Research:** Requiring publication in international journals can promote rigorous research practices and ensure that the research conducted meets high-quality standards. It can also encourage students and faculty to engage in research that has broader relevance and impact.
3. **Job Market:** In some fields and industries, especially in academia and research institutions, having a record of international publications is essential for career advancement. Requiring international publications can better prepare students for these job markets.
4. **Access to Resources:** Publishing internationally often requires access to resources, including funding and international collaboration. Universities may need to provide support in terms of funding, mentorship, and access to research networks to help students meet these requirements.
5. **Balancing Priorities:** It's essential to strike a balance between promoting internationalization and considering the unique challenges and needs of Vietnamese students and researchers. Some may argue that the focus on publication should not overshadow other critical aspects of education, such as teaching skills, problem-solving abilities, and creativity.

Ultimately, the decision to make publishing in international journals mandatory or encouraged should be made after careful consideration of these factors. It's also crucial to involve relevant stakeholders, including educators, researchers, students, and policymakers, in the decision-making process.

Furthermore, any changes in educational policies should be flexible and adaptable, taking into account the evolving needs of the education system and the country's goals in terms of research and development.

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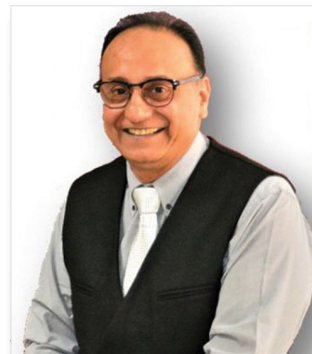
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Conceptualising Negative Workplace Impact on Employees' Innovative Behavior in Educational Enterprises

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to formulate a conceptual framework to identify the factors that impact the innovative behavior of educational enterprise employees. This paper uses a conceptual method i.e. utilizing gathering and analyzing extant literature from online and offline materials related to innovative behaviors and other relevant subjects in educational enterprises. Because of the impact brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Double Reduction Policy that targeted educational enterprises in China, workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and perceived job insecurity negatively influence educational enterprise employees' innovative behavior. The study hopes to provide an outlook on the behavior of educational enterprises by investigating the impact of workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and perceived job insecurity on the innovative behavior of educational enterprises. By discussing the factors which impact employee innovative behaviour, a conceptual framework is proposed for an empirical study to be done soon. It is critical as the findings can be used to improve the quality of life of the teachers as well as the quality of teaching in the educational enterprises which is in line with SDG 4.

Keywords: workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, perceived job insecurity, innovative behavior, educational enterprise employees, COVID-19, SDG 4

1. Introduction

Innovation is essential to the growth of all businesses (Tu, Cheng, & Liu, 2019), especially in the uncertain business field of today, and innovations have been viewed as fundamental to prosperity (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019). Due to the bottom-up innovation model, in which the importance of innovative behavior of employees in

organizations has been emphasized (Pieterse et al., 2010), a lack of innovative employee behaviors inevitably leads to organizational failure (Ibrahim et al., 2018). Therefore, the innovative work conduct of an organization's members is crucial for attaining competitive advantage and ensuring its long-term survival.

However, because of the uncertainty of the corporate climate, fierce competition in the global market, and the sudden COVID-19 pandemic in China, organizations have undergone a substantial transformation. For instance,

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educational enterprises are under intense pressure to innovate (Zhang & Bray, 2021) due to COVID-19 and the Double Reduction Policy.

It is noted that educational employees experienced an increased level of unemployment due to the lockdown (Karani, et al., 2022). Furthermore, half of the employees are reported to feel ostracised at the workplace (Wang et al., 2023), which may cause serious problems, such as the feeling of well-being (Fatima et al., 2023), and counterproductive behavior (Ali Awad et al., 2023). Additionally, employees in educational enterprises reported feeling overburdened by endless overtime work (Yang, L. et al., 2023), which is one aspect of compulsory citizenship behavior.

Prior studies have examined a wide range of antecedents that can obstruct innovative behavior (Shalley et al., 2004). And perceived job insecurity, workplace ostracism, and compulsory citizenship behavior are prominent in the current society in China (Karani, et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023; Yang, L. et al., 2023), especially in educational enterprises. However, there is a scarcity of research investigating the potential effects of workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and perceived job insecurity on innovative behavior among employees in educational enterprises. This condition was further aggravated after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of the Double Reduction Policy. Hence, the research gap is discussed in this study by examining the factors that contribute to innovative behaviors in educational enterprises. This paper discusses factors which impact employee innovative behaviour in educational enterprises with the aim of proposing a future empirical study.

2. Research Background

2.1 the Influence of Covid-19 on Enterprises Globally

In 2020, COVID-19 swept the whole world, causing serious problems for the global economy. According to IMF (2020), the developed countries experienced -6.1% growth rate while the developing countries, which normally perform well above the developed countries, plunged into -1.0% growth rate in 2020. If China has not been included, the rate will be lower at -2.2%. Besides, more than 170 countries were expected to shrink in income per capita. Hence, the pandemic has dramatically changed the economy and the workforce involved, so it is critical to explore what factors might hinder the innovative

impetus among enterprises in order to help the struggling industries to find a noble way for the survival from the damages of the pandemic.

2.2 Double Reduction Policy

The “Double Reduction Policy” mentioned in the official publication of the Chinese government refers to the “opinions on further reducing the burden of school work and off-campus training for students in compulsory education.” The main objective of the strategy is to reduce the excessive schoolwork load of children throughout the compulsory education period, including homework and out-of-school educational activities. (General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and The State Council, 2021). For educational enterprises with compulsory education-related business, the Double Reduction Policy has a great influence on their revenue and earnings (Yu, 2023), because the policy sets a price and time limit on the products of these companies and forbids capital investment in them. Therefore, there is a need to research the potential influence brought after the policy came into force.

2.3 Educational Enterprises in China

In 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, China’s K12 education market size was 762.9 billion yuan (Foresight Industrial Research Institute, 2020). According to the Training Education Committee of China Non-government Education Association (2020), more than 90% of educational enterprises lack confidence in business even after the lockdown. However, after the COVID-19 outbreak, traditional offline services provided by educational enterprises have been forced to quickly move their classrooms to online platforms, which changed the traditional business model of these companies. This saw online education increase to 21.9 percent, and the market size of K12 online tutoring was about 168.7 billion yuan in 2020 (Foresight Industrial Research Institute, 2020). Under such serious conditions in the offline education service and fresh requirements for the newly changed model, traditional educational enterprises in China saw an urgent need to find new ways to face the difficulties.

2.4 Traditional Chinese Culture’s Influence

Chinese people share common characteristics such as “patience” and adhere to traditional cultural principles such as “return good for evil”, and “being strict with

oneself and forgiving others" (Zhu et al., 2017). These characteristics make people who have experienced workplace ostracism suffer more harm than others. Besides, Chinese people attach great importance to harmony and the ability of tolerance, and strive to reduce conflicts, so the frequency of overtime work is high (He et al., 2022). The same is true for employees in educational enterprises (Yang, L. et al., 2023). In China's high-power distance culture, many companies manage their employees with high pressure to force them to take on extra work (Liu, Chow & Huang, 2019). Hence, the negative problems related to forced work are much more severe in China. Therefore, it is pertinent to conduct research to study this phenomenon.

3. Literature Review

3.1 The Conservation of Resources Theory (COR)

Hobfoll (1989) proposed the theory of Resource Conservation (COR) as a way to analyze the concept of stress. COR theory uses the concepts of resource acquisition and depletion to understand the behavior of employees in an organizational environment, thereby measuring and delineating abstract and total stress. When people realise that resources may run out, they feel overwhelmed and anxious (Hobfoll, 1989). Employees are driven by natural tendencies to try to protect the resources available to them. When employees feel that they lack the necessary tools to meet job requirements, they may become emotionally exhausted, which may affect their work performance and creative behavior (Ding & Quan, 2021).

3.2 Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory proposed by Blau (2017) is a behaviorist social psychological framework that emphasizes the importance of psychological factors in shaping human behavior. This view emphasizes the idea that all human activities depend on certain motives. When individuals engage in interpersonal communication, they expect to gain benefits from their peers. The credibility of these returns depends on the ability of the other party to perform their duties. Social exchange theory and the principle of reciprocity can be embodied in the way people interact with each other and can also be applied to other organizations (Gouldner, 1960).

This means that there is a principle of reciprocity between employees and the organisation. If employees perceive

the organisation's care for them, they are willing to work actively and repay the organisation. If employees cannot perceive care from organisations, they are not willing to conduct behaviors that go beyond the duties of his or her position. Innovative behaviors, as a beneficial force for institutions, are the positive actions of employees beyond duties in work towards organizations. Therefore, social exchange theory is applied to explain the effect of PJI, WO, and CCB, which have negative impact on the perception of care from organisations, leading to the impacts on IB.

Thus, the use of social exchange theory can be expanded to reveal the negative workplace impact on innovative behavior in educational enterprises.

3.3 Innovative Behavior

The 1970s saw a marked upsurge in scholarly interest in the study of inventive behavior, which focused primarily on individuals. Researchers often measure the results of creative efforts. It is known that employees who exhibit creative thinking are actively involved in the creation and execution of new concepts in an organizational setting. On another note, the formation of team alliances is the result of individuals receiving peer help and support for new ideas, which is also an extension of their research on innovative behavior. Tierney and Farmer (2002) argued in their studies that complexity and highly challenging work are factors that lead to innovative behavior. When the demands on the job are high, it can be effective if employees perceive the ratio of effort to reward as fair. In this situation, employees are more likely to come up with innovative ways to reduce their workload (Janssen, 2000). From the leadership perspective (Alessa & Durugbo, 2021), empowered leadership, transformational leadership, entrepreneurial and ethical leadership, participative leadership, inclusive leadership and servant leadership have an impact on innovative behavior. From another perspective, friendly communication and a fun atmosphere also exert an influence on innovative behavior (Jing et al., 2021).

Based on past literature, we can see that innovative behavior in the workplace can be impeded or encouraged by the working atmosphere, the relationship between leaders and employees, and the work nature, etc. After the COVID-19 pandemic, working conditions and relationships in the workplace changed due to the lockdown policy, hence the need to examine workplace negative impact on innovative behavior.

3.4 Compulsory Citizenship Behavior

According to Zellars and Tepper (2002), compulsory citizenship behavior can be defined as the behavior of employees under external pressure rather than personal motivation to meet the expectations and requirements imposed by leaders and organisations. Several studies have explored the effects of compulsory citizenship behavior. Based on the principles of COR theory, we can assume that the lasting consequence is to use the resources initially allocated to work to facilitate the implementation of mandatory citizenship by employees. This, in turn, can lead to employee dissatisfaction (Golparvar & Taleb, 2016), which can have an impact on the overall advantages accumulated throughout the organisation. According to Hui et al. (2000), there is evidence to support the idea that organisational citizenship behavior can have a significant impact on weakening organisational citizenship and thus adversely affect job performance. In addition, studies have shown that employees may take unproductive actions to compensate for the resource consumption caused by the above situations. In recent academic research, compulsory citizenship behavior has been found to be associated with increased turnover intentions and social loafing (Yildiz & Elibol, 2021). There is also a link between compulsory citizenship behavior and group work stress, especially in the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak (Baydin et al., 2020).

3.5 Workplace Ostracism

Workplace ostracism refers to the perceived experience of being excluded or ignored by individuals within a shared work environment (Ferris et al., 2008). In contrast to other phenomena such as bullying, bad manners and social damage, workplace ostracism is primarily characterised by its overt and indirect nature, which can have harmful effects (Robinson et al., 2013). Regarding the investigation of the effects of ostracism in the workplace, the available literature indicates that this phenomenon can seriously affect the mental health of employees. There is a clear positive correlation between workplace conditions and the occurrence of unpleasant emotions such as depression and anxiety among employees (Ferris et al., 2008). In terms of job performance, ostracism in the workplace is associated with a variety of negative effects. These include an increase in personal retaliation, such as aggressive behavior, antisocial behavior, and counterproductive work behavior (Rajchert & Winiewski, 2016).

3.6 Perceived Job Insecurity

Job insecurity indicates a clear lack of job security. Sverke and Hellgren (2002), argue that perceived job insecurity does not necessarily indicate imminent job loss, but rather represents a person's subjective impression of the employment environment. Some previous research has shown that job insecurity can adversely affect a variety of outcomes. For example, Mantler et al. (2005) found a correlation between perceived job insecurity and stress. As a powerful stressor, job uncertainty has the potential to lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as emotional exhaustion, reduced well-being, reduced work attitudes, and impaired work performance (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, given the adverse effects of stress on an individual's cognitive function and self-control, the stress view suggests that job instability leads to decreased levels of creativity, incidents of interpersonal abuse, and participation in unproductive professional behavior (Probst et al., 2020). Moreover, perceived job insecurity was associated with an increase in emotional exhaustion, decreased happiness, and higher levels of anxiety and depression. These negative emotions caused by job insecurity can severely impact work attitudes and behaviors. In addition, job insecurity was found to be directly associated with behaviors and attitudes, such as decreased job engagement, increased turnover, and lower job performance (Shoss, 2017). These negative outcomes that perceived job insecurity bring might be closely related

3.7 Compulsory Citizenship Behavior and Employee Innovative Behavior

Previous research by He et al. (2018) has shown that the implementation of compulsory citizenship behavior can also lead to adverse outcomes. The implementation of mandatory citizenship among employees may increase the degree of politicization within the organization and lead to increased internal pressure among employees. As a result, this may exacerbate conflict between employees and organizations, ultimately contributing to negative employee behavior (Vigoda-Gadot, 2006). At the same time, this phenomenon also has a series of negative effects on individual attitudes and behaviors, such as job performance, satisfaction, burnout experience, and the overall political climate within the organization.

Compulsory citizenship behavior is more common in China than in other countries, as evidenced by the study by Zheng et al. (2020). This finding aligns with research

by Vigoda-Gadot (2006), which suggests that coercive civic behavior can induce job stress and burnout. Burnout is recognized as an important stressor and has been found to negatively affect work achievement (Crawford et al., 2010). In addition, it has been suggested that burnout impedes employees' creativity (Drafahl, 2020). The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory states that stress drives employees to adopt resource conservation behaviors with the aim of protecting their resources against possible future loss and depletion (Hobfoll, 1989).

Thus, compulsory citizenship behavior may adversely affect the performance of innovative behavior.

3.8 Workplace Ostracism and Employee Innovative Behavior

According to COR theory, people experiencing resource scarcity are likely to act defensively in order to safeguard existing resources and prevent further losses. Kiazad and Seibert (2014) claim that people who experience secular stagnation are likely to exhibit negative work behaviors as a result of resource loss, leading them to minimize resource consumption and avoid risk.

De Clercq, Haq, and Azeem (2019), argue that ostracism in the workplace leads to a significant squandering of resources as more adverse situations arise, such as worry. Due to the inherent limitations of available resources, workplace ostracism is a harmful phenomenon that can lead to resource depletion (Van Woerkom & Bakker, 2016). Inadequate resource allocation on the other hand may result in hindering the execution of other critical tasks within the professional domain, such as the generation of new ideas (Feng et al., 2019).

The potential for innovation failure poses significant risks to individuals in the workplace. Individuals are reluctant to invest energy in work where there is a risk of failure (Kiazad, Seibert, & Kraimer, 2014), especially when faced with limited resource allocation. This assertion is supported by Choi (2019), who also shows that the act of fostering creativity poses risks to resource conservation. Over time, the tendency not to allocate resources to labor is activated.

Ultimately, when employees experience workplace ostracism, their social ties are cut off. Unfortunately, a large number of indispensable resources in the professional environment are closely related to social interactions (Zhang & Kwan, 2015). In addition, engaging in creative work requires employees to have access to

job-related resources (De Clercq, Haq, & Azeem, 2019). As a result, individuals experiencing exclusion lack resources for innovation, which can lead to a decline in out-of-role behavior and job performance (Becuwe, 2021).

Besides, according to Mayer et al. (2012), unpleasant emotions play an important role in the association between adverse work events and employee behavior. In addition, it has been observed that when employees experience negative behaviors from their leaders, such as being ignored or dismissed, they may have adverse emotional reactions, including anxiety, distress, and anger, as a result of self-assessment (Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). Many studies have shown that reduced levels of belonging, self-esteem, control, psychological stress (Williams, 2001), emotional exhaustion, and hopelessness caused by workplace ostracism may affect an individual's creative behavior.

The presence of the individual psychological consistency effect gives rise to a phenomenon wherein an individual's emotions have an impact on their conduct. Hence, the presence of negative emotions resulting from work-related occurrences, particularly unpleasant events, can diminish proactive activities.

Furthermore, as posited by social exchange theory, the creative output of employees is subject to the influence of interpersonal interactions (Shalley, Gilson & Blum, 2009). It is evident that the creative abilities of employees are not just contingent upon a "hard environment" encompassing financial resources and equipment, but also depend on the conducive nature of the "soft environment" including the working conditions provided to employees.

3.9 Perceived Job Insecurity and Employee Innovative Behavior

According to the COR theory proposed by Hobfoll (1989), when individuals find that their resources are limited, they will be more inclined to adopt conservation methods to avoid further consumption of resources. Belschak and Den Hartog's (2009) conceptualisation of extra-role behavior, engaging in innovative behavior requires employees to generate, disseminate, and potentially utilise information while performing prescribed job duties (Chen et al., 2022). This places additional demands on an individual's resources for self-control. Therefore, employees are less inclined to participate in innovation behavior.

Raja et al. (2020) argue that the presence of epidemics induces job insecurity, which in turn adversely affects

work behavior in quantitative terms. Innovative behavior is considered to be one of the key job characteristics. Thus, insecurity over quantitative jobs (often referred to as fear of unemployment) may have an impact on an individual's innovative behavior.

Qualitative job insecurity refers to an expected reduction in valuable job characteristics related to the overall scope of the job (D. Wang et al., 2021). It is associated with work-related stress factors that lead to work attitudes, negative emotions, and work-related behaviors. Moreover, as Farroukh, Canaan Messarra, and Yunis (2023) have argued, qualitative job insecurity has the potential to have a beneficial impact on organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). In addition, employee OCBs can have a significant impact on the internal mechanisms of organizational innovation by facilitating information sharing.

In short, job insecurity includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions and has been found to have a significant impact on employees' work behavior (Raja et al., 2020). This includes displays of dissatisfaction and complaining, which in turn can adversely affect employees' motivation to engage in out-of-role behaviors (Belschak & Den Hartog, 2009) and other proactive behaviors, as postulates in resource conservation (COR) theory. In view of the fact that employees are important contributors to organizational innovation, it is imperative to conduct a comprehensive survey on the phenomenon of employee innovation behavior.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that the existence of perceived job insecurity may hinder innovative behavior.

4. Discussion

This conceptual paper aims to form a conceptual framework to elaborate on the relationship among compulsory citizenship behavior, workplace ostracism, perceived job insecurity, and innovative behavior. Based on the reviews of past studies, workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and job insecurity negatively influence educational enterprise employees' innovative behaviors. Seen from the aspect of theoretical contribution, this conceptual paper fills the gap that there is little literature explaining clearly how workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and perceived job insecurity have an impact on the innovative behavior of educational enterprise employees. From the aspect of practical implementation, understanding more about the antecedents of innovative behavior can be a stimulus to business success.

5. Conclusion

This paper uses a conceptual method, reviewing and analyzing extant literature from online and offline materials related to innovative behaviors and other relevant subjects in educational enterprises. It also proposes a potential conceptual framework that is meaningful for future exploration in a similar area. Besides, this has provided a fresh recognition of the antecedents of employees' innovative behaviors during COVID-19 and the Double Reduction Policy in China. It specifically focusses on whether compulsory citizenship behavior, workplace ostracism and perceived job insecurity can have an effect on innovative behavior of educational enterprises' employees.

In the future, there should be a more comprehensive study on the antecedents of innovative behavior in educational enterprises. The future research should also examine the mediating and moderating effects that might influence the relationship between compulsory citizenship behavior, workplace ostracism, perceived job insecurity, and innovative behavior of educational enterprises' employees.

6. Proposed Framework for Future Empirical Study

Based on the discussion of this study, the following conceptual framework is proposed. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of Double Reduction Policies, the innovative behavior of employees in education enterprises may be affected by negative workplace issues such as workplace ostracism, compulsory citizenship behavior, and job insecurity. This can be understood from the perspective of resource conservation theory and social exchange theory.

Some empirical studies should be conducted to examine what and how the negative factors mentioned above might impact the innovative behaviors of educational enterprise employees in China. A purposive sampling technique can be used to collect data using questionnaires distributed in China nationally since the pandemic and the Double Reduction Policy have had a huge impact on the whole nation. The proposed framework is as shown in Figure 1, below.

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Declaration of Competing Interests

No competing financial or personal interests exist in reporting the results of the study.

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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 (*sorted by alphabetical order by first name*).



JHSSR is inviting papers for its upcoming issues in 2024–25 (without Deadline).

Greetings from JHSSR. Hope you are keeping safe & healthy. JHSSR in collaboration with various universities is making best effort to spread right knowledge across academicians. We hope the content in our journal proves an interesting read for you, please feel free to spread the knowledge to your peers and upcoming generation of accomplished authors.

The Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (JHSSR), eISSN 2682-9096 is a **peer-reviewed, international** journal that uses an **open access** model. It publishes original contributions in the field of humanities and social sciences. The journal serves as a place to share new thinking on analysis, theory, policy, and practice that relates to issues that influence innovative research and education. We believe that our journal can make a significant contribution to the advancement of the field and help address some of the pressing challenges facing society today.

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 stringent yet relatively rapid double-blind peer-review process, which translates to benefits such as timeliness of publication, widespread dissemination, high visibility, and likelihood of high citations and broader impacts. JHSSR follows code of conduct stipulated by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). 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.

Our goal is to foster a vibrant and dynamic community of social scientists including experts in *psychology, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, geography, and history* by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of high-quality research results. We seek to present the cutting-edge innovations and/or latest insights and strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence for JHSSR.

The journal is published online with DOI. <https://doi.org/10.37534>

Send your manuscript to the editor at CEE.Horizon@gmail.com, or get further information at info.jhssr@gmail.com

Explore the Journal at: <https://horizon-jhssr.com/index.php>

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

(Manuscript Preparation & Submission Guide)

Revised: Nov. 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.

Submission Preparation Checklist

As part of the submission process, authors are required to check off their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions may be returned to authors that do not adhere to these guidelines.

- ✓ 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

Horizon accepts submission of mainly **four** types of manuscripts for peer-review.

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.

2. REVIEW ARTICLE

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**.

3. **SHORT COMMUNICATIONS**

They are timely, peer-reviewed and brief. These are suitable for the publication of significant technical advances and may be used to:

- (a) Report new developments, significant advances and novel aspects of experimental and theoretical methods and techniques which are relevant for scientific investigations within the journal scope;
- (b) Report/discuss on significant matters of policy and perspective related to the science of the journal, including 'personal' commentary;
- (c) Disseminate information and data on topical events of significant scientific and/or social interest within the scope of the journal.

The manuscript title must start with "*Brief Communication*".

Size: These are usually **between 800 to 1,500 words** and have a maximum of three figures and/or tables, from 8 to 20 references, and an abstract length not exceeding 150 words. Information must be in short but complete form and it is not intended to publish preliminary results or to be a reduced version of Regular or Rapid Papers.

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

Horizon 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.

- **FILE TYPE:** MS WORD; Font-type: Times New Roman, Size 12 pts and 1.5 line-spaced.
- **WORD COUNT:** Adhere to the stipulated word-count. Regular articles: not more than 6,000 words, and Review articles: 3,000 words max. Headings: Ensure that they are clearly formatted throughout.
- **MANUSCRIPT STRUCTURE:** The journal uses IMRAD style.
- **TITLE:** Should be attractive and indicative. No more than 30 words.
- **RUNNING-HEAD:** No more than 40-character spaces.
- **ABSTRACT:** Should describe your entire study at a glance. No more than 150 words (maximum).
- **KEYWORDS:** Must provide as many as 8.
- **INTRODUCTION:** It should provide sufficient background about the work carried out.
- **METHODOLOGY:** This should include details of any experiments conducted or data collected.
- **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:** This section should answer the question you raised in the introduction.
- **CONCLUSION:** Here you should include your findings.
- **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:** This section should answer the question you raised in the introduction.
- **CONCLUSION:** Here you should include your findings.
- **COMPETING INTERESTS STATEMENT:** e.g. The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.
- **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** This usually follows the Discussion and Conclusions sections. Its purpose is to thank all of the people who helped with the research but did not qualify for authorship.

This could be someone from a sponsoring institution, a funding body, other researchers, or even family, friends or colleagues who have helped in the preparation. Individuals and entities that have provided essential support such as research grants and fellowships and other sources of funding should be acknowledged. Contributions that do not involve researching (clerical assistance or personal acknowledgements) should not appear in acknowledgements.

- **REFERENCES:** Lists every source (no limitation) but list those that may be of interest to readers and are current. "**Each reference cited in text must appear in the reference list, and each entry in the reference list must be cited in text**". There is no reason to include uncited sources in the reference list. **Cite what you use, use what you cite.** The references are to be alphabetized by the first author's last name, or (if no author is listed) list by the organization or title. Ensure that in-text

citations and references are complete and consistently styled and formatted as per the journal's in-house style (APA Edn. 6 or 7) failing which your article will **not be accepted for peer-review**. You may refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for further details (<http://www.apastyle.org/>). You may generate APA citations here: <https://www.scribbr.com/apa-citation-generator/new/article-journal/> A video is available for your viewing pleasure at <https://vimeo.com/191910171>

Horizon takes unethical publishing strictly and reports each case of "ghost referencing" or "phantom referencing" to the Committee on Publication Ethics or COPE.

DOIs: Include the DOI at the very end of the APA reference entry. In the APA 7th edition, the DOI is preceded by '<https://doi.org/>'.

APA citation example (7th edition)

Bakari, R. (2022). The relations among social media addiction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction in university students. *Horizon J. Hum. Soc. Sci. Res.*, 4(1), 176–186. <https://doi.org/10.37534/bp.jhssr.2022.v4.n1.id1148.p25>

- **BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT OF AUTHORS:** Authors should submit a biographical statement to be included in the manuscript to be published by JHSSR. The biographical statement should include the author(s) full name, affiliation, email. In addition, it is also appropriate to discuss your personal history, academic program and/or field placement, and interest in the article's subject. The biographical statement may **not exceed 75 words**. The author biography should be **separately** accompanied with a **high-resolution picture** (in JPEG file format) of each author listed in this manuscript as this would be published along with the article (**not pasted in a word file**).
- **APPENDIX:** Includes additional data.
- **FOOTNOTES:** Include necessary additional information.
- **TABLES, FIGURES, GRAPHS:** Are complete, clear, attractive and of high-resolution. Avoid too long tables. Do not forget Table titles, figure and graph legends, and image captions. All Figures/ photographs to have a reference to the original source, unless created by the author.

Manuscript Structure

Most scientific papers are prepared according to a format called **IMRAD**. The term represents the first letters of the words Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, And, Discussion. IMRAD is simply a more 'defined' version of the "IBC" [Introduction, Body, Conclusion] format used for all academic writing. IMRAD indicates a pattern or format rather than a complete list of headings or components of research papers; the missing parts of a paper are: **Title, Authors, Keywords, Abstract, Results & Discussion, Conclusions, Competing interests' statement, Acknowledgement, References** and **Biographical Statement of Author(s)**. Additionally, some papers include Appendices or Supplementary data.

The *Introduction* explains the scope and objective of the study in the light of current knowledge on the subject; the *Materials and Methods* describes how the study was conducted; the *Results* section reports what was found in the study; and the *Discussion* section explains meaning and significance of the results and provides suggestions for future directions of research. The manuscript must be prepared according to the Journal's style.

Manuscript Organisation

Manuscripts for submission to Horizon should be organised in the following order:

Page 1: Running head or title (No more than 40-character spaces).

This page should **only** contain the running title of your paper. The running title is an abbreviated title used as the running head on every page of the manuscript. The running title should not exceed 60 characters, counting letters and spaces.

Page 2: This page should contain the following:

Author(s) and Corresponding author information.

This page should also contain the **full title** of your paper not exceeding 30 words, with name(s) of all the authors, institutions and corresponding author's name, institution and full address (Street address, telephone number (including extension), hand phone number, and e-mail address) for editorial correspondence. First and corresponding authors must be clearly indicated.

The names of the authors stated must be **in full** (no initials).

e.g. Victor Terence King, Percival Bion Griffin, James William Chapman, Neelambar Hatti and Taher Badinjki.

Co-Authors: The commonly accepted guideline for authorship is that one must have substantially contributed to the development of the paper and share accountability for the results. Researchers should decide who will be an author and what order they will be listed depending upon their order of importance to the study. Other contributions should be cited in the manuscript's Acknowledgements.

Authors' Affiliation: The primary affiliation for each author should be the institution where the majority of their work was done. If an author has subsequently moved to another institution, the current address may also be stated in the footer.

Authors' addresses. Multiple authors with different addresses must indicate their respective addresses separately by superscript numbers:

Aimee Henderson¹ and Nayan Kanwal²

¹Department of English Studies, Texas University, Dallas, USA., ²Department of the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Texas University, Dallas, USA.

A list of **number of black and white / colour figures and tables** should also be indicated on this page.

Page 3: Abstract

This page should **repeat** the **full title** of your paper with only the **Abstract** and **Keywords**.

Abstract: The abstract should be around 150-200 words for a Regular Paper and up to 100 words for a Short Communication.

Keywords: Not more than eight keywords in alphabetical order must be provided to describe the contents of the manuscript.

Page 4: Introduction

This page should begin with the **Introduction** of your article and followed by the rest of your paper.

Manuscript Style

The manuscript should be written using the **IMRAD** style of writing. Regular Papers should be prepared with the headings INTRODUCTION, MATERIALS and METHODS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, REFERENCES, and SUPPLEMENTARY DATA (if available) in this order.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Title | |
| Abstract | |
| Keywords | |
| (IMRAD) | |
| Introduction | |
| Methods | |
| Results | |
| And | |
| Discussions | |
| Conclusions | |
| Acknowledgements | |
| References | |
| Supplementary data | |

MAKE YOUR ARTICLES AS CONCISE AS POSSIBLE

Most scientific papers are prepared according to a format called IMRAD. The term represents the first letters of the words Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, And, Discussion. It indicates a pattern or format rather than a complete list of headings or components of research papers; the missing parts of a paper are: Title, Authors, Keywords, Abstract, Conclusions, and References. Additionally, some papers include Acknowledgments and Appendices.

The Introduction explains the scope and objective of the study in the light of current knowledge on the subject; the Materials and Methods describes how the study was conducted; the Results section reports what was found in the study; and the Discussion section explains meaning and significance of the results and provides suggestions for future directions of research. The manuscript must be prepared according to the Journal's instructions to authors.

Equations and Formulae

These must be set up clearly and should be typed double spaced. Numbers identifying equations should be in square brackets and placed on the right margin of the text.

Tables

All tables should be prepared in a form consistent with recent issues of Horizon and should be numbered consecutively with Roman numerals. Explanatory material should be given in the table legends and footnotes.

When a manuscript is submitted for publication, tables must also be submitted separately as data - .doc, .rtf, Excel or PowerPoint files- because tables submitted as image data cannot be edited for publication and are usually in low-resolution.

Figures & Photographs

Submit an **original** figure or photograph. **All Figures and/or photographs must include a reference to the original source**, unless you have created it yourself. Line drawings must be clear, with high black and white contrast. Each figure or photograph should be

prepared on a new page, embedded in the manuscript for reviewing to keep the file of the manuscript under 5 MB. These should be numbered consecutively with Roman numerals.

Figures or photographs must also be submitted separately as TIFF, JPEG, or Excel files- because figures or photographs submitted in low-resolution embedded in the manuscript cannot be accepted for publication. For electronic figures, create your figures using applications that are capable of preparing high resolution TIFF files. In general, we require **300 dpi or higher resolution** for coloured and half-tone artwork, and **1200 dpi or higher for line drawings** are required.

Failure to comply with these specifications will require new figures and delay in publication.

NOTE: Illustrations may be produced in colour at no extra cost at the discretion of the Publisher; the author could be charged USD 50 for each colour page.

General rules on Figures and Tables

- All Figures and Tables should be numbered sequentially (e.g. Table 1, Table 2 etc.) and cite each one in your writing as Table 1 or Figure 1.
- All tables should be referenced in the text of the paper and in the reference list.
- Each table should have an individual title. Each word in the title should be italicized and capitalized except with, of, in, and, etc.
- **Figure captions must be placed at the bottom of each figure.**
- **Captions for tables must be placed at the top of each table.**
- All Figures/ photographs **must include a reference to the original source**, unless you have created it yourself.

General Guidelines

Abbreviations: Define alphabetically, other than abbreviations that can be used without definition. Words or phrases that are abbreviated in the introduction and following text should be written out in **full the first time** that they appear in the text, with each abbreviated form in parenthesis. Include the common name or scientific name, or both, of animal and plant materials.

Authors' Affiliation: The primary affiliation for each author should be the institution where the majority of their work was done. If an author has subsequently moved to another institution, the current address may also be stated in the footer.

Co-Authors: The commonly accepted guideline for authorship is that one must have substantially contributed to the development of the paper and share accountability for the results. Researchers should decide who will be an author and what order they will be listed depending upon their order of importance to the study. Other contributions should be cited in the manuscript's Acknowledgements.

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**, **iThenticate** 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; 30-40%– RESUBMIT MS; > 40%– REJECT.

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Articles cannot be published until a signed form (*original pen-to-paper signature*) has been received.

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Footnotes: Current addresses of authors if different from heading may be inserted here.

Page Numbering: Every page of the manuscript, including the title page, references, tables, etc. should be numbered.

Spelling: The journal uses American or British spelling and authors may follow the latest edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary for British spellings. **The spellings must be consistent with the same style throughout the manuscript.**

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

Visit our Journal's website for more information at <https://horizon-jhssr.com/index.php> | DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37534>

Journal at a glance

Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (JHSSR), Online ISSN 2682-9096 is aimed at those in the academic world who are dedicated to advancing the field of social science education through their research. JHSSR provides a range of articles that speak to the major issues in social sciences across all content areas and disciplines. The Journal is peer edited through a blind review process that utilizes a national and international editorial board and peer reviewers, comprising of renowned scholars from various disciplines of research with diverse geographical backgrounds engaged with universities in 35 countries across the world.

JHSSR aspires to advance research in the field of social sciences through a collection of quality, relevant, and advanced interdisciplinary articles in the fields associated with the scope of the journal.

Published bi-annually, the journal encourages submission of manuscripts by lecturers, post-doctorates and scholars that use quantitative or qualitative methods. Articles combine disciplinary methods with critical insights to investigate major issues shaping national, state, and institutional contexts. We seek to present the cutting-edge innovations and/or latest insights and strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence for JHSSR.

Check our [Editorial Board](#)

Indexing

The journal is listed/indexed with: MCC, ProQuest, Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, and ISC amongst others.

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