2024

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

PROCEEDINGS

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Proceedings of the Postgraduate Research Colloquium (PGRC) 2024

Editors

Dr. Ellie Chee Shi Yin, *Taylor's University, Malaysia*
Dr. Jasmine Anak Jain, *Taylor's University, Malaysia*

Foreword by the Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, we are delighted to welcome you to the Postgraduate Research Colloquium (PGRC) 2024, held from 5th to 6th November. Organized by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Leisure Management (FSLM), Taylor's University, this colloquium continues to serve as a dynamic platform for academic exchange, research dissemination, and meaningful collaborations among scholars worldwide.

This year's colloquium features 94 extended abstract presentations from research scholars across diverse areas, including Hospitality, Tourism & Events; Education; Media & Communication; Psychology; Sociology & Political Science; and Food Studies & Gastronomy. These presentations are organized into 25 breakout sessions, highlighting innovative research and interdisciplinary strategies for addressing contemporary challenges.

Adding to the richness of the event, six workshops have been organized to provide practical insights and strategies for postgraduate students and early career researchers. PGRC 2024 has brought together over 500 participants from 18 nations, reflecting its growing global reach and impact. This diversity enriches the discussions and fosters a truly international exchange of ideas, building connections that transcend borders.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all participants, presenters, and organizers for their enthusiasm and commitment, which have made PGRC 2024 a success. We look forward to seeing this vibrant community grow further and to welcoming you again at PGRC 2025.

Sincerely,
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Journal Affiliation for PGRC 2024

- Journal of Hospitality and Tourism
- Journal of Ecotourism
- Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights
- Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism
- Tourism and Management Studies
- Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal
- International Journal of Gastronomy and Food Sciences
- Media Asia
- SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication Research
- Event Management
- Tourism and Hospitality Management
- The International Journal on e-Learning and Higher Education
- TEAM Journal of Hospitality & Tourism
- Asia-Pacific Journal of Futures in Education and Society
- Asian Journal on Perspectives in Education
- Graduate Journal of Food Studies

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Hospitality, Tourism & Events

PGRC-001

Strategic Situational Analysis Of The Leisure Tourism Industry In Southern Cebu, Philippines

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Abstract

The leisure tourism industry is one of the main pillars of Cebuano economy for over a period of more than forty years. It has been proven that the said industry has supported economic development because the industry cuts across and is linked to many other industries, and its benefits are widely distributed within national economies. In comparison to other industries, it possesses distinct advantages as a driver of economic development. This study determined the competitiveness of leisure tourism in Southern Cebu, Philippines and its prevailing crucial issues and challenges. The results served to enhance the industry's performance and sustainability.

This study applied the multi-research method with the use of researcher-designed survey tool to gather data on the degree of competitiveness of the leisure tourism industry and an interview guide to determine the prevailing crucial issues as well as the related challenges confronting the industry that affect its competitiveness and performance. This study was conducted in well-known leisure tourism municipalities in Southern Cebu, Philippines such as Moalboal, Badian, Alegria, Oslob, Dalaguete and Argao. The participants of this study were the primary stakeholders who are directly benefited from the leisure tourism industry and the secondary stakeholders who indirectly gained advantages from the said industry. The primary stakeholders included the domestic and international tourists, travel agents, tour guides, leisure tourism operators, employees and entrepreneurs in leisure tourism business while the secondary stakeholders included the local residents, local government unit (LGU) officials, and local tourism organizations. Using purposive sampling method, there was a total of 190 primary and secondary stakeholders who were selected and actively involved in the leisure tourism industry in the selected towns in Southern part of Cebu, Philippines and those who had experienced the different leisure activities. For the personal interview, there were ten participants. In the conduct of the study, proper ethical protocols in the context of beneficence, non-maleficence, voluntarism and confidentiality were observed. The gathered data were treated statistically using weighted mean, chi square test of independence and one-way ANOVA. Thematic analysis was applied for qualitative data.

The leisure tourism industry in the Southern strip of Cebu Province was highly competitive in terms only of the existence of the means of air transport infrastructure and environmental sustainability despite on the challenges in keeping the surrounding areas of the tourists' sites as assessed by both the primary and secondary stakeholders. However, in terms of policy rules and regulations, safety and security, health and hygiene, ground transport infrastructure, water transport infrastructure and price, there are still a considerable gap that needs to be fill in so that the operation of the leisure tourism will be at par with the requirements of their regulatory agencies as well as the international tourism organizations.

There are common crucial issues which confronted the various stakeholders in the leisure tourism industry of Southern Cebu, Philippines which affected the competitiveness and performance in the aspect of various forms of dilemma encountered in facing the massive volume of tourists. Themes created were: Weak Tourism Management Policy, Shortage of Tourism Facilities and Supplies Creates Local Economic Distortion, Rise of Immorality and Shortage of Competent Workers while the economic issues observed were: Unreasonable Prices of Goods and Services and Insufficient Provision of Information and Commodities. For the social issues observed, the

challenges were: Diminishing of Moral Values in the Society and Behavioral Problems of Tourism Service Providers while the environmental issues that they observed were: Tourists' Misbehavior Destroys the Environment and Weak Environmental Protection Platforms. Further, the related challenges encountered by the various stakeholders in the leisure tourism industry in dealing with different tourists who manifested different behavior was Improved Quality of Customer Service while the related challenges in ensuring that leisure tourism activity does not alter local tradition and practices were: Adaptation of New Normal and Effect Information Dissemination. For the challenges in ensuring that leisure tourism activities do not destroy the natural environment were: Effecting Responsible Action Towards the Environmental for Sustainability and Drawing of Local Government Support. Lastly, the challenges in keeping the municipality or town clean were: Implementation of Proper Waste Management and Conveying Environmentally-Friendly Mindset to the Stakeholders.

There is no significant relationship between the types of respondents and their assessment on the degree of competitiveness of leisure tourism industry as to policy rules and regulations, safety and security, environmental sustainability, health and hygiene, air transport infrastructure, ground transport infrastructure, water transport infrastructure and price. Likewise, there is there is no significant difference on the responses of primary and secondary stakeholders to their perspectives degree of competitiveness of the leisure tourism industry in the Southern part of Cebu, Philippines as to policy rules and regulations, safety and security, environmental sustainability, health and hygiene, air transport infrastructure, ground transport infrastructure, water transport infrastructure, and price.

Moreover, the complexity of demands highlights the importance of enhancing the competitive position of the industry as it plays enabling roles of creating job and national development. Thus, regardless of the economic benefits, it is also important to consider the social and environmental impact associated with the conduct of leisure tourism. Also, recognizing pertinent issues and challenges confronting the industry will drive towards being sensible in developing, updating and delivering quality service, facilities, infrastructure and overall operations as it affects the industry's sustainability in the long-run.

Most of the research studies proved that the leisure tourism industry provides lots of economic benefits to the people especially in the rural economy in which the source of livelihood is very scarce. Along with these benefits, lies environmental, social, cultural and economic constraints, issues and challenges in which regulating bodies must address. The vulnerability of human and natural resources then creates pressure to maintain sustainable and competitive industry. Thereby, imposing a competitiveness development plan serves as a guideline on how to improve the performance of leisure tourism industry and the wide-ranging community as it plays a crucial role in developing the destinations' image to the domestic and international market. Creating a competitive destination image, requires a strong collaboration of all the stakeholders. Integrating them in the process will produce a worthwhile experience that travelers consume and enjoy.

Keywords: Tourism management, strategic situational analysis, leisure tourism, multi-method, Cebu, Philippines

PGRC-002

Service Quality, Communication Practices, Work Attitudes, And Customer Satisfaction: A Causal Model on Performance

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Abstract

The performance of the service providers plays a crucial role in the success of the operation of the accommodation businesses. This study investigated the level of the performance of the service providers by examining relationship among service quality, communication practices, work attitudes and customer satisfaction. The study used survey data analysis, path analysis and causal modeling to identify the best-fitting model that captured the dynamics of the performance of the service providers. The results revealed that Hypothesized Model 4, which incorporates job satisfaction, co-workers' support, reliability, and commitment to customer service variables, is one of the best models for understanding and evaluating the performance of the service providers. The findings highlighted the strong relationships between the performance of the service providers, service quality, communication services, work attitudes and customer satisfaction. This study contributed valuable insights into the factors that influenced the performance of the service providers. This also emphasized the importance of enhancing service quality particularly reliability and assurance, fostering effective communication practices driven by employee engagement, nurturing positive work attitudes through job satisfaction and commitment, and cultivating a strong customer-centric culture emphasizing coworker support and dedication to service that emerges as the most impactful strategy for driving service provider performance in the accommodation business.

Keywords: service quality, communication practices, work attitudes, customer satisfactions, performance of the service providers, casual model

PGRC-003

Theoretical Insights into the Impact of Cruise Tourism Destination Branding on Economic Growth in Penang, Malaysia

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Abstract

Cruise tourism is characterised by leisure travel, where the voyage and ship amenities are central to the experience. It has become a vital segment of the global tourism industry. This sector's appeal lies in the luxurious onboard experiences and the allure of the destinations visited. Despite global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, cruise tourism has shown notable resilience. From 2019 to 2023, the number of global cruise tourists increased from 29.7 million to 31.7 million, demonstrating a strong recovery. However, this growth has not been uniform. While North America and Europe have seen substantial increases, Asia has faced a decline of 37.7% during this period, underscoring the varied dynamics within the industry (CLIA, 2024).

Penang, Malaysia, is a significant player in the Southeast Asian cruise tourism market, with its port serving as one of the leading cruise harbours in the region. In 2023, Penang welcomed 573,178 cruise tourists (Dermawan, 2024). The number of international cruise ships docking at Penang's ports surged by 85.71% between 2022 and 2023, solidifying its status as a major hub for cruise tourism in Southeast Asia (Dermawan, 2024a). However, Penang faces challenges that threaten its ability to fully capitalise on the economic benefits of this industry. The region has yet to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 8, which emphasises decent work and economic growth. Additionally, Penang recorded its highest budget deficit in 2024, a troubling indicator of underlying economic issues. The slight increase in the unemployment rate from 2% to 2.7% in 2022 underscores the importance of sustainable growth strategies to support the regional economy (Leng, 2021; Mok, 2024).

Destination branding in cruise tourism provides a promising strategy to address these challenges. Destination branding involves creating a unique image and identity for a location to attract tourists by highlighting its distinctive attributes and experiences. For Penang, effective destination branding could enhance the region's appeal to cruise tourists, drive economic growth, and help mitigate its financial challenges. However, the relationship between cruise tourism destination branding and economic growth still needs to be explored, particularly in Penang. This gap in the literature suggests the need for a comprehensive theoretical framework to guide future research on the impact of destination branding on cruise tourism and economic development.

Previous research on cruise tourism in Penang has often focused on either a supplier's or a consumer's perspective, with few studies integrating both to provide a holistic understanding of the industry. Furthermore, applying established branding models, such as Keller's Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model (Keller, 2001), to cruise tourism destination branding has yet to be extensively explored. The CBBE model, which emphasises building a strong brand by creating a positive and memorable customer experience, offers a valuable framework for understanding how destination branding can influence tourist behaviour and economic outcomes. By adapting the CBBE model to cruise tourism, a more nuanced understanding can be developed

regarding the factors driving tourists' decisions to visit a destination and how these can be leveraged to enhance the destination's brand equity.

This study proposes the Cruise Tourist-Based Destination Brand-Equity Pyramid (CTBDBEP) (see Figure 1), an adaptation of the CBBE model, as a theoretical framework for understanding the impact of cruise tourism destination branding on tourist visit intention, which will lead the economic growth in Penang. The CTBDBEP framework consists of four key components: cruise destination identity, cruise destination meaning, cruise destination response, and cruise destination resonance. Each of these components shapes tourists' perceptions and experiences, ultimately influencing their decisions to visit and return to a destination.

Cruise Destination Resonance
(Loyalty, Attachment, Visit Intention, Word of Mouth)

Cruise Destination Response
Judgments: Perceived Satisfaction, Perceived Quality, Perceived Value
Feelings: Excitement, Adventure, Relaxation

Cruise Destination Meaning
Destination Performance: Destination Quality
Imagery: Destination Image

Cruise Destination Identity
Destination Salience: Destination Awareness

Figure 1. Cruise Tourist-Based Destination Brand-Equity Pyramid (CTBDBEP)

Cruise destination identity focuses on the salience and awareness of the destination. This component examines how well the destination is recognised by potential cruise tourists and the strength of its brand identity. In Penang's case, efforts to enhance the destination's identity could include marketing campaigns that highlight its rich cultural heritage, vibrant culinary scene, and strategic location as a gateway to other popular tourist destinations in Southeast Asia. By increasing awareness and recognition, Penang can position itself as a must-visit destination for cruise tourists, attracting more visitors and boosting economic activity. In addition, cruise destination meaning encompasses the destination's performance and imagery. This component explores how the destination is perceived in terms of its quality and the emotional and psychological associations it evokes in tourists. For Penang, improving the visitor experience by enhancing the quality of its tourist infrastructure, providing unique and memorable experiences, and promoting a positive image could create strong associations with the destination, increasing the likelihood that cruise tourists will choose to visit and recommend it to others.

Cruise destination response evaluates tourists' judgments and feelings toward the destination. This component assesses overall satisfaction, emotional responses, and perceived value, focusing on factors such as satisfaction, quality, value, excitement, adventure, and relaxation. In Penang, gathering feedback from tourists to identify areas for improvement and offering personalised services could enhance the destination's response, leading to higher satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth promotion, both of which are crucial for sustaining economic growth. Furthermore, cruise destination resonance is the final component of the CTBDBEP framework, which focuses on building long-term relationships with cruise tourists. This includes

fostering loyalty, attachment, visit intention, and word-of-mouth promotion. In Penang, strategies to enhance destination resonance could involve developing loyalty programs that reward repeat visitors, creating opportunities for tourists to form emotional connections with the destination, and encouraging positive reviews and recommendations. By cultivating a strong and loyal tourist base, Penang can ensure a steady stream of visitors who contribute to the region's economic growth.

The economic impact of cruise tourism in Penang can be understood through three primary channels: direct, indirect, and induced impacts. Direct impacts refer to the immediate economic benefits generated by tourist spending on goods and services in the region, such as accommodations, dining, shopping, and entertainment. Indirect impacts include the economic activities stimulated by the supply chain supporting the cruise tourism industry, such as local businesses providing goods and services to cruise ships. These businesses, in turn, generate additional economic activity by purchasing supplies and hiring workers, creating a multiplier effect that further stimulates the regional economy. Induced impacts encompass the broader economic effects resulting from increased income and spending within the local economy due to cruise tourism. As workers and businesses involved in the cruise tourism sector earn more income, they are likely to spend more on goods and services, further contributing to economic growth in the region. The Tourism-Led Growth Hypothesis (TLGH) posits that tourism can be a significant driver of economic growth, particularly in regions where tourism plays a substantial role in the economy (Balaguer & Cantavella-Jorda, 2002; Brida et al., 2016). Applying the TLGH to Penang's cruise tourism sector, this study suggests that effective destination branding can enhance the region's competitiveness as a cruise destination, thereby attracting more tourists, increasing tourist spending, and ultimately contributing to economic growth.

Cruise tourism destination branding holds significant potential for contributing to the economic growth of Penang, Malaysia. By creating a strong and positive brand identity, enhancing the visitor experience, and building long-term relationships with cruise tourists, Penang can position itself as a leading cruise destination in Asia. As the region navigates its economic challenges, effective destination branding will be crucial in ensuring that Penang achieves sustainable economic growth and fully capitalises on the opportunities presented by the cruise tourism industry. Through continued research and applying frameworks like the CTBDBEP, stakeholders in Penang can develop strategies that attract more cruise tourists and create lasting economic benefits for the region.

Keywords: Cruise Tourism Destination Branding, Economic Growth, Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model, Cruise Tourist-Based Destination Brand-Equity Pyramid (CTBDBEP), Tourism-Led Growth Hypothesis (TLGH), Penang, Malaysia

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PGRC-004

The Mediating Role of Attitude Towards Tourism Development on the Relationship Between Perceived Impacts and Quality of Life of Residents of Casino Tourism Destinations

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Abstract

Amidst the Philippine government's declaration that tourism is an essential component of the country's economy and an industry that requires attention and importance, it is imperative to employ tourism as a tool for socio-economic development. Namely, to increased investment, foreign currency inflow, and job generation, and while also encouraging a stronger sense of national pride among all Filipinos. With this assertion, the Philippines has been actively regarding casinos as an integral component of the tourism sector, which plays a substantial role in nation-building and fuels the economy through the establishment of casino destinations. It can help generate revenues for the socio-civic and national development programs of the Philippine government; and to assist in promoting the Philippine tourism industry. Under the Republic Act No. 9593, also known as the Tourism Act of 2009, which declares that tourism is a crucial component of the national economy and a significant industry of national importance. It emphasizes the need to utilize tourism as a catalyst for socio-economic growth and cultural affirmation, aiming to attract investment, foreign exchange, and employment opportunities. However, the casinos contribution and growth has been a subject of broad debate and extensive research in the tourism industry. Discussing and debating what can be done to diminish the negative impacts caused by the development of a casino tourism destination. This casino tourism research is currently unique in nature and the intention of investigating it is very timely with all these scattered issues and problems that were thrown about the effects of casino gambling in the Philippines. With the proliferation of small casino businesses, it is therefore well-timed to propose a study and assess the positive and negative issues that surround casino tourism in the Philippines context with a specific focus on its impact on residents of the community in Laguna, Philippines. The researcher will delve on the viewpoints of residents towards the development of small casino tourism businesses in their communities, to respond to this argument and contribute to the body of research knowledge about casino tourisms' positive and negative impacts. This study will address the gap in understanding how the perceived casino impacts and quality of life of residents of a casino tourism destinations being interacted to mediate the role of attitudes towards tourism development.

The expansion of casinos has been a subject of extensive debate and research while arguing that casinos bring economic benefits, such as job creation and increased tourism, however it highlights potential negative consequences, including social issues, economic disparities, and environmental degradation. The establishment and operation of casinos in local communities presents a complex array of impacts that are not fully understood. This research aims to investigate the relationship between perceived impacts and quality of life of residents of a casino tourism destinations with the mediating role of attitude towards tourism development. The primary objective of this study is to assess the respondents' perceived impacts of casino tourism, respondents' attitudes, and the quality of life of residents of casino tourism destinations. This specifically involves addressing the following research questions: (1) what the respondents' attitudes towards tourism development are; (2) how the perceived impact of casino affects the

quality of life of the residents of casino tourism destinations; (3) what the mediating role of attitudes towards tourism development on the relationship between perceived impacts and quality of life of residents of casino tourism destinations is.

In understanding the study, the researchers will adopt the hierarchical regression analysis. The integration of this technique enables the researchers to examine the impact of several independent variables on a dependent variable and facilitates the identification of intricate interactions among variables, therefore enhancing the detailed comprehension of the relationship of the data. This analysis will offer great insight into the phenomena under study and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research issue. The population that the researchers will target in this study are residents living near the casino tourism destinations or 10-kilometer radius. The quantitative data will be conducted on a significant volume of sample size that is enough to represent the target population. The researcher will use the convenience sample method to easily reach respondents who are geographically close, available at a specific time, and willing to engage in the study. The target respondents should also be between 21 to 65 years of age, residing and a registered voter in the community in Laguna, Philippines near where the casino destination is situated and for 10-kilometer radius. The consideration of individuals with experience of a minimum of 6 months with gambling contributes to a more-in-depth analysis as they may offer nuanced perspectives, detailed insights and can suggest optimal research outcomes. Therefore, researchers' selection of respondents will provide valuable insights to the study being investigated. To gather pertinent information in the study, the researchers will utilize a self-administered questionnaire as it is the most feasible way to collect data and was adopted from the study of Anderek and Nyaupanel (2010). The first section of the questionnaire explores the respondents' attitudes towards tourism development; next is how the perceived impact of casino affects the quality of life of the residents of casino tourism destinations; lastly is the mediating role of attitudes towards tourism development on the relationship between perceived impacts and quality of life of residents of casino tourism destinations. These will be measured through a 4-point Likert scale based-questions (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) allowing for the quantification of responses, enabling statistical analysis to be conducted on the data. The questionnaire items are measured directly, without reverse scoring to ensure clarity and consistency in the responses. Maddox (1985) recommended the use of a Likert-scale in tourism impact research due to its superior validity.

This study will hold its importance significantly for several key stakeholders, including the residents themselves, the local tourism industry, the community, and future researchers. First, the perceived impact of casino tourism on the quality of life of residents of selected barangays in Laguna Philippines will be illuminated in this vital study. They are the main reason the researcher will pursue this study by acquiring their knowledge about the consequences of casino tourism. This research will give them an active voice to state their attitudes and support casino tourism development that promotes their welfare and mitigates any adverse effects associated with casino tourism. Second, the results of this study have the potential to offer significant contributions to the stakeholders of the tourism sector in Laguna. This study will be significantly added and contribute to the amusement travel destinations in Laguna, not only San Lazaro Leisure Park and Carmona Racing Circuit. Different stakeholders who wish to venture in this kind of tourist destination can ensure that the objectives of sustainable tourism of casinos are gaining understanding and importance. Third, by increasing their knowledge of the complexities of casino tourism, the Community and Local Government in Laguna community can benefit from this research by encouraging community engagement and participation in tourism-related decision-making processes, this knowledge can facilitate the advancement of a more sustainable and inclusive approach to tourism development. And lastly, this research will be valuable to future researchers that will pursue the study about casino tourism. This study can serve as a foundation for future research on casino tourism and its impacts. Researchers can

build upon the findings and methodologies used in this study to further explore the topic and contribute to the growing body of knowledge on casino tourism destinations.

Keywords: Residents' Attitude; Perceived Impacts; Quality of Life; Casino Tourism; Hierarchical Regression

PGRC-005

Yes Chef!: Exploring Power Dynamics of Professional Chefs in the Kitchen Workplace

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Abstract

The professional kitchen is often characterized by its high-pressure and hierarchical nature, it serves as a critical environment where power dynamics and communication practices greatly influence the daily interactions, professional characters, and overall workplace culture of culinary professionals. These dynamics are critical in shaping how authority is exercised, negotiated, and perceived within the culinary workplace. While the implication of these power relations is well-documented, much of the existing research focuses on Western contexts, leaving a considerable gap in understanding how these dynamics play out in non-Western settings, particularly within the unique cultural backgrounds of the Philippines.

In Metro Manila, the cultural and organizational features that shape power dynamics in kitchens create distinctive patterns of behavior and interaction among chefs. Deep-rooted Filipino cultural values like hiya (shame), utang na loob (debt of gratitude), and pakikisama (smooth interpersonal relationships) also have an impact on these patterns in addition to the formal hierarchies and roles within the kitchen. These values play a critical role in how authority is exercised, challenged, and maintained in culinary settings, making the study of power dynamics within this setting both necessary and compelling.

This research seeks to address the gap by focusing on the professional kitchens of Metro Manila, exploring how power is used, assigned, and perceived within these environments. It does not only contribute to a broader understanding of the factors that influence kitchen workplaces in different cultural contexts but also offers insights that can be applied to culinary settings worldwide. The results can inform the development of more helpful management practices, improve workplace relations, and improve the well-interests and professional growth of Filipino chefs globally.

This utilizes a qualitative research methodology grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which is fit for exploring the complex and context-dependent nature of power relations in social settings. Constructivism highlights the co-construction of reality by participants and researchers, allowing for an in-depth analysis of how individuals interpret and direct the power structures within their specific environments. Also, semi-structured interviews and participant observations is used to gather in-extensive data from chefs and kitchen staffs. Thematic analysis is used as well to identify patterns and themes in how power dynamics are navigated, particularly through language use. Furthermore, the application of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology) provides a critical view for understanding the unique psychological makeup and social behaviors of Filipinos within their cultural context, particularly in relation to power dynamics in the professional kitchen.

Preliminary findings indicate that power dynamics in professional kitchens are deeply embedded in the cultural and organizational contexts of the culinary establishments. The use of language, particularly profanity, emerges as a significant factor in these dynamics, serving as both a tool for asserting authority and a means of navigating the high-pressure environment of the kitchen. Profanity is not merely a reflection of the stress and intensity of the kitchen environment but also a critical component of the communication practices that maintain and challenge the hierarchical structures within the workplace.

This introduces the Profanity Framework, constructed to explore how various factors influence the use and perception of profanity in the kitchen environment. This framework examines the relationship between profanity and key aspects of kitchen life, including the assertion of authority, the maintenance of discipline, and the negotiation of social chain of command. The framework also considers how profanity contributes to the creation of an organized team identity and how it reflects core cultural values and norms, particularly within the context of Filipino kitchens.

The investigation identifies three important focal areas: (1) the forms of profanity used by chefs, (2) chefs' and kitchen staff's views of profanity use, and (3) the influence of profanity on the cooking environment. These suggest that power in the kitchen is enacted through a combination of formal authority, rooted in organizational hierarchy, and informal practices, influenced by cultural norms and values. This dual structure of power creates a complex condition where authority is constantly negotiated and redefined through daily interactions.

The findings have important theoretical and practical implications for the culinary industry. Theoretically, the research supplies a deeper understanding of the cultural specificity of power dynamics in professional kitchens, offering a framework for analyzing related dynamics in other cultural contexts. The Profanity Framework provides a concept that discovers the role of language in shaping workplace dynamics, proposing a valuable tool for future research in both culinary studies and organizational behavior.

This offers valuable understandings for culinary professionals, educators, and policymakers. For culinary professionals, the results emphasize the importance of cultural understanding and sensitivity in managing kitchen environments. Understanding the cultural factors that influence power dynamics can help chefs and managers create more comprehensive and supportive workplaces, where authority is exercised in ways that respect the values and identities of all employees. The Profanity Framework can also inform the development of communication strategies that control the positive aspects of profanity while mitigating its potential negative effects.

For educators, this highlights the need for training programs that address the cultural dimensions of power and communication in the kitchen, preparing future chefs to cross the complexities of diverse workplace environments. The combination of cultural competence in culinary education is essential for equipping chefs with the skills necessary to manage and thrive in kitchens with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Finally, for policymakers, this suggests the importance of developing regulations and guidelines that promote more concerned and culturally aware management practices in the culinary industry. By recognizing and focusing the cultural factors that influence power dynamics, policymakers can contribute to the well-being and professional development of chefs, ultimately steering to more equitable and supportive workplace environments.

This presents a thorough examination of power dynamics in professional kitchens, with a specific emphasis on the use of profanity among professional chefs in Metro Manila, Philippines. Adopting a qualitative research methodology grounded in the constructivist paradigm and applying the principles of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, the research offers valuable insights into the specific ways in which power is used and conveyed in culinary settings. The development of the Profanity Framework supplements a new dimension to our understanding of the role of language in shaping power dynamics in the kitchen, contributing to a more complete and informed understanding of power relations in the kitchen workplace.

Keywords: Power Dynamics, Professional Chefs, Kitchen Workplace, Profanity, Sikolohiyang Pilipino

PGRC-006

Exploring the Sociocultural Impact of Internal Migration of Tourism Workers in Kuta, Bali

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Abstract

The rapid growth of Kuta, Bali, as a popular tourist destination has led to significant internal migration due to the thriving tourism industry. This has brought about substantial social and cultural changes, particularly regarding the integration of migrant workers and their impact on the local community. The disparities in economic opportunities between urban and rural areas in Indonesia have contributed to this ongoing migration. Many individuals are motivated to migrate in search of better economic prospects, resulting in an influx of job seekers from other regions to Bali, where the tourism sector offers numerous employment opportunities. As a response to this internal migration, many migrants who initially moved to Bali for work have subsequently established various businesses in the tourism sector. This influx of workers is reshaping the social fabric of the receiving communities and introducing new cultural elements to Kuta. Migrant workers bring their own languages, traditions, and cultural backgrounds, which interact with or differ from those of the local Balinese community. This cultural fusion can lead to various outcomes, from enriching cultural exchange to potential tensions and conflicts. However, the specific ways in which these sociocultural interactions manifest and evolve in Kuta have not been thoroughly explored.

To address this gap, a comprehensive research study will be conducted to analyze the effects of internal migration on tourism workers in Kuta, Bali. The study will focus on how migration impacts local cultural practices and traditions, the challenges and opportunities of integrating migrant workers, and local residents' perceptions regarding changes in social relationships and community cohesion. The primary objectives of this study include: (1) Exploring the influence of internal migrant tourism workers on local cultural practices and traditions in Kuta, Bali; (2) Identifying the main challenges and opportunities in integrating migrant tourism workers into the local community; (3) Assessing local residents' perceptions of changes in social relationships and community cohesion due to the influx of migrant tourism workers; (4) Investigating the forms of cultural exchange and interaction between internal migrant tourism workers and the local population.

The literature review will thoroughly examine the complex dynamics of the tourism industry in Bali, including the sociocultural impacts of tourism and the role of internal migration in driving sociocultural change. It will begin with an overview of Bali's tourism industry, tracing its historical development, current state, and economic significance. It will also highlight the characteristics of the tourism workforce, particularly the influx of internal migrants. The review will then delve into the sociocultural impacts of tourism, exploring both the positive aspects, such as cultural exchange and preservation, and the negative aspects, including cultural commodification and social inequality. The literature on migration and sociocultural change will also be reviewed, focusing on integration and adaptation, identity and community dynamics, and cultural hybridization. This section will discuss how migrants integrate into new environments, the formation and dynamics of migrant communities, and the blending of cultures resulting from migration. Real-world examples and empirical evidence from relevant case studies and research will support the theoretical frameworks discussed, highlighting various sociocultural impacts of internal migration in tourism contexts and offering insights into the experiences of migrant workers and local communities. Finally, gaps in the literature will be identified, pointing out areas that have been under-researched or overlooked, particularly in understanding the

long-term sociocultural impacts of internal migration in tourism-dependent regions like Kuta, Bali.

The research aims to explore the integration of migrant workers into the local community, the impact of migration on local cultural practices and traditions, the attitudes of local residents towards migrants, and the broader effects on social cohesion and community identity. The study will span six months, providing ample time for thorough immersion in the community to gather in-depth qualitative data while also considering practical constraints. This research will utilize a qualitative ethnographic approach, employing participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups to collect in-depth data. This approach is chosen for its capacity to offer a comprehensive, contextualized comprehension of the lived experiences and social interactions within the community. The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute substantially to the understanding of the sociocultural impacts of internal migration within the tourism sector, particularly in the context of Kuta, Bali. By exploring how the influx of migrant tourism workers influences local cultural practices, social cohesion, and community identity, this research addresses a significant gap in the existing literature. While the economic impacts of migration have been well-documented, the sociocultural dimensions remain underexplored, particularly in the rapidly evolving tourism landscapes of developing countries like Indonesia. Through an ethnographic approach, the research seeks to comprehensively explore the experiences of both migrant tourism workers and local residents. This will involve gathering detailed qualitative data, including participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. The study aims to involve 30 participants, including both migrant tourism workers and local residents, selected through purposeful and snowball sampling to ensure a diverse and representative sample. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis and NVivo software to achieve comprehensive and robust findings. Ultimately, the research aims to provide valuable insights into the social and cultural impacts of internal migration in Indonesia. The conclusions of this study will be beneficial for informing the decisions of policymakers, community leaders, and stakeholders in the tourism industry.

The expected contributions from this research are multifaceted. Academically, the study will fill gaps in the existing literature on the sociocultural impacts of internal migration within tourism contexts, particularly in Southeast Asia. It will provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of internal migration and its effects on local communities, which can inform the development of inclusive policies and programs. This research aims to foster a more inclusive and cohesive community that benefits both migrant workers and local residents, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development of Kuta, Bali as a thriving tourism destination.

Keywords: internal migration; tourism workers; the sociocultural impact; Kuta-Bali

PGRC-007

The Effect of Customer Experience Quality On Customer Loyalty In Homestays: The Mediating Role Of Perceived Value

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Abstract

Sharing is an efficient, intelligent, and human-centered method of consumption (PalosSanchez et al., 2018). The concept of the "sharing economy" was coined by FelsonJoe & Spaeth (1978) in their essay "Community structure and collaborative consumption: A routine activity approach." It is a broad economic and social concept that refers to the income generated by exchanging commodities and services. According to industry experts, the sharing economy might grow to $335 billion by 2025, up from $15 billion in 2015 (PWC, 2015). The World Bank (2018) also predicts that the annual growth rate of the shared accommodation economy will reach 31% between 2013 and 2025. Traditional corporate paradigms have been subverted and exceeded by the sharing economy, which touches every part of people's lives. Shared accommodation has become a novel, attractive, and popular idea in the tourism industry. The core idea of shared accommodation is to identify people's underutilized assets and try to make more money from them by utilizing and optimizing them through online platforms (PWC, 2015). Homestays, a non-standardized kind of accommodation, are becoming increasingly popular in China with the rise of the shared accommodation idea. The rapid development of tourism has promoted the development of the homestays industry. With China's homestays industry rapidly developing, state and local governments have paid increasing attention to the homestays industry's healthy development and standardized management, and policies related to homestays industry management, industry standards, and support have been released. Homestays has emerged as a critical content and new hotspot in China's tourism development, serving as an innovative driving force in the restructuring and upgrading tourism locations (Liu et al., 2022). Under the impetus of market demand and government laws, homestays, as a developing non-standard accommodation form, will have extensive development potential but also confront intense market competition and new standards for high-quality development. This study focuses on homestays in Yunnan, China. As one of the earliest regions in China to develop the homestays industry, Yunnan homestays have gained a certain degree of popularity and a unique brand influence over many years of construction and development, it is highly representative to study the homestays industry in Yunnan. The expansion of homestays in Yunnan Province, one of China's most popular tourist destinations, is in a phase of incremental competition. Competition between both the overall accommodation industry and the homestays industry is forcing local homestays to focus more on nurturing and increasing customer loyalty. It is clear that cultivating and improving of customer loyalty can bring great benefits to homestays. However, the factors influencing consumer loyalty are complex and dynamic and alter over time (Johnson et al., 2006). Therefore, identifying the factors that influence customer loyalty in homestays is a topic for discussion.

Based on the background of study, this study has three research objectives. First, this study aims to identify the dimensions that effect customer experience quality in Yunnan homestays and the second one is to identify the impact of customer experience quality in Yunnan homestays on customer loyalty. The third purpose is to identify the mediating role of perceived value in mediating customer experience quality and customer loyalty. This study uses three variables, namely customer experience quality, perceived value, and customer loyalty. This study used quantitative method for the data collection and data analysis. The target respondents of this study are customers who have stayed at least once in a homestays in Yunnan, China, in the past

12 months (September 2022-September 2023) . SPSS and AMOS was employed to analyze the data of 392 valid respondents, and SEM was employed to conduct path analysis to test the hypotheses. The results show the customer experience quality in the context of homestays is a higher-order structure; in addition to emotionally relevant experiences (surprise, entertainment/fun, escapism/immersion), lifestyle, learning, staff-customer interaction, customer-customer interaction, atmosphere, guest safety, and price is also another vital dimension of customer experience quality in homestays. In addition, customer experience quality has a significant positive impact on perceived value and customer loyalty, this means that the better the customer experience quality during the homestays experince, the higher the perceived value and customer loyalty. Perceived value has a significant positive impact on customer loyalty, this means that the better the perceived value, the higher the customer loyalty. Perceived value plays a partial mediating role in the impact of customer experience quality on customer loyalty. Therefore, the homestays must create an unforgettable experience quality for customers. In addition, through the overall improvement of perceived value (functional value, social value, emotional value), it can help homestays further retain customers and ensure their loyalty. Homestays must transform and upgrade from traditional service methods to the latest service models, and strike a new balance between providing customers with both standardized services and customized experiences. It can know that H1, H2, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted.

The finding of this study contributes to both theoretical and practical standpoints. For theoretical perspective this study enriches the dimensions of customer experience quality in the context of homestays, and confirms that price is also an important influencing factor of customer experience quality. Secondly, the direct relationship between customer experience quality, perceived value and customer loyalty was examined, and the partial mediating role of perceived value in the relationship between customer experience quality and customer loyalty. For practical contribution, this study will be the guideline for Yunnan homestays managers in formulating marketoriented strategies to retain old customers and attract new customers based on the increase of customer experience quality and perceived value. Limitations of this study in the scope of the study is limited to homestays in Yunnan Province, China, and lacks comparison with other cities. The dynamic relationship between homestays customer experience quality and customer loyalty is also an essential topic that needs to be investigated. For example, does homestays customer experience quality include other dimensions? In addition to perceived value, do other variables play a mediating role between customer experience quality and customer loyalty? Some suggestions that are proposed for future research are as follows: further research can expand the scope of the study to other regions outside Yunnan or to other countries; further research can develop the existing research model by adding other variables to expand the results of the study; further research can compare customers who stayed in a homestays only once and those who stayed in homestays multiple times so that the results of the study can be described further.

Keywords*:* Homestays; Customer Experience Quality; Perceived Value; Customer Loyalty

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PGRC-008

Greenversation: Vermicomposting as an Adopted Sustainability Practice in a Selected Hotel in Metro Manila

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Abstract

The hospitality industry generates a significant amount of organic waste, posing environmental and reputational challenges. Inadequate waste management practices not only contribute to pollution but also jeopardize public health and safety. As the industry increasingly recognizes the importance of sustainable practices, vermicomposting has emerged as a promising solution. Vermicomposting, the process of utilizing earthworms to decompose organic waste into nutrient-rich vermicast, offers numerous benefits such as waste reduction, cost savings, and improved plant growth.

While vermicomposting has primarily been associated with the agricultural sector, its adoption within the hospitality industry, particularly in the Philippines, remains limited. This research focuses on investigating the profitability and sustainability aspects of vermicomposting within a selected hotel in Metro Manila. By understanding the integration of vermicomposting within the hotel's operations and addressing potential gaps, this study aims to provide valuable insights for similar establishments seeking to enhance their sustainability efforts.

The primary objective of this research is to develop a framework that demonstrates the success of adopting vermicomposting as a sustainable practice in the selected hotel. By examining the profitability and sustainability dimensions, this model aims to offer actionable recommendations for small- to medium-sized hospitality establishments in Metro Manila. Specifically, the study aims to analyze the vermicomposting processes and associated factors within the hotel, understand the integration of vermicomposting with other sustainable practices, address observed gaps and lapses in the implementation of vermicomposting and develop a framework showcasing the profitability and sustainability benefits of vermicomposting.

This research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study analysis to investigate the selected hotel's experiences and perceptions regarding vermicomposting. Purposive sampling was used to identify individuals involved in the vermicomposting process within the hotel. The researchers conducted a pre-field study and immersion at an organic farm to gain firsthand experience and identify potential challenges.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews guided by a questionnaire and on-site observation and demonstration. The interviews focused on various aspects, including the initiation of vermicomposting, processes, challenges, and perceived benefits. The on-site observation allowed for a deeper understanding of the vermicomposting setup and its integration within the hotel's operations.

Latent content analysis was employed to analyze the collected data. Meaning units were extracted and categorized based on their implications for the hotel's methods and processes. These categories were further grouped chronologically to understand the involvement of different stakeholders.

The findings revealed four distinct stages in the successful adoption of vermicomposting within the hotel, leading to the development of the WORM Model:

- Willpower Stage: This stage emphasizes the management's commitment and dedication to sustainability. The hotel's proactive approach in implementing sustainable practices, including vermicomposting, demonstrates their strong willpower in prioritizing environmental responsibility.

- Optimization Stage: This stage focuses on the actualization and execution of the plans and decisions made in the Willpower stage. The hotel's efforts to promote a circular economy through waste reduction and recycling initiatives are central to this stage.

- Renewability Stage: This stage explores the profitable implications of the Optimization stage. The integration of vermicomposting with other sustainable practices, such as renewable energy procurement and the use of regenerated materials, showcases the hotel's commitment to a sustainable future.

- Merit Stage: This final stage highlights the impact of the previous stages on the hotel's profitability, particularly in terms of guest behavioral intention and preferences. The positive brand image associated with the hotel's sustainability efforts attracts environmentally conscious guests, contributing to increased revenue and customer loyalty.

The WORM Model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the successful adoption of vermicomposting as a sustainable practice within the hospitality industry. It emphasizes the importance of management commitment, optimization of processes, renewable resource utilization, and the positive impact on brand image and profitability.

The study's findings align with existing literature on the benefits of vermicomposting and sustainable practices in the hospitality industry. The hotel's experience demonstrates that vermicomposting not only contributes to waste reduction and cost savings but also enhances brand image and attracts environmentally conscious guests.

This research concludes that vermicomposting is a viable and effective sustainable practice for the hospitality industry. The selected hotel's successful implementation of vermicomposting, as evidenced by the WORM Model, underscores its potential for profitability and sustainability benefits. Management commitment and employee engagement are crucial for the successful adoption of vermicomposting. Optimization of processes and promotion of a circular economy are essential for maximizing the benefits of vermicomposting. Integration of vermicomposting with other sustainable practices, such as renewable energy and resource utilization, enhances overall sustainability efforts. The positive brand image associated with sustainable practices attracts environmentally conscious guests and contributes to increased profitability.

The findings of this study have several implications for the hospitality industry, particularly for small-to medium-sized establishments in Metro Manila. Hotels should consider adopting vermicomposting as a sustainable waste management practice. Management should prioritize sustainability as a core value and actively engage employees in its implementation. A circular economy approach should be adopted to maximize resource efficiency and minimize waste. Integration of vermicomposting with other sustainable practices should be explored to enhance overall sustainability efforts.

Hotels should actively communicate their sustainability initiatives to attract environmentally conscious guests and enhance their brand image. Furthermore, this research suggests potential areas for future studies, such as the integration of natural pollinators in urban vermicomposting setups and the feasibility of heat-energy conversion mechanisms for composting machines. By embracing sustainable practices like vermicomposting, the hospitality industry can contribute to a greener future while reaping the benefits of improved profitability and enhanced brand image.

This study provides valuable insights into the successful adoption of vermicomposting in a hotel

setting. However, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The qualitative case study approach focused on a single five-star hotel in Metro Manila, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, particularly smaller establishments or those in different regions. Future research could explore the applicability of the WORM model across diverse hotel types and locations. Additionally, a longitudinal study could examine the long-term financial and environmental impacts of vermicomposting in the hospitality industry.

The study primarily focused on vermicomposting and its integration with other sustainability initiatives. Future research could delve deeper into the relationship between specific sustainable practices and their impact on hotel profitability and guest satisfaction. Investigating the role of employee training and engagement in promoting sustainability could also be valuable. Furthermore, exploring the potential for technological advancements, such as heat-energy conversion from vermicomposting, could open up new avenues for sustainable practices in the hospitality sector. By addressing these limitations and pursuing future research directions, a more comprehensive understanding of the role of vermicomposting and sustainability in the hotel industry can be achieved.

Keywords: Vermicomposting, Sustainability, Hospitality Industry, WORM Model, Profitability

PGRC-009

The Mediating Role of Societal Interaction in the Relationship Between Physical Infrastructure Modifications of Quick Service Restaurants and Satisfaction of Differently Abled Individuals in Manila

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Abstract

Modern eating habits have evolved beyond basic and utilitarian needs; aesthetics, presentation, and overall experience of food consumption have become increasingly important. In this context, fast-food restaurants have emerged as significant players in the global restaurant industry, attracting substantial consumer interest. Nevertheless, the growth of these businesses has exposed some barriers to access, especially for the physically challenged. Although these establishments are expected to provide common kinds of dining facilities, they are not able to address the needs of people with disabilities, thus limiting their chances to have positive dining experiences. Fast foods are present in the Philippines as one of the most dominant types of restaurants due to this, fast foods are now a part of the country's dining. These are normally preferred due to their low costs, ease of access and flexible locations thus suitable for a wide demographic. Nonetheless, there is the need to address and examine the aspects of access and accommodation to people with disabilities in these facilities. However, today, there are several hurdles that constrain the part of their lives that persons with disabilities can experience, these dining experiences. This gap requires an understanding of how structural adjustments to build environment together with social interactions bear on the satisfaction of disabled customers in this particularity.

There are hardly facilities like ramps, wide doors and accessible restrooms which are very crucial for wheelchair bound or disabled persons. Nevertheless, in the cases where such features are available, they usually do not meet the standards that should be bothering themselves, which in turn means that they are not very helpful. For instance, ramps may include features such as having a slope that is hard to manage or even live with is another major one. Likewise, it is possible that the width of restrooms is not sufficient to allow entrance to a wheelchair which limits the freedom and the convenience of disabled guests.

The layout and design of fast-food restaurants further exacerbate these challenges. Frequently, the interior spaces of these establishments are arranged in a manner that prioritizes efficiency and maximizes seating capacity, often at the expense of accessibility. Small and tight spaces such as aisles, and long tables properly stacked or high counters are barriers to physically challenged persons wherein they will not be in a position to navigate the space around independently. Furthermore, these choices seem not to factor in all customers' needs, especially those customers with disabilities who may benefit from specific designs that meet their needs.

Although physical infrastructure modification is key in increasing accessibility of fast-food restaurants for differently abled population, it's not enough for increasing their satisfaction levels altogether. Human conduct, or more precisely, staff's and other customers' conduct is a very important factor that defines the overall value of dining experience. In this case, this study shall hypothesize that societal interaction forms a variable that mediates the relationship between physical accessibility and customers' satisfaction.

A series of friendly, respect-maintaining, and supportive societal interaction can also improve the effectiveness of modifications to physical elements in infrastructure to satisfaction outcomings. On the other hand, abusive or inattentiveness, prejudice, or other forms of societal interaction are a complete turn off for physically disabled depending on the appreciation of the assistive structures put

in place.

The approach adopted for the research is positivist in nature meaning that it focuses more on observation and analysis of facts. A purposive sampling of 197 differently abled individuals who often eat at fast-food restaurants in Manila was chosen. The data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equations Modeling (PLS-SEM) to understand the variables and to test the mediating role of societal interaction regarding overall satisfaction.

The research results thus open up understandings of the challenges presented by the market to the differently abled when seeking fast-food restaurants in Manila. Modifications including ramps, accessible restrooms and barriers free aisles were proven to have a direct correlation with the satisfaction of a disabled client. It was likewise noted that these physical modifications alone are insufficient to guarantee a high level of satisfaction. More specifically, societal interaction was established to mediate the relationship between these physical infrastructure changes and overall satisfaction of differently abled individuals.

The researcher found that societal interaction plays a significant direct effect in the relationship between physical access and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, positive societal interactions in areas such as customer-staff and customers' interactions added to the positive impact of physical accommodation changes. This means that it is the societal interaction which ensures that public facilities which may be physically accessible to disabled customers are effectively made into experiences which are enjoyable by the customers.

The interaction with society in a negative manner was also seen to reduce the perceived value of physical attributes, and therefore the level of satisfaction. This highlights the need for creating respect and acceptance in the employment of the facilities serving the fast foods, as the quality of social relations complement or hinder the upgrading of physical characteristics to accommodate the disabled.

The findings made from this study has important managerial implications for restaurant managers, policy makers, and scholars all over the world. From the practitioner's point of view, the research draws attention to the fact that restaurant managers should focus on making restaurants physically accessible as well as encouraging positive sociability within their business premises. Those changes may be structural in nature to accommodate a physically challenged persons' access to fast-food restaurants, but strategic measures should also be adopted in an organization and followed by customers to improve staff efficient and effective relationship with customers including those with a physically challenged disability.

Additionally, it is recommended to enhance the general understanding of societal interactions globally to include it into the regulation of the accessibility for public spaces. Where the existing laws and regulations are understood mostly in the framework of spatial or world accessibility standards, it is necessary to consider the function of societal relations in the concretization of generally understood accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Fast-food businesses must be accessible to all customers in terms of physical layout, policies and practices, and other impediments.

This research suggests that improvement in the physical infrastructure of fast-food restaurants in Manila definitely plays one part to boost satisfaction of the differently abled through infrastructural modifications but could also portray improvements in societal interactions. With reference to the accessibility of the fast-food restaurants, efforts must be made to ensure that the settings are friendly for all clients in terms of physical arrangement, policies and practices, and other barriers. The findings of this study are useful in enhancing accessibility and inclusiveness in the restaurant business. Further studies should examine the long-term efficacy of these interventions and consider applying them to other hospitality sectors to promote a society with equal opportunities and a more inclusive society.

Keywords: Accessibility, PWD, Societal Interaction, Fast-food restaurants, Facilities, Physical infrastructure

PGRC-010

Mediation Analysis of Customers' Amazement between Quality and Behavioral Intention: The Case of Coffee Shops in the Province of Bulacan

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Abstract

Travel Cafe Philippines was promoted by the Philippines' Department of Tourism in 2011. The initiative used specialized coffee shops in the City of Makati as a starting point along with other cities to promote the Philippines as a top travel destination to visit coffee shops. Notwithstanding the pandemic the nation had endured, Philippine provinces are developing (privately owned) coffee shops, which could potentially contribute to the growth of the tourism sector in the region, especially in the Province of Bulacan. Due to its historical significance and rich cultural and artistic past, Bulacan has fast grown in popularity as a vacation destination. A wide variety of excellent local crafts and cuisines can be found in the area, along with historical sites, charming traditional residences and churches, scenic natural landmarks, religious sites, lively and exciting festivals, swimming and other themed activities, and religious attractions. Additionally, it boasts a number of hotels, restaurants, resorts, and other leisure amenities. With the rise in popularity of themed restaurants, the province saw a large number of cafes open, especially in the cities of Baliuag, Malolos, Meycauayan, and San Jose Del Monte. Retaining customers is becoming harder as competition increases. Coffee shop businesses may consider qualities that could influence their customers' behavioral patterns. The researcher has concentrated on the quality of themed coffee shops particularly physical environment, food quality and service quality and its direct effect in the behavioral intentions of customers for the most part of loyalty, revisit intention and word of mouth as well as the mediating effect of customers' amazement between the two variables.

The study aims to comprehend how customers behave in themed coffee shops in order for the hospitality and tourism sector to strive for the development of novel product concepts. This will also help the industry expand the range of business ideas, consumer demands, and future business strategies because the study gives background information on the key factors influencing the sector, like quality and behavioral intention. Given that four of the province's cities are on the verge of experiencing rapidly increasing urbanization, the study could help urban planners create communities that will boost the growth of coffee shops and foster greater community involvement. These cities stand to gain since one of their main growth goals is tourism and hospitality.

A cross-sectional quantitative research design was used for this study. To evaluate the level of customer amazement, restaurant quality, and behavioral intentions, the researcher has employed descriptive statistics with the use of weighted mean. The relationship between the quality of the restaurant and the customers' behavioral intentions in themed coffee shops (TCS) long with the mediating effect of customer amazement was analyzed through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM) using Haye's PROCESS Model 4. The parameters of this study namely, customer amazement, quality and behavioral intention were all treated as latent constructs. Each of the latent constructs have their corresponding manifests variables. A total of 250 respondents from the customers of themed coffee shops completed the survey questionnaire instrument. The major inclusion criteria for the respondents of the study are that

they have at least visited a themed coffee shop in the Province of Bulacan. All respondents are of legal age. The responses were gathered through the use of Google forms. The respondents were identified using referral method or snowball sampling technique.

The researcher found that there is a direct effect in quality (food quality, service quality and physical environment) to behavioral intentions (loyalty, revisit intention and word of mouth). A significant mediating effect of customers' amazement between quality and behavioral intentions is observed in this study. The study also proved that food quality, service quality and physical environment are important qualities to be considered by the coffee shop owners. To be able to deliver high-quality food, themed coffee shop operators carefully analyzed and verified the meal's taste, nutritional value, aroma, appearance, and extensive menu selection. The employees at the themed coffee shop went above and beyond to provide excellent customer service by precisely delivering the food in a timely manner and by being willing to help guests feel comfortable during their meal and lastly the physical environment of the themed coffee shops gave customers an experience of dining in a space that is neat and well kept, provided an ambient music and appealing interior designs. The aforementioned quality has a direct effect on the customers' behavioral intentions considering that they have demonstrated their commitment to themed coffee shops by self-identifying as loyal customers, believing the location they stayed to be their favorite place to visit, and returning time and time again; The customer routinely visited to the themed coffee shop, added it to their list of sites to see in Bulacan, and made plans to return thereafter. Aside from that, the customers' amazement had a mediating effect between coffee shop quality and customer behavioral intention by offering attributes that inspired, relaxed, amazed, fascinated, and provided them a sense or feelings that is greater than satisfaction by the themed coffee shops' quality.

The study also found out that customers' amazement has a significant mediation effect between quality and behavioral intention of customers in themed coffee shops. The mediator customer amazement was measured and identified by knowing if the customer felt amazed, fascinated, inspired and built a positive emotion with the coffee shop. This suggests that customer amazement is a significant intervening factor between quality and customers' behavioral intention. Customers that are amazed, fascinated and inspired during their visits to themed coffee shops have developed strong emotional connections to the place. This connotes that customer amazement parameter is an enabling strong intervening factor in order to have a strong link between coffee shop quality and customers' behavioral intention. The positive emotions that customers have developed in coffee shops is a major determinant for their future patronage as well as passing a good word of mouth and eventually express loyalty to the place. This study has confirmed prior literatures that customer amazement has indeed a positive and significant effect in the link between coffee shop quality and behavioral intention.

Keywords: themed coffee shops, customer amazement, coffee shop quality, behavioral intention, customer fascination

PGRC-011

Unveiling the Viability, Challenges and Opportunities of Campus–Based Tourism: A Case Study of Visayas State University

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Abstract

Campus-based tourism is a new type of tourism that focuses on educational institutions as tourist destinations (Cheng et al., 2020). Many colleges worldwide view their campus landscapes as art, part of local culture, and a key driver of university-campus tourism. Buildings can leave different impressions, affecting tourists' views of the university, enhancing campuses' visual and sensory experiences, and guiding campus tourism resource development. The interconnection between university tourism and landscape planning expansion can have a positive social impact and potentially boost several municipal sectors. The emergence of academic landscape design and tourism demonstrates that landscape appreciation is no longer a privilege for the few but a daily aspect of life. The economic growth campus tourism has brought to China has led to its widespread practice (Cheng et al.,2020).

Visayas State University is a campus situated between the mountains and the sea. The architectural design of its buildings mirrors the natural landscape. Due to its achievements in agriculture research and innovation, it has gained popularity and attracts local, international, and educational tours. The tourists visiting the campus can enjoy the abundance of different sites in the mountains and the sea, as well as the several research centers on campus. The university envisions being globally competitive in science, technology, and environmental conservation. In line with this vision, the university wanted to explore the possibility of offering ecotourism, given its rainforest and marine sanctuary. The university welcomes visitors and guests, with numerous tourists frequenting the campus for a variety of leisure and educational activities. Records shows that VSU's influx of tourists open up its viability and opportunity to offer campus-based tourism. Through this, the university can open the possibility of making the university a destination, give the stakeholders an initial outlook, and widen their perspective on the benefits of campus-based tourism and its contribution to the community. This study aims to achieve the following:

1. Understand the perceptions, attitudes, and opinions of key stakeholders regarding the potential to create immersive and memorable experiences through campus-based tourism at VSU.
2. Leverage VSU's unique characteristics, resources, and assets to design and provide captivating experiences that make the campus-based tourist experience at VSU distinctive and appealing.
3. Identify the anticipated social, cultural, and economic consequences resulting from the introduction of campus-based tourism at VSU.
4. Identify the strategies and recommendations do key stakeholders propose to design and deliver unique and memorable experiences promoting campus-based tourism at VSU; and
5. Understand that campus tourism can contribute to the image and competitiveness of the university.

Methodology

The study will employ a qualitative research approach that integrates case studies and action research, utilizing a semi-structured interview method for data collection. On the other hand, in

order to understand the operation of the accommodation and resort on campus, this study will also use an action research approach. The project also proposes the unification of the accommodation, food, and resort establishments. The study is conducted at Visayas State University, Brgy. Pangasugan, Baybay City, Leyte. This study will employ purposive sampling to specifically target the stakeholders of the institution that will best help the researcher understand the problem during the data gathering. The core question "Why did you visit the campus? What did you like about the campus? And stories and experiences shared by the informants will be gathered. Data and field notes gathered will be encoded in a database for coding purposes and easy access for future research use. The data gathered will be stored, organized, and encoded and it will be themed and coded according to the word it represents. The coded terms will be described according to the theme they represent, which is essential to the findings of the study.

Results

The university's viability as a destination is the most important factor in considering a campus as a tourist destination. The perceptions of the stakeholders are essential in decision making because it is the top management that will oversee the activity. Therefore, the opinions of university stakeholders on the projects and possible opportunities for the institution's welfare are crucial in this study. The results of the study are categorized into the following themes:

"Viability"

Visayas State University (VSU) has been attracting students for years due to its environment, people, cultural and historical sites, and its top-performing agricultural and technological sciences. Campus tourism consists of four components: campus as a destination, knowledge-based tourism, urban tourism, and building and landscape architecture. VSU's unique architecture, aesthetic scenery, rich cultural heritage, and academic atmosphere make it an attractive destination for tourists. City Tourism Officer believes VSU's strategic location between mountains and sea makes it an asset for Baybay tourism. The Student Council President sees VSU as a big university with lots of opportunities for students to learn, socialize, and interact with others. VSU has been hosting scientific forums and academic symposiums, making campus-based tourism a significant opportunity for the university. Establishment managers see it as an opportunity for accommodation and food establishments to build linkages outside the university. Stakeholder perception can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives, and policies should bring together as many stakeholders as possible to ensure the development of a tourist area. Using the Department of Tourism's checklist and guidelines can help to determine VSU's viability for campus-based tourism.

"Tourist-Ready Facility"

Visayas State University (VSU), dubbed the Very Scenic University, is a university that follows the CHED mandate for instruction, research, and extension. With its abundant environment, VSU is considering a new role as an academic institution. The university offers various attractions and activities for tourists, including hiking, camping, biking, and swimming. However, VSU faces challenges in implementing tourism activities, such as a lack of parking, comfort rooms, and rest areas. The university is also hesitant to accept tourists due to safety concerns and a lack of policies and procedures. The City Tourism Officer emphasizes the need for prioritizing facility improvements, policies, and guidelines to make the university a destination. Stakeholders are working on improving parking, rest areas, and comfort rooms for tourists, as well as crafting guidelines to make the university ready as a destination.

"Challenges"

Tourism has both positive and negative impacts on social and environmental aspects. Positive introduction of campus-based tourism are, it provide students with exposure to tour guiding and

entertaining guests, improve service quality, and increase awareness of historical sites and educational contributions. However, there are potential negative social impacts, such as security concerns, class disturbances, and adapted tourist practices.

Campus-based tourism can also promote environmental conservation and awareness, as VSU's abundant nature serves as an example for sustainable development projects. However, the OIC President warns that, if not controlled, tourists can cause waste and resource exploitation. Tourism often puts pressure on natural resources, resulting in overconsumption, stress on local land use, and pressure on endangered species. VSU is implementing sustainable innovations to become a green university, focusing on resilient design, energy conservation strategies, and enhancing the thermal efficiency of buildings. Social components of resilient design include fostering stakeholder collaboration and establishing robust networks to raise community awareness about climate change risks. To mitigate these negative effects, the need for stakeholder support and hands-on planning and implementation is essential.

"Opportunities"

Financial assumptions were used and presented to plan for improvements in campus-based tourism, a potential solution to improve university facilities and services. Entrance fees, according to stakeholders, will fund maintenance, services, and personnel salaries. Tour packages will be saleable, and collaboration between stakeholders is crucial. Campus-based tourism can increase financial income for the university and its people, as it can boost popularity, improve facilities, and attract more visitors. Additionally, it can boost IGP income and university promotions, increase the influx of tourists, and extend the working days for job-order personnel. Students can also entertain international students and build linkages with those from outside the university. Head of DTHM believes that campus-based tourism is a priority project that can generate income for both the university and surrounding communities. Four different tour themes and an integrated campus based tourism framework is made.

Conclusion

Understanding the nature and new niche of tourism, the university stakeholders' perception find it viable and its potential in creating an immersive and memorable experiences through campus-based tourism in VSU. Results also shows that there are identified tourist areas in the campus showcasing its unique characteristics, resources and assets, thus, creating a service design or customer journey can leverage and provide captivating experiences that will make campus-based tourism in VSU distinctive and appealing. Tourism may have positive and negative contribution to the area however, if carefully planned and guidelines are created, the anticipated social, environmental and cultural consequences will be alleviated. The stakeholders already understand the things to improve and innovate to make VSU tourist ready, on top of it is the improvement of facilities and accommodation that will bring comfort and convenience to the tourists must be prioritized in order to deliver unique and memorable experiences promoting campus-based tourism at VSU. Campus-based tourism will increase the university's image and competitiveness in the national and international arena as it will be the first if not, to offer such tourism activity where academic, travel and leisure activities are all in one.

Implication

This study implies that when an academic institution is viable to become a tourist destination, campus base tourism can happen. This study is for the greater contribution of knowledge on the same topic. This will also help other researchers who are interested in campus-based tourism for future improvement of the study in related field.

Keywords: academic institution, campus tourism, campus-based tourism, university tourism, viable

PGRC-012

Investigating The Motivational Factors Influencing Plant-Based Consumers' Intentions To Patronise Plant-Based Restaurant

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Abstract

Environmental concerns are increasingly influencing consumer choices, particularly in dietary consumption, leading to a rising demand for plant-based food as people become more aware of the environmental impact of livestock, especially cattle, on greenhouse gas emissions and global warming (Grasso et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there is limited understanding of the motivations behind plant-based dining choices, particularly within the Malaysian context (Darmalinggam & Kaliannan, 2020). The study examines the motivations driving plant-based consumers' intentions to patronise plant-based restaurants in Malaysia by integrating the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Norm Activation Model (NAM). The contextual framework in this study highlights the dynamic interplay between the internal and external motives that drive plant-based dining intentions in Malaysia. By integrating TPB and NAM, the study provides a nuanced understanding of consumer behaviour in a multicultural and environmentally conscious Malaysia market. At the same time, it offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing pro-environmental dining behaviour, taking into account both internal factors as personal determinants and external factors as social determinants.

This study investigates the key factors that shape Malaysian plant-based intentions to patronise plant-based restaurants. Additionally, this study explored the major role of the NAM and the TPB in understanding consumers' intentions to visit plant-based restaurants. The primary objective of this study is to identify the most significant and impactful constructs influencing plant-based consumers' behavioural intentions to patronise at plant-based food service establishments. (Bai et al., 2023). Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) identify internal factors, such as problem awareness and personal norms, that motivate pro-environmental dining intentions among Malaysians; (2) examine external factors, including subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, that shape pro-environmental dining intentions in the context of plant-based restaurant patronage; and (3) evaluate the relative importance of each factor in the intention to engage in pro-environmental plant-based dining. This study utilised the NAM and the TPB to explore the factors influencing the intentions of Malaysian plant-based consumers in the decision-making process regarding patronising plant-based restaurants. The hypotheses based on NAM and TPB constructs were tested and evaluated for the goodness of fit of the proposed model, examining the predictors within these frameworks. Additionally, the study investigated the mediating effect toward motivating plant-based dining and the impact on the intention to visit plant-based restaurants. By identifying the key influencing factors, the study provides valuable insights into the primary motivations driving the behaviour of plant-based consumers in Malaysia.

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling to test the proposed hypotheses. Data from 472 participants were collected through an online survey, targeting Malaysian and non-Malaysian residents aged 18 and above who currently reside in Malaysia. The survey captured data on diverse dietary habits, with a focus on individuals interested in plant-based diets. The data collection aimed to measure both internal and external motivations influencing dining decisions. Utilising a purposive sampling approach, the researchers selected respondents who met the study's criteria to ensure the sample was representative of individuals exhibiting diverse levels of commitment to plant-based diets. The data analysis evaluated the measurement and structural models, assessed the reliability and validity of constructs, and determined the overall

model fit. This analysis provided insights into the relative significant of each motive in shaping pro-environmental dining intentions among the respondents (Hair et al., 2016; Hopwood et al., 2022).

The analysis suggests that both internal and external motivations are significant in shaping dining intentions, but the relative influence varies. Internal factors such as personal norms appear to exert a more substantial impact on dining choices, whereas external factors may function as either facilitators or impediments depending on the prevailing social and logistical circumstances. The analysis indicated that social influence warranted further exploration, as personal moral considerations emerged as strong motivators for individuals when deciding to patronise at plant-based restaurants. It aligns with previous findings that ethical considerations regarding environmental sustainability are potent drivers of plant-based dining behaviour. However, the influence of wider social norms, including those from family, friends, and government initiatives, was less significant. This study suggests that the decision to patronise plant-based restaurants is primarily driven by personal ethics and values, rather than external factors. Nevertheless, these social influences may still pose challenges within the given context (Wang et al., 2018). The analysis indicated that social influence warranted further exploration, as personal moral considerations emerged as strong motivators for individuals when deciding to patronise at plant-based restaurants. It aligns with previous findings that ethical considerations regarding environmental sustainability are potent drivers of plant-based dining behaviour (Fechner et al., 2023; Park et al., 2022). However, the influence of wider social norms, including those from family, friends, and government initiatives, was less significant. This study suggests that the decision to patronise plant-based restaurants is primarily driven by personal ethics and values, rather than external factors. Nevertheless, these social influences may still pose challenges within the given context (Park et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2022; Hammami et al., 2023; Camilleri et al., 2023).

This study contributes to the literature on plant-based and sustainable consumption by examining the motivations behind pro-environmental dining behaviour in Malaysia. The results highlight the significance of both internal and external motives in shaping consumer intentions to choose vegetarian dining options. By integrating the TPB and the NAM, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how awareness, personal values, social influences, and perceived control interact to drive sustainable behaviours (Han & Hyun, 2017; Auza & Mouloudj, 2021). First, this study holds significant implications for practitioners and policymakers aiming to promote plant-based consumption. This study highlighted the benefits of plant-based diets for the environment, motivating individuals to make more sustainable dining choices and contributing to broader sustainability efforts (Wirsenius et al., 2010; Chen & Deng, 2016; Salmivaara et al., 2022; Hammami et al., 2023). Secondly, the findings offer valuable insights for restaurant owners and policymakers seeking to increase the adoption of plant-based dining. By comprehending the key internal and external factors motivating consumers to patronise plant-based restaurants, policymakers and food service operators can devise more effective strategies to promote sustainable dining behaviours among consumers (Han & Hyun, 2017; Garnett et al., 2019; Borusiak et al., 2022). Finally, the Operators can refine the menu offerings, service delivery, and marketing approaches to better cater to the ethical and environmental concerns of the target market, thereby expanding the customer base and cultivating stronger patron loyalty (Chen & Deng, 2016). For instance, making plant-based dishes more appealing and accessible through targeted marketing and menu engineering may catalyse greater adoption of eco-friendly dining practices among consumers (Verma & Chandra, 2018; Fechner et al., 2023).

Keywords: Motivations, Consumer Intention, Plant-based Dining, Theory of Planned Behaviour, and Norm Activation Model.

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PGRC-013

Destination Experience, Environmental Sustainability Initiatives, And Revisit Intention: A Mediating Model For An Exclusive Tourist Destination In The Philippines

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Abstract

The tourism industry is a vital contributor to the global economy, with international arrivals growing from 25 million in 1950 to a projected 1.8 billion by 2030. As tourism continues to expand, there is a heightened focus on sustainability, balancing economic growth with social responsibility and environmental protection. Sustainable tourism initiatives, such as reducing carbon footprints, promoting local culture, and implementing eco-friendly practices, are essential for enhancing visitor experiences and ensuring the long-term viability of tourist destinations. In the Philippines, a country known for its rich natural and cultural heritage, the government has made significant strides in promoting sustainable tourism through various programs, including the Department of Tourism's Sustainable Tourism Development Project. However, despite these efforts, the Philippines faces ongoing challenges, such as pollution and habitat loss, which pose a threat to its sustainability ranking and attractiveness to tourists. This study aims to explore the relationships between destination experience, environmental sustainability initiatives, and revisit intention among tourists in the Philippines, focusing specifically on exclusive tourist destinations like those in Caliraya, Laguna. The primary objective is to understand how tourists' perceptions of sustainability initiatives impact their overall experience and their subsequent intentions to revisit these destinations. The study adopts a quantitative research design, employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data and test the hypotheses. The research utilized a causal approach to measure the relationships among the key constructs: Destination Experience, Environmental Sustainability Initiatives, and Revisit Intention. A sample of 368 respondents was selected using a simple random sampling method. The adequacy of the sample size was confirmed through the inverse square root and gamma exponential methods, which indicated a range of 329 to 398 as the minimum requirement. Data collection was carried out using a self-constructed questionnaire, which was validated for reliability and consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability measures demonstrated high validity across all constructs, including Destination Image, Sentimentality, Local Attachment, Environmental Sustainability Initiatives, Perceived Risks, and Revisit Intention. Each construct was measured using a 4-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated "No Extent" and 4 represented "To a Great Extent." The results of the study reveal a nuanced picture of the relationships between the constructs. The analysis indicates that the relationship between environmental sustainability initiatives and revisit intention is weak but positive, suggesting that tourists who perceive a destination as environmentally sustainable are slightly more likely to return. The findings also show very weak effects across all relationships examined, implying that while environmental sustainability initiatives positively influence revisit intention, the impact is minimal. Sentimentality, or the emotional connection tourists feel towards a destination, was found to have a very weak positive effect on both environmental sustainability initiatives and revisit intention. Local attitudes demonstrated a similarly weak positive effect on sustainability initiatives but a weak negative impact on revisit intention, indicating that local perceptions might slightly deter repeat visits. Additionally, perceived risks associated with visiting the destination, such as concerns about safety or environmental conditions, were found to have a very weak negative effect on both sustainability initiatives and revisit intention. This underscores the importance of effective risk management strategies in tourism to mitigate potential negative

perceptions and enhance visitor satisfaction. These findings provide valuable insights into the complex interplay of factors influencing tourist behaviors and perceptions, particularly in the context of environmental sustainability. While the relationships identified are generally weak, they underscore the importance of fostering positive emotional connections, addressing local attitudes, and managing perceived risks to enhance the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives and encourage repeat visits. The study suggests that incorporating sustainability into the core offerings of tourist destinations can enhance their appeal and foster visitor loyalty, a critical factor as the global tourism landscape increasingly shifts towards eco-friendly practices. In conclusion, the study highlights the need for targeted initiatives that promote environmental sustainability while simultaneously enhancing the overall tourist experience. Future research should explore additional variables and more potent interactions to better capture the complexities influencing revisit intentions. By understanding and leveraging the dynamics between destination experience, environmental sustainability initiatives, and revisit intention, tourism stakeholders can create a more sustainable and appealing environment for tourists. This approach not only improves visitor experiences but also ensures the long-term viability of tourist destinations in the Philippines and beyond. The study's implications are significant for tourism operators, policymakers, and community stakeholders. Several strategic recommendations emerge from the findings to enhance the effectiveness of environmental sustainability initiatives and improve revisit intentions among tourists in the Philippines. First, tourism stakeholders should actively promote sustainable practices that enhance the destination's image. This can be achieved through marketing campaigns that highlight eco-friendly initiatives, conservation efforts, and community engagement. By showcasing a commitment to sustainability, destinations can attract environmentally conscious travelers and improve their overall appeal. Second, fostering emotional connections with tourists is crucial. Tourism operators should create experiences that resonate emotionally with visitors, such as storytelling that emphasizes local culture, history, and environmental stewardship, as well as opportunities for tourists to engage in community-based activities that foster a sense of belonging and connection to the destination. Third, it is essential to address perceived risks among tourists by enhancing safety measures, providing clear information about health and environmental conditions, and ensuring transparent communication regarding sustainability practices. By addressing these concerns, destinations can build trust and encourage repeat visits. Fourth, engaging local communities is vital, as local attitudes significantly shape sustainability initiatives and tourist experiences. Involving local communities in the planning and implementation of tourism strategies can foster a sense of ownership and pride, leading to more positive attitudes towards sustainability. Training programs and workshops can empower locals to participate actively in sustainable tourism practices. Fifth, implementing feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights into areas for improvement. Establishing channels for tourists to provide feedback on their experiences, such as regular surveys and focus groups, can help identify perceptions of sustainability initiatives and their impact on revisit intentions. This feedback can inform ongoing adjustments to strategies and practices. Lastly, increasing awareness of the importance of sustainability in tourism among both tourists and local communities is essential. Educational programs that highlight the benefits of sustainable practices can encourage responsible behavior among visitors and foster a culture of sustainability within local populations. Building partnerships among government agencies, private sector players, and non-governmental organizations can enhance the effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. Collaborative efforts can lead to the development of comprehensive policies and programs that address environmental challenges while promoting tourism growth. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders in the Philippine tourism industry can create a more sustainable and appealing environment for tourists, ultimately leading to increased revisit intentions and the long-term viability of tourist destinations.

Keywords: Destination Experience, Environmental Sustainability Initiatives, Revisit Intention

PGRC-014

Evaluating Riyadh's Tourism Growth and Economic Diversification under Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Strategies and Outcomes

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Abstract

The tourism industry is a vital component of national economic development, facilitating growth, cultural exchange, and the enhancement of international relations. Historically, Saudi Arabia's tourism has been predominantly centered around religious pilgrimages, particularly to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. However, with the launch of Vision 2030, the Saudi government has embarked on a strategic shift aimed at diversifying its economy by expanding the tourism sector beyond its religious boundaries. Riyadh, the capital city, is a focal point in this transformative journey, where extensive developments and strategic initiatives are being implemented to position it as a top global tourist destination. This study seeks to evaluate the strategies and outcomes of Riyadh's tourism growth under Vision 2030, with a particular focus on economic diversification, the impact on local communities, and tourist satisfaction.

Research Background

Vision 2030 is Saudi Arabia's long-term strategy with the goal of the reduced dependence on the oil and gas export business. Of course, one of the strategic guidelines of this vision is the further growth of the tourism sector, which should contribute to the country's economic development, job creation, and the promotion of a positive image of the country in the world. Riyadh fall under this region, and it has experienced many tourism efforts towards achieving these objectives. The city has experienced innovations in trends and the expansion and improvement of facilities as well as formulation of policies for both internal and external tourist markets. However, there is a scanty literature that provides a synthesis of the assessment of these measures in their capability to deliver the objectives of Vision 2030. To address this gap, this research aims to do the following: Offering an account of the strategies used in Riyadh and the effects of these strategies on the tourism industry, economic diversification, and community welfare in Riyadh.

Problem Statement

Despite the improvements recorded in the tourism sector in Riyadh under Vision 2030, studies focusing on the assessment of the particular strategies as well as their results are scarce. It cannot be doubted that the expansion of tourism services in Riyadh has definitely stimulated economic growth of the city and the state in general, however, certain questions arise as to whether these strategies facilitate the accomplishment of economic diversification objectives and whether the increased economic value coming from the development of tourism industry is delivered back to the people of Riyadh. Also, the goal that can be seen in the strategy of the sustainable tourism is to attract tourists, but it is also necessary to know what governs the satisfaction of the tourist and, while expanding the tourism sector, it is not useful for the negative impacts on the society of the locals. These gaps are filled in this study because it assesses the degree to which Riyadh's tourism promotion is successful in achieving diversification objectives, explores the social and cultural implications of tourism on locals, and reviews the factors affecting tourists' satisfaction.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the effectiveness of tourism initiatives in Riyadh in attracting domestic and international tourists.

2. To evaluate the economic impact of these initiatives in terms of job creation, income generation, and overall economic growth.
3. To examine the social and cultural effects of tourism development on local communities in Riyadh, including changes in social norms, cultural practices, and community well-being.
4. To identify and analyze the factors influencing tourist satisfaction in Riyadh, contributing to the long-term success of the tourism sector.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research is quantitative and is based on a positivist paradigm that is appropriate for developing causal relationships of variables and offers a well-structured analysis of the impacts of tourism development programs. A evaluative research design is therefore adopted and utilized to analyze the effectiveness of the policies and strategies which have been formulated under Vision 2030 for the enhancement of the tourism sector of Riyadh. The data will be collected through constructing online survey where the sample size would be 385. The target respondents for the study are the local citizens, tourists and the workers in the tourism sector to capture all the aspects of the discussion. A technique of sample selection that will be applied in this study is the simple random sampling which will help in reducing biasness. The questions included in the survey will be pertinent to the assessment of the impact of the different initiatives on economic, social and satisfaction aspects. A quantitative approach will also be used in the study where descriptive and inferential analysis will be done using statistical package software such as the SPSS and Excel. To analyze the data, descriptive analysis will be used to describe the data while inferential analysis will be used to determine the relationship between the variables and hence the impact that the tourism initiatives are having.

Findings

It is therefore believed that the result of this study shall be useful in assessing the effectiveness of Riyadh in implementing its tourism agenda under Vision 2030. Some of the groups expect the study to show the level of contributions of these initiatives to economic diversification focusing on employment and income generation. The study will also reveal the social and economic benefits of tourism for the growth of the city especially the reduction of the over reliance on oil sales. Alternatively, it may also reveal negative effects linked with the growth of tourism industry in developing countries and its effects on the social structure of the communities. They will focus on matters like alterations in social relations, the destruction of cultures as well as ways through which the change will have a negative impact on the welfare of the community. At the same time, the research will reveal factors affecting satisfaction of the tourists, hence understanding which factors in tourism are valued more by the tourist. This information will be important for those policy makers as well as tourism developers operating in Riyadh since this will help them improve the tourism experience and guarantee the sustainable growth of the sector in the city.

Conclusion

Evidently, this research will provide a valuable contribution in appraising the viability of Riyadh's tourism endeavours under Vision 2030. Analyzing the effect of these measures for economic diversification, local communities, and tourists' satisfaction level, the study will inform policymakers and stakeholders involved in the formation of the tourism industry. The results are going to demonstrate what has already been done, and what directions require further investment to make sure that positive tourism development impacts are going to be sustained in the long run and are going to be equally beneficial to all regions. Based on this research, the findings will present specific policy guidelines for improving the occurrence of tourism in Riyadh and thereby, contribute to the redevelopment of the city into a tourist hub state in Saudi Arabia under the state's vision of 2030.

Keywords*:* Tourism Growth, Economic Diversification, Vision 2030, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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PGRC-015

The Mediating Role Of Destination Satisfaction In Tourists' Behavioral Post-Visit Outcomes In Philippines

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between tourists' behavioral intentions, destination satisfaction, and post-visit outcomes in Calabarzon, Philippines, focusing on its reputation as a gastronomic destination. As culinary tourism becomes increasingly significant, understanding the factors that influence tourists' experiences, and their subsequent loyalty is critical for the sustainable development of tourism in the region. The primary objective of this research was to explore how tourists' satisfaction with their experience mediates the relationship between their initial behavioral intentions and their post-visit outcomes, such as loyalty and the likelihood of recommending the destination to others. The research utilized a quantitative methodology, specifically employing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyze data collected from surveys conducted among tourists visiting Calabarzon. A diverse sample of respondents was selected, including both local and foreign tourists, to provide a comprehensive understanding of various perspectives on the region's culinary offerings. The survey instrument was developed based on validated scales and items from existing literature to ensure the reliability and validity of the measures. The instrument also underwent extensive pre-testing to identify and correct any ambiguities, thereby ensuring clarity and effectiveness in capturing the relevant data. The findings from the analysis revealed that tourists' behavioral intentions to engage with Calabarzon's culinary scene are significantly influenced by factors such as the authenticity of flavors, cultural immersion, and perceived value. These elements are crucial in shaping tourists' initial desires to visit or revisit the destination. However, destination satisfaction emerged as a key mediating variable in the relationship between these initial intentions and post-visit outcomes. The results indicate that higher levels of satisfaction with the destination significantly enhance the likelihood of tourists exhibiting loyalty behaviors, including intentions to revisit and recommend the destination to others. Memorable dining experiences, exceptional hospitality, and cultural authenticity were identified as the most significant drivers of destination satisfaction. These findings align with the broader literature on tourism, which emphasizes the importance of delivering high-quality, authentic experiences to foster tourist satisfaction and loyalty. The study explored the concept of perceived risk and its impact on tourists' attachment to a destination and their intention to revisit. It was found that even when tourists have strong emotional connections and fond memories of a destination, perceived risks—such as concerns over safety, economic security, or well-being—can deter them from returning. This finding underscores the importance of effective risk management strategies in tourism. Destination managers must consider both the physical and psychological aspects of safety and security to reduce perceived risks and enhance tourists' comfort and confidence in revisiting the destination. The use of PLS-SEM in this study allowed for a comprehensive examination of the complex relationships among multiple variables. This approach was particularly advantageous given the study's focus on predicting dependent variables based on several independent ones and the need to manage smaller sample sizes effectively. The PLS-SEM method integrates various statistical techniques, including regression analysis and structural equation modeling, to provide a robust framework for understanding the dynamics of tourist behavior in relation to gastronomic tourism. The study's findings emphasize the importance of environmental sustainability initiatives in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors. The research demonstrated that tourists' awareness and perceptions of sustainability practices, such as waste management education and the use of locally sourced ingredients, significantly affect their overall satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. Tourists who recognize and value these initiatives are more likely to develop positive perceptions of the destination, which, in turn, enhances their intention to revisit. This

underscores the need for tourism stakeholders to integrate sustainability into their operational strategies, not only to appeal to environmentally conscious travelers but also to enhance the overall attractiveness and competitiveness of the destination. The research also highlighted the role of sentimentality and emotional connection in influencing tourists' experiences and intentions to return. Sentimentality, or the emotional value tourists associate with their experiences, was found to be a significant factor in shaping tourists' attachment to Calabarzon. Tourists who felt a strong sentimental connection to the destination were more likely to have positive revisit intentions. This finding aligns with previous studies that suggest emotional appeal is a powerful driver of tourist behavior and a critical component of effective tourism marketing and experience management. In addition to these psychological factors, the study examined the influence of cognitive evaluations of destination attributes on tourists' intentions to recommend or revisit. Cognitive elements, such as tourists' assessments of the quality of services, the variety of attractions, and the overall image of the destination, were found to play a crucial role in their decision-making processes. Positive evaluations of these attributes were associated with higher levels of satisfaction and stronger intentions to revisit. This suggests that destination managers should focus on enhancing both the tangible and intangible elements of the tourism experience to meet and exceed visitor expectations. Furthermore, the study identified several demographic factors that influence tourists' perceptions and behaviors, including age, gender, and frequency of visits. Correlation analysis revealed significant associations between these demographic characteristics and tourists' perceptions of environmental sustainability initiatives, destination satisfaction, and revisit intentions. For instance, younger tourists and those who frequently visit are more likely to have a positive perception of sustainability practices and a stronger intention to revisit. These findings suggest that tourism marketers should consider demographic trends when developing targeted marketing strategies and designing tourism products. The implications of this study are significant for stakeholders in the tourism industry, particularly in the context of promoting Calabarzon as a leading gastronomic destination. By focusing on the elements that contribute to tourists' satisfaction—such as high-quality service, cultural immersion, and environmental sustainability—destination marketers and operators can better tailor their offerings to meet visitor expectations. This strategic focus not only fosters loyalty but also promotes economic growth by attracting more visitors and encouraging repeat visits. Additionally, the findings underscore the importance of adopting a holistic approach to destination management that integrates environmental, cultural, and experiential factors to create memorable and satisfying tourist experiences. The study also provides valuable insights for policymakers and destination managers looking to enhance the competitiveness of Calabarzon as a gastronomic destination. The results suggest that improving service quality, enhancing cultural and culinary experiences, and effectively managing perceived risks are key strategies for fostering tourist satisfaction and loyalty. In conclusion, this study contributes to the existing literature on gastronomic tourism by providing a nuanced understanding of the factors that influence tourists' behavioral intentions, satisfaction, and loyalty. It highlights the importance of delivering high-quality, authentic, and sustainable experiences to enhance destination satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty. The findings also underscore the need for continued research and data-driven decision-making to monitor trends, preferences, and satisfaction levels among tourists. Such efforts are crucial for developing effective marketing strategies and enhancing the overall tourism experience in Calabarzon. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and incorporating qualitative methods to further explore the nuances of tourists' experiences and their impact on destination loyalty. By implementing these recommendations, Calabarzon can position itself as a premier gastronomic destination, offering visitors authentic culinary experiences, memorable encounters, and sustainable tourism practices that resonate with discerning travelers and foster long-term destination loyalty and economic growth.

Keywords: Behavioral Intentions, Destination Satisfaction, Post-Visit Outcomes, Destination Loyalty, Gastronomic Tourism

PGRC-016

Economic Impacts of Sustainable Tourism in Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism is now a major pillar in the development of tourism in cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage areas. Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village is located in Guizhou Province, China, and is the largest Miao village in the country. As a typical community, it has undergone tremendous economic changes due to tourism-oriented industrial investments. With its unique cultural and architectural features, this village has become an important tourist destination for domestic and foreign tourists to experience the local Miao culture. Tourism has brought great economic benefits to the region.but it has also generated problems such as wealth inequality and lack of economic fairness. The goal of this study is to measure the economic impacts of sustainable tourism on Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village, with the main focus being from the perspectives of local residents and operators. Distinguishing these impacts is a crucial prerequisite for recognizing and creating methods for sustainable economic growth and cultural heritage preservation.

The Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village has approximately 6,000 residents, many of whom rely on tourism as their primary source of livelihood. Over the past decade, the village's economy has undergone a most significant transformation with the development of tourism, a transformation that has had wide-ranging economic impacts. Tourism has been both a source of job creation and increased income, as well as the basis for other businesses that have sprung up as a result of tourism activities. On the other hand, it has also led to the widening of the economic gap, and the benefits of different groups are not balanced. In addition, due to the rapid growth in the number of tourists, the local economy has become overly dependent on tourism, leading to problems of commodification of cultural practices and sustainability of the local economy. This study analyzes these dynamics from the perspectives of residents and operators through qualitative research methods.

The main research questions of this study are as follows: 1) What is the economic impact of sustainable tourism on the residents and business operators of Qianhu Miao Village in Xijiang? The sub-questions of this study delve into various aspects of economic impact: 2) How does tourism affect the income level of residents and business operators? 3) What are the main economic challenges faced by different economic groups in the stockade? 4) How to distribute the economic benefits of tourism fairly within the community?

Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, this research employs a qualitative case study approach, focusing on in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis to gather data. The sample for the study consists of 30 individuals, including residents and business operators, selected using a purposive sampling strategy. This approach ensures that the sample is diverse, encompassing different ages, genders, occupations, and levels of involvement in the tourism industry. Interviews are conducted in various locations within the village, providing a comfortable and familiar environment for participants to share their experiences and perspectives. In addition to interviews, participant observation is employed to gain insights into the daily lives of residents and the practical realities of tourism in the village. Document analysis provides an additional layer of data, offering insights into the official narratives and policies surrounding tourism development in the village.

Preliminary research indicates that sustainable tourism has contributed to a 25% increase in household income for some residents However, the benefits of tourism were not evenly distributed. Operators in the hotel and retail sectors achieved the most significant financial gains, while residents not directly involved in tourism-related businesses experienced less income growth and greater financial instability. The survey also revealed that per capita income inequality within the Village has increased, with the wealth gap between the highest and lowest income earners widening as a result of tourism. In addition, the study found that many residents and operators face challenges related to the seasonality of tourism, including fluctuating incomes and the pressing need to find alternative sources of income during the off-season. Not only that, but the rising cost of living is also a significant issue for many residents, especially due to the rising prices of housing and daily necessities. Despite these challenges, the majority of respondents were generally positive about tourism, believing that it contributes to the economic development of the village. However, there was also a strong desire for tourism development to truly benefit livelihoods and all residents.

By conducting a detailed analysis of the economic impact of sustainable tourism in ethnic minority communities, this study makes an important contribution to the literature in the relevant field. By focusing on both residents and business operators, the study provides a new perspective on how tourism affects different stakeholders within the community. The findings highlight the duality of tourism as both a driver of economic growth and an important factor in widening economic disparities. The study highlights the importance of tourism distribution effects, especially how to distribute benefits among different economic groups. These views of inclusive and sustainable economic development serve as useful guides for policymakers and tourism planners to come up with effective decisions. The study's use of empirical data and evidence serves as a strong backbone for application of tourism management in similar communities.

Taking into account the research findings, there are some implications, which suggest some ways to consider the tourism economy of Qianhu Miao Village in Xijiang for the better sustainability. It emphasizes on financial assistance, business advice, and microcredit programs to small businesses and low-income families. Inclusive tourism is first and foremost people-centered, and it is for that reason that the benefits of the sector should trickle down to all the citizens of the community. Additionally, the study suggests developing policies that stabilize the mean human capital of people depending on tourism, for instance, by organizing sports and culture-related tourist activities or different lines of business. With these measures, the residents will be given more stable income, and hence income variations will be less damaging. In other words, the communities should participate actively in the planning and development of tourism together, especially when they are weighing its economic benefits. Tourism-related community projects can be useful tools in achieving this more coherent and fair approach. Lastly, a continuous evaluation of tourism impacts is the study's last strategy to guarantee so that the authorities take corrective actions if necessary. It comprises consistent surveys and economic evaluations and establishment of local destination management boards to supervise and give directions to the village tourism development.

Finally, however, there are some inconveniences that result in the process of sustainable tourism and need to be dealt with on a level of detail to achieve long-term sustainability and fairness. The study provides a comprehensive analysis on such effects, showing the strengths and weaknesses in the trend of tourism-driven economic development. This study guides policy makers, community leaders, and tourism developers to build an ethical, holistic, and resilient tourism economy in Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village from the perspectives of residents and operators. The article also gives a benchmark to other communities that are aiming at negotiating sustainable tourism and cultural development on the one hand.

Keywords: Sustainable Tourism, Economic Impacts , Xijiang Qianhu Miao Village, Social Exchange Theory, Community-Based Tourism, Income Distribution

PGRC-017

Predicting Booking Decision in Digital Platforms Using A Hybrid Pls-Ann Approach

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Abstract

The advent of online booking platforms has revolutionized the travel industry, providing consumers with unprecedented convenience and choice. In the Philippines, these platforms initially offered services through online travel agencies (OTAs), but have subsequently expanded to include direct bookings with airline companies. While these platforms have significantly transformed consumer behavior, they are not without their challenges. Issues related to the reliability of reviews and accessibility can negatively impact user experience and trust.

This study investigates the mediating role of review reliability on the relationship between accessibility and booking decisions within Philippine digital travel platforms, considering generational differences. By understanding how these factors interact and influence consumer behavior, we can gain valuable insights into the strategies that platforms can adopt to enhance user satisfaction and drive bookings.

A causal-comparative design was employed to investigate the relationship between accessibility, review reliability, and booking decisions. An online survey was administered to a sample of 515 Filipino travelers, stratified across three generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. The survey instrument included measures of accessibility, review reliability, and booking decisions, as well as demographic information. Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to analyze the data and extract the composite scores of the latent variables. PLS-SEM is a powerful technique for analyzing complex relationships among constructs, particularly when dealing with non-normal data or small sample sizes. To explore both linear and nonlinear relationships among the variables, a Neural Network analysis was conducted. Neural Networks are capable of modeling complex patterns and non-linear relationships, making them well-suited for analyzing consumer behavior data.

The results of the analysis revealed significant nonlinear relationships between accessibility and booking decisions, suggesting that previous studies focusing on linear models may have overlooked important aspects of consumer behavior. Additionally, the relationship between online reviews and booking decisions was found to be nonlinear, indicating the complexity of how consumers evaluate and utilize review information. The neural network model achieved an accuracy rate of 87% in predicting booking decisions, demonstrating its effectiveness in capturing the underlying patterns and relationships in the data. These findings highlight the importance of considering nonlinear relationships and the mediating role of review reliability in understanding the factors influencing consumer behavior in digital travel environments.

The study's findings have several implications for digital travel platforms. First, platforms should prioritize accessibility to ensure that their services are usable by a diverse range of users. This includes providing clear navigation, intuitive interfaces, and options for users with disabilities. Second, platforms should invest in strategies to improve the reliability and credibility of online reviews. This may involve implementing measures to prevent fake or biased reviews, encouraging users to provide honest feedback, and displaying reviews from verified customers.

Third, platforms should recognize the importance of tailoring their offerings to meet the diverse needs and preferences of different generations. While some generations may prioritize convenience and accessibility, others may place greater emphasis on personalized experiences

and social proof. By understanding the unique characteristics of each generation, platforms can develop targeted marketing strategies and product features to appeal to their specific preferences.

Finally, the study's findings suggest that traditional linear models may not be sufficient for understanding consumer behavior in digital travel environments. Future research should explore the use of more advanced analytical techniques, such as neural networks and machine learning, to uncover the complex relationships and non-linear patterns that may be present in the data.

This study has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing booking decisions in Philippine digital travel platforms, highlighting the mediating role of review reliability on the relationship between accessibility and booking decisions. The findings have implications for both academic research and industry practice, suggesting that digital travel platforms should prioritize accessibility, manage online reviews effectively, and tailor their offerings to meet the diverse needs of different generations. By adopting these strategies, platforms can enhance user experience, build trust, and ultimately drive bookings.

Keywords: SEM-ANN, PLS-ANN, online booking, accessibility, online reviews

PGRC-018

The Impact of Hotel Service Robot Accessibility on Perceptions of Travel Experience

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate how hotel service robot accessibility affects travellers' perceptions of the overall travel experience. The study explored the relationship between service robot accessibility, usability, functionality, guest satisfaction, and hotel brand perception, with a particular focus on satisfaction between different demographic groups (e.g., gender). The study utilizes a quantitative survey in which a structured questionnaire will be distributed to hotel guests who have interacted with the service robot to measure the service robot's accessibility, usability, functionality, guest satisfaction, and hotel brand awareness variables. The data will be analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to identify key factors that influence the perception of the traveller experience. The expected results indicate that the accessibility of service robots is positively associated with increased customer satisfaction and perceived service quality. However, this effect varies for different demographic groups (e.g., gender). The results of the study provide valuable insights for hotel managers and designers to help them optimize robot deployment strategies to improve guest satisfaction. The study also contributes to the theoretical understanding of technology acceptance and usage in the hospitality industry, expanding the application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to service robots. This study is one of the first to specifically explore the role of service robot accessibility in shaping perceptions of the travel experience. It adds a novel perspective to the growing literature on automation in the hospitality industry, emphasizing the importance of accessibility in customer-robot service interactions.

Keywords: Hospitality Service Robots; Travel Experience Perception; Accessibility; Customer Satisfaction; Usability; Functionality; Hospitality Industry

PGRC-019

Combating Climate Change Through Hotel Food Waste Reduction

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Abstract

Food waste is a global issue created by society through irresponsible production and consumption. Studies reported that one third of global food produced goes to waste annually. The tremendous amount of food loss and waste receive spectacular attention when it is converted to billions and millions in respective developed and developing countries. Besides, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated around 1 trillion (USD) loss associated with food loss and waste excluding social and environmental value. The irresponsible food loss and waste deplete natural resources, disrupt ecological cycle and biodiversity effortlessly through pollution (e.g. air, soil, water), energy, and deforestation accumulated from production, carbon footprint, food processing, packaging and storage. This issue further escalates when hazardous greenhouse gases (GHGs) and methane emitted as food decompose. Without proper handling, decomposition of food waste in land or ocean emits methane; a greenhouse gas which is 21 times more potent compared to carbon dioxide. This vicious cycle speeds up global warming when long- lived methane stays as ozone precursor. Putting a tonne of food into rescue from turning into waste means saving of 3.4 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and landfill spaces. In a planet of increasing populations of 9 billion by 2050, there are concerns on food security by United Nations. The current humankind triumph in industry revolution, technology advancement, education awareness, wealth and economy growth should be able to resolve food waste issue effortlessly. However, the reduction of agricultural food production and speeding food to rot due to climate change while increasing food waste phenomena in modern society is questionable.

Although tourism activities bring significant economy growth, it is also contributing towards negative social and environment impact simultaneously. Albeit multiple attempts in turning this industry into eco-friendly and implement sustainable practices, hospitality food service sector contributes highest amount of food consumption and waste. Studies reported that approximately 1.1kg food waste was produced on average by a hotel guest daily. Reducing is aligned with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 12.3 which aims to reduce food loss and waste into halves which can only be achieved by all stakeholders' participation. In reducing food waste, organization need to consider on the administrative policies, culture, financial strength, and long-term sustainable practices to foster positive behaviour. Sustainable food production and consumption could not be more paramount at this instance. These barriers are interrelated which best be understood from social studies. The limelight focusses at hospitality food service provider where employees working in hotels are frequent understudied as compared to hospitality guests.

At present, there is a lack of theory applied to understand the phenomena of food waste reduction behavior. This study responds to the call for more theory-driven research in hospitality context by exploring the potential influence of corporate sustainability on hotel employee's food waste reduction behaviour. The tension and paradox here are when the organization intended to reduce food waste collectively but the practices by individual stakeholders are not aligned causing insufficient aggressive food waste reduction behavior. Previous study on food waste has been focused on sources of food waste generation, types of wastes, barriers, while lack of study from the corporate sustainability paradigm integrated which able to contribute towards food waste mitigation plan from service provider dimension. Individual attitude, self-efficacy and

social environment in relation to hospitality food service businesses are mutually interdependent. Culture form organization strategies and strategies influence workplace culture. The dyadic influence of hospitality corporate sustainability management in influencing hotel employee's food waste reduction has yet to be investigated.

This study combines Social Cognitive Theory and Environment Health Belief Model to understand and unveil the deep underlying complexity of hospitality food waste management. The empirical data collected from this study provides an overview of the current hotel employees food waste reduction behavior and corporate sustainability management policies towards sustainable food production and consumption in Malaysia. Enriched knowledge from this study portrayed challenges faced and at the same time discussed opportunities associated with the implementation of sustainable food practices in hotels. The disconnected relationships between food, actors, social, and environment can further be discussed through the lens of this study. Upon understanding the relationships of hospitality food waste generation from individual, social environment and corporate sustainability management, this study provides practical implications for stakeholders to refine business practices mitigating hospitality food waste issues.

To investigate the social phenomena through human activities, it is important that the study design in a manner able to achieve research objectives. This study applied cross-sectional mono-method quantitative based on the conceptual framework. Empirical data which have strong representation will be collected from employees who are currently working in Malaysia five-star hotels through online questionnaire to minimize bias and secure reliable response rate. After survey instrument is developed, experts from both academic and industry involved in hospitality food waste, tourism and sustainability domains are consulted to refine the questionnaire on content, validity, and clarity. Face validity is conducted to ensure the closed ended questionnaire, and its scale is better fit for targeted population. The improved questionnaire based on experts' feedback is further translated into two other common languages used in Malaysia which are Mandarin Chinese and Malay. Prior to final data collection, 50 hotel employees will be recruited for pilot test to ensure questionnaire validity and content clarity. Five-star hotel employees were selected as the sample because they are active food handlers in the industry which has been influenced by the food waste reduction awareness programme and training. They are the key personnel in handling, preparation and serving food to the guests before food turns into waste. It is important the study focuses on hotel employees individually as their roles dictate food waste reduction behavior mediates by corporate sustainability shaping in the organization's food waste management culture.

The sampling proposed is non-probability purposive sampling due to the reliance on available five-star hotel employees involves in food waste reduction. Five-star hotel have strict requirements of their employees in regard to organisation operating procedures. Data collection needs to go through gatekeeper of the organisation before able to access employees' adequate and useful voluntary response. Hence, non-probability purposive sampling is more appropriate in achieving research objectives, enhancing the trustworthiness of the data and results. The data collected will be analyzed through Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) method utilizing SmartPLS software.

Keywords: food waste; hotel employees; corporate sustainability; social cognitive theory

PGRC-020

Evaluation of AI Tools for Cost-Effective Reporting on Sustainable Tourism Standards and Practices in ASEAN

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Abstract

The ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region, comprising diverse countries with rich cultural heritage and unique biodiversity, faces significant challenges in sustaining its tourism sector amidst the growing impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, and social inequities. To support effective governance and promote sustainable tourism practices, there is a need for cost-effective methods to regularly collect, analyze, and report data on key sustainability indicators. This study aims to conduct an evaluation of currently available AI (artificial intelligence) tools and platforms to determine their suitability for generating regular annual or bi-annual reports on sustainable tourism practices in the ASEAN region over the next five years (2026-2030).

The study will evaluate AI tools based on their ability to perform three core functions: information collection, data analysis, and reporting. The evaluation will focus on identifying tools that can provide cost-effective solutions for continuous monitoring and reporting on key areas of sustainable tourism, including climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation, waste management, cultural heritage protection, and the rights of indigenous communities.

An evaluation will be conducted to assess a range of currently available AI tools and platforms that can be leveraged for sustainable tourism reporting. The study will involve a comprehensive review of the functionalities, costs, and implementation requirements of various AI technologies, focusing on the following categories:

1. Information Collection: The study will evaluate geospatial AI tools (e.g., Google Earth Engine, ArcGIS AI) for their capacity to collect real-time environmental data, such as satellite imagery for land use changes, weather patterns, and biodiversity monitoring. Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools (e.g., OpenAI's GPT, SpaCy) will be assessed for their ability to extract insights from policy documents, social media, and community feedback. Additionally, AI-enhanced survey tools (e.g., SurveyMonkey AI, Qualtrics) will be reviewed for their utility in gathering qualitative data from stakeholders, including local communities and tourists.

2. Data Analysis: The evaluation will focus on machine learning platforms (e.g., TensorFlow, Scikit-Learn) and AI-powered decision support systems (e.g., IBM Watson, Microsoft Azure AI) for their capabilities in analyzing large datasets, identifying trends, and forecasting future scenarios. These tools will be assessed for their applicability in modeling climate impacts, predicting biodiversity loss, optimizing resource use, and evaluating the effectiveness of current tourism policies and practices.

3. Reporting and Visualization: The study will review AI-integrated data visualization tools (e.g., Tableau, Power BI) for their ability to transform complex datasets into accessible reports and dashboards tailored for diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, tourism operators, and local communities. The focus will be on identifying tools that can automate the generation of regular reports, ensuring clarity, usability, and cost-

effectiveness.

The evaluation will be guided by criteria that align with the objectives of providing cost-effective, regular reporting over the next five years (2026-2030):

- Cost-Efficiency: The total cost of ownership, including licensing fees, maintenance costs, and required technical expertise, will be evaluated to ensure that the selected tools offer a cost-effective solution for ongoing reporting needs.

- Scalability and Flexibility: Tools will be assessed for their scalability to handle varying data volumes and their flexibility to adapt to the diverse conditions and requirements of ASEAN countries.

- Accuracy and Reliability: The evaluation will examine the accuracy and reliability of the AI tools in collecting and analyzing data relevant to sustainable tourism.

- User-Friendliness and Accessibility: The study will consider the ease of use of these tools, their integration capabilities with existing data systems, and their accessibility to stakeholders with varying levels of technical expertise.

- Sustainability of Use: The long-term sustainability of deploying these tools, including their compatibility with existing technological infrastructure in the ASEAN region, will be reviewed.

The evaluation will provide a detailed analysis of the most suitable AI tools and platforms for generating cost-effective, regular reports on sustainable tourism practices in the ASEAN region. It will identify the strengths and limitations of each tool, providing practical insights into their applicability for information collection, data analysis, and reporting. The study will offer specific recommendations on the combination of tools that can be deployed to achieve the desired reporting frequency (annual or bi-annual) and provide a cost-benefit analysis to support decision-making by regional tourism authorities and stakeholders.

Sustainable tourism in the ASEAN region is guided by several established standards and frameworks, including the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) Criteria, the ASEAN Tourism Standards, and various national policies focused on transportation, environmental conservation, community involvement, and cultural preservation. These standards provide a comprehensive set of guidelines for destinations, businesses, and tour operators to promote responsible tourism practices that minimize environmental impacts, conserve biodiversity, respect cultural heritage, and ensure socio-economic benefits for local communities. AI tools can significantly enhance the implementation and monitoring of these standards by providing automated, data-driven solutions that address the complexities of sustainable tourism and transport (including air travel) management.

For instance, AI tools can support the GSTC Destination Criteria, which emphasize the need for effective sustainability management, maximizing social and economic benefits for local communities, cultural heritage protection, and reducing negative environmental impacts. Geospatial AI platforms like Google Earth Engine and ArcGIS AI can provide real-time monitoring of land use, track changes in biodiversity, and detect environmental degradation, ensuring compliance with environmental standards. Machine learning algorithms, such as TensorFlow or Scikit-Learn, can predict the impact of tourism activities on local ecosystems and help policymakers develop adaptive management strategies to mitigate adverse effects.

AI tools can also enhance adherence to the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard and the ASEAN Community-Based Tourism Standard by automating waste management, optimizing resource use, and providing predictive analytics to improve energy efficiency and waste reduction. AI-enhanced waste management platforms, like Rubicon and DeepMind AI, can track and analyze waste generation patterns in tourist areas, ensuring hotels and tourism operators meet

sustainable waste management practices. Similarly, Natural Language Processing (NLP) tools, such as OpenAI's GPT and SpaCy, can analyze feedback from local communities and tourists, offering insights into their perceptions and satisfaction, which is essential for compliance with community-based tourism standards that prioritize local participation and benefits.

By aligning AI tools with these existing sustainable tourism standards, ASEAN countries can not only streamline the process of monitoring and reporting but also improve the overall effectiveness of sustainable tourism practices, ensuring that tourism growth is balanced with the principles of sustainability and social equity.

By outlining a roadmap for integrating AI technologies into sustainable tourism reporting frameworks, this study aims to support ASEAN countries in establishing robust monitoring systems that enhance transparency, accountability, and strategic planning. The findings will help tourism stakeholders in the region to adopt AI-driven approaches that balance economic growth with environmental sustainability and social equity, ensuring that tourism remains a viable and resilient sector amidst global and regional challenges.

Keywords: sustainable tourism; AI tools; ASEAN region; cost-effective reporting; data analysis; climate change

PGRC-021

Exploring the Dynamics of Bamboo Bike Tourism: A Mediation Analysis of Satisfaction and Perceived Value in Intramuros

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Abstract

The resurgence of bicycle usage in the Philippines, evident in the significant increase in Filipino households utilizing bicycles for essential and recreational activities, highlights a growing trend towards sustainable and health-conscious transportation choices. This shift in preferences has created opportunities for innovative tourism ventures such as bamboo biking. This eco-friendly activity combines the benefits of cycling with the unique experience of riding on bicycles crafted from bamboo, a renewable and sustainable material. Intramuros, Manila's historic walled city, provides the perfect backdrop for this activity, offering visitors a chance to explore its cultural and historical treasures while enjoying the physical and environmental benefits of cycling.

The rise of bamboo biking in Intramuros aligns with the global push for sustainable tourism, which emphasizes responsible travel practices that minimize negative impacts on the environment and contribute to the well-being of local communities. Bambike Revolution Cycles, founded by Bryan Benitez McClelland, exemplifies this commitment by crafting handmade bamboo bicycles and organizing eco-friendly bike tours in Intramuros. Their initiative not only promotes sustainable transportation but also provides employment opportunities for local artisans, fostering economic growth and community development.

This study investigates the complex factors that influence tourists' experiences and satisfaction levels in the context of bamboo biking in Intramuros. By examining the motivations driving participation, the quality of the experience, perceived value, and levels of engagement, this research aims to provide valuable insights for enhancing the bamboo biking experience and promoting sustainable tourism practices.

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the mediation effect of bamboo biking satisfaction and perceived value on the relationship between bamboo biking experience and recommendation intention. Surveys were administered to 116 respondents who had prior experience with bamboo biking in Intramuros, Manila. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents, ensuring that the sample adequately represented the target population. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to capture respondents' opinions and perceptions on various aspects of the bamboo biking experience, including motivation, satisfaction, perceived value, and engagement levels. The collected data was analyzed using PLS-SEM to identify significant relationships and test the proposed hypotheses.

The majority of respondents were young Filipino students with relatively high levels of education and modest incomes. They showed a preference for group activities and a significant percentage were first-time participants in bamboo biking.

The respondents expressed a strong preference for autonomy, indicating their desire to explore Intramuros independently rather than following a fixed tour route. Competence, the ability to ride a bamboo bike quickly and confidently, was also identified as a significant motivator. The respondents also valued relatedness, highlighting the enjoyment of sharing the experience with friends and family and feeling connected to others interested in sustainable tourism.

The respondents highly rated various aspects of the bamboo biking experience. Hedonism,

focusing on pleasure and enjoyment, received high scores, indicating that the activity was perceived as both enjoyable and thrilling. The novelty and escape from routine offered by bamboo biking also contributed to high levels of refreshment. The incorporation of local culture into the experience fostered a sense of immersion and authenticity, further enhancing satisfaction. Meaningfulness, related to personal growth and connection, and knowledge, pertaining to learning and discovery, were also highly rated, suggesting that bamboo biking provides opportunities for personal development and cultural enrichment. The interactive nature of the bamboo bike tour and the sense of control over the pace and direction of exploration contributed to high levels of involvement and engagement. The respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with their bamboo biking experience, indicating that it positively contributed to their overall trip satisfaction and was perceived as a valuable addition to their travel itinerary. While the bamboo biking experience itself did not directly influence recommendation intention, satisfaction derived from the experience significantly mediated this relationship. This suggests that a positive biking experience leads to increased satisfaction, which in turn fosters a stronger intention to recommend bamboo biking to others.

The study found that biking satisfaction acts as a full mediator between the bamboo biking experience and recommendation intention. This implies that the impact of the biking experience on recommendation intention is entirely channeled through satisfaction. Higher satisfaction levels lead to a greater likelihood of recommending bamboo biking. Perceived value also emerged as a significant mediator between the bamboo biking experience and recommendation intention. However, an inverse relationship was observed, suggesting that enhancing specific dimensions of service quality may not uniformly increase perceived value if participant expectations are not adequately managed. Engagement levels were found to significantly moderate the relationship between the biking experience and recommendation intention. Higher engagement levels strengthened the positive relationship between these two variables.

This study highlights the intricate relationships between various factors influencing tourists' experiences, satisfaction levels, and recommendation intentions in the context of bamboo biking in Intramuros, Manila. The findings emphasize the critical role of satisfaction, perceived value, and engagement in shaping positive recommendations. By focusing on these key factors, tourism organizers can enhance the overall visitor experience and promote sustainable tourism practices. To further enhance the bamboo biking experience and promote sustainable tourism, several recommendations can be made. Firstly, focusing on strategies that increase respondent satisfaction, such as providing high-quality service and engaging activities, can boost recommendation intentions. Secondly, careful management of perceived value is essential, ensuring that enhancements in the biking experience align with respondent expectations. Thirdly, increasing respondents' motivation through targeted initiatives can lead to better biking experiences and higher satisfaction. Fourthly, encouraging higher levels of engagement among participants can further strengthen the positive impact of the biking experience on recommendations.

Collaboration with local communities is also recommended to enhance the authenticity and appeal of bamboo biking experiences, fostering a deeper connection between respondents and the local culture. Local and national authorities can support the initiative by improving and expanding cycling infrastructure in and around Intramuros. Future research could explore additional mediators and moderators, such as emotional and social factors, to further understand the complex dynamics influencing recommendation intentions. Longitudinal studies and larger, more diverse samples could also help validate and extend these findings.

Keywords: Bamboo Biking, Sustainable Tourism, Intramuros Manila, Tourist Satisfaction, Recommendation Intention

PGRC-022

Stakeholder Perspectives on Implementing a Tourism Management Program at Romblon State University: Opportunities, Challenges, and Recommendations

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Abstract

The tourism management field is crucial in shaping the global travel and hospitality industry, with increasing demand for skilled professionals prompting academic institutions to reassess their program offerings. In Romblon province, the introduction of a Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) at Romblon State University presents a significant opportunity, as a previous study indicated high interest among potential students, with only one private school currently offering the program. This study aims to explore the diverse perspectives of stakeholders regarding the BSTM program, seeking to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with its implementation and to inform strategies for its development at Romblon State University.

The research objectives focus on examining stakeholders' perceptions, feelings, and expectations about the BSTM program at Romblon State University. Specifically, the study seeks to identify potential problems, benefits, and opportunities associated with offering the program. It also aims to gather stakeholders' suggestions for the proposed Tourism Management program. By addressing these research questions, the study intends to navigate the diverse viewpoints of educational institutions, students, industry professionals, and society at large, ultimately contributing to the development of a quality tourism management education program that aligns with industry needs and sustainable development goals.

The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 diverse stakeholders in Odiongan's hospitality and tourism sector. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select participants, including community members, local government authorities, tourism industry professionals, educators, and students. A semi-structured interview guide, validated by thesis panels, was the primary data collection instrument. The interviews, conducted after obtaining informed consent, provided rich, first-hand information. Data analysis involved descriptive content analysis, categorizing stakeholders' responses and relating them to the proposed tourism curriculum. This methodology allowed for a comprehensive exploration of stakeholders' perspectives, expectations, and concerns regarding the potential Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management program at Romblon State University, offering insights that quantitative methods might not capture.

The study findings reveal a generally positive reception to offering a Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) program at Romblon State University (RSU). Stakeholders expressed support due to current trends and demand, though some suggested careful preparation through surveys and feasibility studies. Potential challenges identified include lack of facilities, infrastructure, faculty, and financial concerns. However, anticipated benefits encompass boosting RSU's reputation, local economic growth, improved student options, and relevant skill development for the tourism industry. Respondents viewed the program as a unique opportunity for local students and an unexpected but welcome addition to RSU's offerings. Overall, while stakeholders recognized potential issues, they predominantly saw the BSTM program as a valuable and timely addition to RSU's curriculum, with significant potential to benefit both the university and the broader community.

In conclusion, the potential offering of a Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) at Romblon State University (RSU) represents a significant opportunity for educational and economic development in the region, albeit with important challenges to address. The study reveals strong stakeholder support for the program, driven by current industry trends and local demand. However, successful implementation hinges on effectively addressing key issues, including infrastructure development, faculty recruitment and training, and sustainable financing. Additionally, the introduction of BSTM at RSU promises to diversify educational options beyond the existing hospitality management program, creating a comprehensive platform for tourism education. This expansion is expected to enhance RSU's academic profile and contribute to local economic growth. Moreover, the program has the potential to cultivate culturally sensitive, globally aware graduates equipped with practical skills highly valued in the tourism industry. To maximize these benefits, RSU must carefully balance stakeholder expectations with institutional capabilities, ensuring that the program's development aligns with both industry needs and the university's strategic goals. Continuous engagement with local tourism stakeholders, regular curriculum reviews, and investment in resources will be crucial to the program's long-term success and its ability to positively impact both students and the broader community.

The implications of this study are significant. The strong stakeholder support for a Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM) program underscores the potential for RSU to fill a critical educational gap and meet growing industry demands. This implies a need for strategic planning and resource allocation to address identified challenges in infrastructure, faculty expertise, and funding. The university must prioritize developing industry partnerships, investing in relevant facilities, and ensuring curriculum alignment with both local tourism needs and global standards. Additionally, the study suggests that RSU has an opportunity to position itself as a key player in regional tourism development, potentially influencing local economic growth and job creation. To capitalize on this, RSU should consider establishing ongoing stakeholder engagement mechanisms, regularly reassessing program offerings, and developing strategies to attract and retain both students and quality faculty. Ultimately, the successful implementation of the BSTM program could serve as a model for other regional universities looking to introduce industry-relevant programs that contribute to local development while meeting national educational standards.

Keywords: Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management; BSTM offering; Romblon State University; tourism management program; tourism stakeholder perspectives

PGRC-023

Profiling Budget Hotel Operation Attributes: Insights from Malaysian Muslim Travelers'

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Abstract

The accommodation experience on a holiday or business trip is an important aspect for every traveler. Hotel selection is often based on factors such as location, price, and quality of service offered. Budget hotels are one of the categories inside the accommodation sector in tourism industry and have a significant role towards traveler overnight decision. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia (MOTAC) had classified the star rating of budget hotels is two star and below. The government also introduced the Orchid Classification Scheme. This scheme has been formulated to accommodate those hotels which do not qualify for any Star Rating. In the study of Zaman Abdullah et al., (2012), budget hotels could be registered as hotel, resort, lodging house, rest house, motel, hostel, chalet, guest house, or inn.

Understanding the unique needs, preferences, and behaviors of Muslim travelers is crucial for developing effective strategies to attract this demographic (Hanafiah et al., 2022). The demand from this market segmentation keeps growing as show at the peak of Malaysia tourism industry before the pandemic, it attracted 5.3 million Muslim tourists and contributing RM16.7 billion to the economy. Muslims traveler might be interested to travel to a particular destination because of the religious environment thus it is appropriate to guarantee that Islamic religious characteristics are accessible in those destinations. This may satisfy the Muslim tourists and lead to various return visits to the country. Studies also found that Muslim travelers, they are very concerned on their spiritual convictions, practices, and tendencies during their venture outside the country(Çetin & Dinçer, 2016).

Thus, studying budget hotel attributes is important for improving the service quality and increasing customer satisfaction by understanding and fulfilling travelers' needs and preferences especially from the niche market segmentation for example Muslim traveler. This study aims to identify operational attributes that influence Muslim travelers' perceptions of budget hotels in Malaysia. This study explores Muslim travelers' perceptions of the operational attributes of budget hotels, focusing on the factors that contribute to inconsistent perceptions and the compatibility of expectations with the reality of their stay. By using a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews, this study involved 5 travelers who had stayed in budget hotel located at northern state of Malaysia. The purposive sampling was adopted in this study, where informants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, it can ensure that even a small number of informants can provide rich and relevant data (Guest et al., 2020). This method focuses on the quality and relevance of the information rather than the quantity of informants. The interviews were recorded, analyzed, and the main themes were identified based on manual coding.

The main findings of the study show that there are five main factors that influence the perception of Malaysian Muslim travelers, including cleanliness, reasonable prices, varied service quality, the feedback and review, as well as the hotel environment and surrounding. The theme of cleanliness emerged as one of the key issues emphasized by the respondents. Coding such as "Unsatisfactory cleanliness" indicates that most informants are not satisfied with the level of cleanliness in the budget hotels they visit. The second theme was the reasonable price. The coding "Low price" indicates that low price is the main factor in attracting Muslim traveler to choose a budget hotel. Informants consider cheaper prices as the main advantage of budget hotels. The third theme appears to be the varied quality service. The Coding of "quality of service is less professional" highlights the informants' concerns about the standard of service provided in budget hotels. They said some services like front desk service and housekeeping efficiency did not meet expected standards. Another theme was feedback and review. The coding with "Difference between expectations and reality" reflects informants' feelings of dissatisfaction when their experiences do not match expectations before

staying. The difference between what is promised by hotel advertisements and what is received is the main cause of this dissatisfaction. The last theme emerged was the hotel environment and surroundings. The Coding "Unsatisfactory location and facilities" underlines Muslim travelers' need for a safe hotel environment and adequate facilities such as numbers of parking lots. Informants showed dissatisfaction with the hotel's location, which may be in a less suitable area or far from their main destination.

These findings have important implications for the hospitality industry, especially the accommodation sector. In line with the findings from the study by Mohsin & Lengler (2015), budget hotel guests have a significant difference in expectations and actual experiences, highlighting the need for budget hotel management to improve their service quality. The findings from this study are important to help budget hotel management understand the need from Muslim travelers and deal with the critical aspects that need to be improved to increase customer satisfaction. It also contributes to the literature on Muslim Travelers' perceptions of budget hotels, particularly in the context of Malaysia.

Overall, this study provides a deep understanding of Malaysian Muslim travelers' perceptions of budget hotel operations. In the managerial implication, the budget hotel needs to improve hygiene standards beside than service quality. Budget hotels also need to ensure that rational prices match the value provided are critical to increasing customer satisfaction. There is also the need for the hospitality industry to focus on fulfilling the promised customer expectations through a better operational strategy. The practical implications of this study supported budget hotels in improving their service excellence and financial returns by focusing on core and auxiliary service attributes, although it does not affect traveler experience, but it helps in influence their revisit intention (Peng et al., 2015). Thus, this study makes a significant contribution to the practical and theoretical understanding of budget hotel operations in the context of the Muslim traveler market.

Keywords*:* Budget Hotel, Muslim Traveler's, Perception, Domestic Tourism

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PGRC-024

Exploring The Relationship Between Leadership Styles and Organizational Citizenship Behaviors and Turnover Intention: A Quantitative Approach

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Abstract

The hospitality industry represents one of the most significant industries in the world, accounting for approximately 10% of worldwide employment (Burke & Hughes, 2018), however, it counters a notably high turnover rate. In 2023, the turnover rate in the leisure and hospitality sector reached 79%, representing the highest percentage comparing to other sectors (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024). Saudi Arabia's hospitality industry has been experiencing substantial growth, mostly because of the initiatives initiated by the government that are aligned with Vision 2030, to diversify the economy and enhance tourism (Saudi Vision 3020, 2024). This growth has been particularly outstanding in the Jazan region, which has developed into pivotal hub for hospitality and tourism businesses, attracting substantial investments in infrastructure and hotel development.

In spite of this rapid growth, the elevated rate of turnover within Saudi Arabia's hospitality industry remains a pressing issue, emphasizing the necessity for effective leadership strategies to enhance employee retention and foster positive work behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs). OCBs are defined as discretionary actions that exceed formal job expectations, promoting the overall effectiveness of the organization (Organ, 1988). Research suggests that such behaviors are correlated with a variety of preferred outcomes, including higher employee retention (Tian et al., 2020). However, the relationship between different leadership approaches (i.e., transformational, transactional, and passive/avoidant) and components of OCB, along with their impact on turnover intention, remains inadequately explored in the context of hospitality in Saudi Arabia.

This study seeks to bridge these gaps by exploring the interplay between leadership styles and the three facets of OCB: OCB toward individuals (OCB-I), the organization (OCB-O), and customers (OCB-C). Furthermore, the study aims to examine how these dimensions of OCB impact employees' intention to leave their jobs within the hospitality sector in the Jazan region. The unique cultural background of Saudi Arabia, marked by high collectivism, hierarchical frameworks, and the influence of Islamic principles (Hofstede, 1980; Mellahi, 2007; Ali, 2005), highlights the necessity to examine how these cultural elements interact with leadership behaviors to shape employee behaviors. For example, the collectivist culture of the country prioritizes group cohesion and fidelity, potentially enhancing OCBs that are advantageous to both peers and the organization (Triandis, 1995). While prior studies on leadership and OCB in Saudi Arabia have predominantly concentrated on major cities such as Riyadh and Jeddah (Alhashedi et al., 2021; Alsughayir, 2017), the Jazan region has not received adequate scholarly attention. Its thriving market dynamics and swift development render it an ideal context for investigating the effects of leadership styles on OCBs and turnover intentions.

The research employs a positivist philosophy and a deductive approach to investigate hypotheses formulated from well-established theoretical frameworks, Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1965) and Full-Range Leadership Theory (Avolio & Bass, 1991). The positivist perspective facilitates the generation of findings that are characterized by objectivity, replicability, and the potential for broader generalization (Saunders et al., 2023), while the deductive methodology ensures the research maintains its objectivity by focusing on the testing of hypotheses derived from existing literature, thus allowing both the replication and generalization of results (Sekaran

and Bougie, 2010). The primary aims of the study are to: 1) Investigate the correlation between transformational, transactional, and passive leadership styles and the three dimensions of OCB, 2) Examine the direct influence of OCB dimensions on employees' intentions to leave the organization, and 3) Test the mediating role of OCB in the relationship between leadership styles and turnover intentions.

This study utilizes a cross-sectional quantitative research design, employing a survey methodology. A structured questionnaire will facilitate the gathering of data from employees associated with three-, four-, and five-star hotels located in the Jazan region. The selection of this heterogeneous sample is intended to encompass a broad spectrum of employee dynamics and experiences, thus improving the external validity of the results (Kline & Harris, 2016). To efficiently engage a varied participant group within a specific timeframe, convenience sampling will be utilized (Saunders et al., 2023). The calculation of the sample size, performed using GPower 3.1, reveals that at least 77 participants are necessary to attain adequate statistical power for executing multiple regression analyses (Faul et al., 2007). The survey will incorporate established measurement tools, including the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Avolio & Bass, 2004) for evaluating leadership styles, Ma and Qu's (2013) instrument for assessing dimensions of OCB, and Mobley's (1977) scale to evaluate turnover intentions.

The data will undergo analysis through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) utilizing SmartPLS software. This facilitates the exploration of complex relationships among several dependent and independent variables (Hair et al., 2017), making it appropriate for investigating the mediating influences of OCB on the correlation between leadership styles and turnover intention. After data preparation, the data will be inspected for normality, multicollinearity, and outliers to ensure the integrity of the dataset. The analysis will encompass assessments of reliability and validity, descriptive statistics, and hypothesis testing through the application of path coefficients.

The study aims to examine multiple hypotheses grounded in social exchange theory and the full-range leadership theory. It is hypothesized that transformational leadership will exert a positive influence on all three dimensions of OCB by cultivating an atmosphere that motivates employees to surpass their prescribed job responsibilities (H1, H2, H3). Additionally, transactional leadership, marked by defined exchanges and contingent incentives, is anticipated to enhance OCBs (H4, H5, H6). In contrast, passive leadership is theorized to negatively affect OCBs (H7, H8, H9), as insufficient guidance and support may result in employee disengagement in positive behaviors and a diminished tendency to contribute to the organization's overall welfare. Moreover, the study asserts that OCBs will exhibit an inverse correlation with turnover intention (H10, H11, H12) and that OCB will serve as a mediating factor in the relationship between leadership styles and turnover intention (H13, H14, H15), thereby elucidating the mechanisms through which leadership style can indirectly influence employee retention.

The significance of this research resides in its ability to offer contributions that are both theoretical and practical in nature. By concentrating on the Jazan region, the investigation provides context-specific insights regarding the interplay of leadership and employee conduct within a swiftly expanding hospitality industry. It further enriches existing literature by examining OCB as a multidimensional framework, which includes OCB-I, OCB-O, and OCB-C, particularly relevant to service-centric industries such as hospitality (Ma et al., 2021). By utilizing the integrated OCB framework outlined by Ma and Qu (2013), this study facilitates a more thorough comprehension of the ways in which leadership styles influence distinct categories of OCB, thereby affecting intentions to leave the organization. From a practical perspective, the findings have implications for managers and practitioners within the hospitality domain. Recognizing the leadership styles that most effectively foster OCBs and mitigate turnover intentions can guide the creation of leadership development programs and employee retention initiatives.

Keywords: Leadership Styles, Organizational Citizenship Behaviors, Turnover Intention

PGRC-025

Leadership Styles and Work Engagement of Employees in Department of Tourism Accredited Hotels in Ilocos Region, Philippines

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Abstract

The literature on the hospitality industry places an emphasis on the implementation of appropriate leadership styles to maximize the engagement of hotel employees thus, gaining a competitive edge through effective labor management requires an understanding of the impact of the leaders in the hotel industry. Hotel employees are the foundation for providing excellent service which a certainty of keeping them in line with their job descriptions while providing them with benefits and security should be offered to them because they are the manpower or more specifically, the workforce of the business. In order to achieve this goal of every hotel establishment, the assurance that every employee is deeply grounded on their work career in general by finding meaning and fulfillment in what they do as they carry out their respective tasks, an appropriate action should be taken to maintain the staff's engagement and dedication to their assigned work. Loyalty comes next at this stage. This, however, has always been a struggle for any hotel manager and only conjures more significant challenges to the organization. DOT implementation of a new national accommodation standards seeking to boost industry competitiveness on year 2013, in which 10 long years have evolved and gone through realization that then it is time to promote human capital where the contention of this study sets in, to look into the leadership styles of the hotel managers and speculate on its bearing to the work engagement of the employees engaging into a sight in promoting human capital researches in Ilocos Region. The paper's objectives are to measure the hotel department's leadership styles and work engagement of employees in Department of Tourism accredited hotels in Ilocos Region, Philippines and to propose a hotel management framework for the improvement of leadership styles and work engagement. In order to examine hotel managers' leadership styles in Department of Tourism accredited hotels in Ilocos Region and evaluate their effects on employees' engagement at work, descriptive and quantitative research methods were applied. Also, to help determine relationships between two or more variables and to investigate the research issue, a google form-based online questionnaire survey was created. Six leadership patterns that might be used by hotel managers in Department of Tourism accredited hotels in the Ilocos Region were measured using an adaptation of 40 statements. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which is widely regarded as standard, trustworthy, and valid tool for evaluating various patterns of leadership, was also adapted to discern transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. To test the significant difference when grouped according to the profile variables was also sought as to see the varying opinions of the respondents about the two variables when grouped according to their demographic profiles. The respondents of the study were 193 Hotel employees of DOT accredited hotels in the Ilocos Region. These hotels and employees were selected based on a set of criteria. The sample size was computed based on the total population using the Rao soft sample size considering the 95% confidence level and 5% marginal error. The study have used two studies' modified questionnaires, which have served as the major variables. First the various leadership styles was derived from a study by Radwan, (2020), whose Cronbach's Alpha score was .973, while the research by Ding, Borbon, and Deng, (2022) which had a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test result of .944 was adapted for the second variable of hotel employee work engagement. Pilot testing and expert validation by industry specialists which was subjected to industry practices as the favorable phase of their evaluation were performed on the instrument. A five-point Likert Scale was used in the two

variables of the instrument. Additionally, using the SPSS software, the results were tallied up, encoded, and analyzed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to evaluate the significant difference when the variables were grouped according to the profile of the respondents, and the Correlation matrix and Sphere man Rho were used to determine the significant relationship between the variables. Majority of the respondents of the study are female and they are mostly 25 years old to 18 years old who belong to the Generation Z, graduates of bachelor's degree working in the hotel for at least 1 to 3 years and mostly assigned at the front office department. This implies that DOT accredited hotels in Ilocos Region employs women that belong to generation Zoomer at their reception. Democratic leadership is the prevalent leadership style used in DOT accredited hotels in Ilocos Region and most hotel department managers in the region have an effective communication with all their hotel employees and the act of giving employees to voice their ideas and concerns are being observed by their hotel department managers which is an implication that most hotel managers in DOT accredited hotels in Ilocos Region maintain open line of communication with their employees. Hotel employees have a mind fully engaged with performing their job, happy when carrying out responsibilities at work and are often physically driven by their jobs which could have seen through their cheery and effortless delivery of service to their guests that have perceived them to be attentive and could be easily approached. Data gathered in the study have indicated that there is a significant difference on the responses when grouped according to profile, where male employees perceive more laissez faire style of leadership of department managers. Also, male employees exhibit stronger agreement to be physically motivated and are high-energy workers which suggests that male employees in DOT accredited hotels in Ilocos Region exhibits a stronger engagement on their work when working with a hotel manager that allows hotel employees to continuously use the same ways in working. Male employees have seen working attentively even after long hours of graveyard shift where they were able to assist guests gushing their way to put on an umbrella during a heavy rain at 6:00 in the morning. Lastly, it was found out that there is a significant relationship between the two variables and implies that every different leadership style has a significant impact on an employees' work engagement. The leadership patterns have a profound impact on employees' work engagement in the work setting. The overall assumption of the researcher is that employees in DOT accredited hotels in Ilocos Region has a high engagement with their work. These results provide a managerial and practical contribution to the growing body of knowledge in the hotel industry; hence the hotel management and owners may further strengthen their department managers' leadership styles as it affects the employees' work engagement since it was found to have a strong direct correlation. With this result, a hotel management framework for the improvement of leadership styles and work engagement was formulated based on the result of the study.

Keywords: Department of Tourism, leadership styles, work engagement

PGRC-026

Navigating the Tourism Landscape: Maldives' Journey to the Global Halal Tourism Market through Halal Certification

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Abstract

This study "Navigating the Tourism Landscape" will explore Maldives' Journey to the Global Halal Tourism Market through Halal Certification. It will draw insights to the ever-evolving global halal travel industry to then focus on the potential the Maldivian tourism sector holds in this evolving market. It aims to develop strategies for accommodating Muslim tourists by adopting Halal tourism *through Halal certification in Maldives.*

Despite Maldives' been a 100% Muslim country, why has the Maldives not actively engaged in the pursuit of this profitable market of Halal Tourism, through Halal Certification? (Maldives, 2019). And if any attempts have been made, why has the pace of advancement been slow? (Maldives, 2019).

Research Objectives

> RO1: To explore the importance of Halal certification in the Maldives tourism industry for tourists.

> RO2: To identify effective strategies for integrating Halal certification into the Maldivian tourism industry.

> RO3: To identify the approaches by policymakers, and industry practitioners to implement Halal certification in the Maldives.

Research Questions

> RQ1: Why is Halal certification important in the Maldives' tourism industry for tourists?

> RQ2: How can Halal certification be effectively integrated into the Maldivian tourism industry to ensure seamless implementation?

> RQ3: How the policymakers, and industry practitioners in the Maldives approach the implementation of Halal certification?

Theoretical background to the problem

The literature on Halal certification is limited, focusing mainly on food and beverages, particularly in the Maldives, highlighting the need for broader research in the tourism industry (Aziza et al., 2020). Malaysia leads in Halal tourism with the establishment of JAKIM and comprehensive governmental support, showcasing potential for both international and local Muslim tourists (Aziza et al., 2020). In Malaysia, enhancing Halal services and amenities is crucial for attracting Middle Eastern tourists (Ma'asor @ Mansor et al., 2023), (Abdul Karim et al., 2022). Thailand, despite its Buddhist majority and limited Muslim personnel, sees potential with over 650,000 Muslim tourists annually (Lubis et al., 2022). South Korea faces challenges in consumer awareness and understanding of Halal standards, needing improved certification processes (Abukhalifeh et al., 2020). The Maldives requires clear Halal certification regulations to promote its fisheries products (Muneeza & Mustapha, 2021).

Presentation of the main theory and framework

The main theory concentrates on Halal Tourism through Halal certification and the effects on the Tourism and Hospitality sector, not just covering the food and beverage sector but also the hotel industry as well as the tourism services. The theoretical arguments discuss the objectives of Halal certification in influencing the perception of Muslims travelers, encouraging tourism development, and maintaining the compliance of the services provided with Islamic laws. Halal Certification in Hospitality: Analyses how the certification of hotels and other services as Halal affects customer satisfaction and productivity in the tourism and hospitality industry. Service Quality and Consumer Behavior links Halal certification to service quality where adherence to Islamic standards contributes to improved client satisfaction which in turn affect behavioral variables like customer loyalty and frequency of visits.

The framework that guides this study focuses on the Halal certification process and its impact on hotel performance, such as food handling, staff training, facility management, etc., derived from the research findings (e.g., Abdul Karim et al., 2022), how the adherence to Halal standards affects operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and overall hotel performance (Abukhalifeh et al., 2020). Furthermore, reflecting on how meeting Halal standards opens new market opportunities for both international and local Muslim tourists (Aziza et al., 2020).

Methodology

The study uses purposive sampling and an inductive, cross-sectional design to explore Halal certification in Maldives' tourism. It collects primary data through semi-structured interviews with stakeholders like Muslim tourists, Hoteliers, Government Tourism officials and Islamic Affairs experts. Secondary data comes from scholarly literature. Using software for content analysis, the qualitative case study approach aims to uncover insights and patterns, aligning with research objectives for a comprehensive understanding of Halal certification in Maldivian tourism.

This research uses non-probability purposive sampling to investigate Halal certification integration in the Maldives' tourism sector. By interviewing at least twenty key stakeholders - including Muslim tourists, Hoteliers, Government Tourism officials, Islamic Affairs experts, and continuing until data saturation is reached. Additionally, by analyzing data from different three countries, the study provides targeted insights and comprehensive qualitative findings despite potential sample bias.

This research employs an inductive approach using semi-structured interviews and secondary data to explore Halal certification in the Maldives' tourism sector. By analyzing patterns and insights from interviews and literature, the study aims to develop new theories and comprehensive qualitative findings, leveraging interpretivism and pragmatism as complementary paradigms.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted, incorporating open-ended questions which will be carried out through phone calls and face to face for personalized insights, observations to enhance understanding of Halal tourism practices, and secondary data analysis to identify certification commonalities and disparities across countries.

This study will employ Content Analysis using NVivo software to systematically analyze primary interview data and secondary textual sources, identifying key themes and insights on Halal certification in Maldives' tourism.

Conclusion

Further the study will continue with conducting interviews, analyze data, and upon the results of the finding provide recommendations.

Keywords: Halal Certification, Halal Tourism, Halal Tourism Market, Halal-Friendly Tourism, Halal-Conscious Travelers, Maldives' Journey to the Global Halal Tourism, Muslim Tourists, Navigating the Tourism Landscape.

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PGRC-027

Using Stakeholder Salience Theory to Explore the Mediating Role of Non-Government Organizations in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development

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Abstract

Rural areas, often in developing countries, face low population density, poverty, and poor human development. Traditional industries, such as agriculture and natural resources, have declined, necessitating the exploration of alternative economic sources. Rural tourism, which focuses on rural communities, offers unexploited ecological environments and wild places. This form of tourism provides opportunities for residents, private sector, government, and stakeholders to sustain relationships and build social capital, contributing to the sustainability of rural landscapes and destination competitiveness.

The competitiveness and sustainability of rural tourism requires an inclusive strategy involving multi-stakeholder participation. However, local governments often lack the necessary capacity to initiate such initiatives, especially in developing countries with high demands for investment in health, education, and infrastructure. This makes tourism development a low priority in budget formulation. To address this, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are often tapped as development partners in rural areas, such as in the Philippines, where poverty is a significant issue. NGOs offer social services, technical assistance, and advocate for environmental, human, minority, and civil rights.

In rural development literature, several studies have provided evidence that Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are one of the many stakeholders involved in rural and community development. However, limited studies have been published in the past decades that highlight the role of NGOs in the context of rural and community tourism development in the Philippines in particular and in developing countries in general. Most of the published articles in refereed journals related to tourism, leisure, management, and marketing tend to focus on residents and communities, tourism enterprise and private sectors, and the government. Using a case study approach, the study charted the role of NGO in the early stage of rural tourism development in the rural destination of Inopacan, Leyte. This 4th-class municipality in Leyte, Philippines, faces challenges due to its dependence on agriculture and fisheries. With an estimated 21,389 population in 2020, many residents need alternative livelihood options. Because of the unfavorable economic condition, the municipality receives developmental support from academic and non-government organizations. The local government aims to develop tourism due to its unique topography, high-quality resources, and scenic islands, mountains, falls, marine environment, and cultural sites. Data were gathered through in-depth key informant interviews, and participant observation and involvement as one of the academic partners in the tourism development process of the study area. The study is guided by the combined models of stakeholder salience and competitiveness and sustainability of Ritchie and Crouch as analytical frameworks.

The study revealed that the non-government organization in the selected case is a highly salient stakeholder possessing power, legitimacy, and urgency. These characteristics enabled the NGO to perform various mediating roles including coalesce local partners, enable participatory and collaborative development planning approach, implement training and human development initiatives, catalyze the strategic development process, and facilitate data collection and

collation using technology-based approach. These roles are evident in the early stage of tourism development where the need for multi-stakeholder support and collaboration is a must.

This paper extends the literature on the non-government organization in the rural tourism context and provides evidence for a new analytical framework to understand the stakeholders' role in tourism development.

Keywords: stakeholder salience theory; non-government organization; rural tourism development; competitiveness and sustainability model; tourism development process

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PGRC-028

Analysis of The Implementation of Customer Relationship Management Towards Guest Satisfaction at Kita Restaurant Park Hyatt Jakarta

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Abstract

This study looks into how a customer relationship management (CRM) software affects KITA Restaurant, a Park Hyatt Jakarta restaurant, in terms of visitor satisfaction. The restaurant aims to study how the deployment of CRM, specifically its dimensions of technology, people, and process, effects customer satisfaction because the hospitality industry is becoming more and more dependent on these systems to nurture stronger client connections. CRM systems provide a structured way to enhancing service quality, optimizing client engagement, and guaranteeing long-term loyalty as restaurants compete to produce great service. The goal of this study is to evaluate how the CRM program influences the experiences of the patrons, specifically with regard to their contentment with the services they received, interest in visiting again, and propensity to refer other people to the restaurant. Along with improving customer happiness, the project intends to advance scholarly knowledge of CRM's role with a particular emphasis on its use in fine dining environments.

The theoretical underpinnings of CRM and customer satisfaction in relation to the restaurant business are first examined in this study. Prior research has demonstrated that CRM systems which are intended to oversee and enhance client interactions are essential for comprehending consumer behavior, encouraging return business, and raising satisfaction levels. CRM combines several aspects of customer service, including as staff involvement, technology use, and efficient procedures, all of which improve the entire experience of the visitor. The precise effects of technology, people, and process (the three CRM dimensions) on visitor satisfaction in the fine dining industry, however, have not received as much attention. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to close that gap by investigating how these factors affect the overall experience that customers have at KITA Restaurant.

The study uses a quantitative research approach to meet its goals, gathering information from restaurant patrons via a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire includes questions about how customers feel about the restaurant's CRM system, how satisfied they are overall, and how likely they are to suggest or return. The CRM program, which is broken down into the areas of technology, people, and process, and guest satisfaction which includes service alignment, desire in returning, and willingness to recommend are among the variables being examined. The study was completed by 100 respondents, all of them were KITA Restaurant patrons. Descriptive statistics, linear regression, and t-tests were used to evaluate the data in order to ascertain the degree to which the CRM program influences guest satisfaction as well as the specific CRM aspects that have the greatest impact on the customer experience.

The study's findings indicate that KITA Restaurant's guest satisfaction has greatly benefited from the CRM program. With a mean score of 4.03, the restaurant's CRM initiatives are generally viewed as beneficial by patrons, especially when it comes to technology, people, and procedure. Comparably, the average guest satisfaction score is 4.07, indicating that respondents were well satisfied. The CRM program and guest satisfaction have a positive link, according to the linear regression analysis, which has a beta value of 0.259 and a constant coefficient of 46.198. This implies that there is a 0.259-unit improvement in guest satisfaction for every unit increase in the CRM program's efficacy. Additionally, the t-test results which have a t-value of 8.691 higher than the t-table value of 1.971 confirm that the CRM program has a considerable impact on visitor satisfaction. The study also discovers that, according to the R-

squared value, the CRM program explains 39.2% of the variation in visitor satisfaction, with characteristics other than those covered in this study accounting for the remaining 60.8% of the variation.

The study finds varying findings on the individual CRM dimensions. With a t-value of 2.198, it is discovered that the technology dimension significantly improves passenger satisfaction. This suggests that utilizing cutting-edge technological solutions, including reservation management and tailored service recommendations, improves the whole guest experience. With a t-value of 5.414, the process dimension likewise has a substantial positive effect, suggesting that simplified operational procedures, such as effective transactions and problem solving, are critical to guaranteeing visitor happiness. The people dimension, on the other hand, does not demonstrate a statistically significant effect on visitor satisfaction because its t-value of 1.827 is below the cutoff. This dimension relates to staff involvement and interpersonal service. This implies that although procedures and technology play a significant part in determining guest happiness, more research or development is needed to fully understand how staff members affect patron experiences at KITA Restaurant.

Based on these results, the study comes to the conclusion that CRM programs especially the technology and process-related ones are essential for raising patron satisfaction in fine dining establishments. CRM and visitor happiness have a positive link, which emphasizes how crucial it is to combine technology with effective procedures to provide high-caliber service that lives up to consumer expectations. Nonetheless, the negligible influence of the people dimension indicates that more research is necessary to determine how restaurant employees may enhance customer happiness. The findings show that although technology and more efficient procedures can improve the visitor experience, interpersonal service is still an area that needs improvement.

There are two ways that this study has ramifications. First, the results imply that restaurant managers can greatly increase customer satisfaction by making investments in cutting-edge CRM tools and streamlining operational procedures. Managers ought to concentrate on improving the technological features of their CRM systems, making sure that they are responsive, easy to use, and able to customize the visitor experience. Maintaining high levels of visitor satisfaction also depends on making sure operational procedures like reservation management and problem-solving are seamless and effective. Second, the study emphasizes the significance of investigating additional factors, such as food quality, perceived value, and service quality, that may affect visitor satisfaction for future researchers. Additionally, qualitative research techniques like interviews could be used to learn more about the ways in which certain CRM features affect the visitor experience. Future research in this field will have a strong base thanks to this study, especially in the fine dining industry where the significance of CRM in enhancing customer happiness is increasing.

To sum up, this study shows that CRM programs especially those with a focus on technology and processes are essential for raising customer satisfaction levels at KITA Restaurant. Even though the results show that procedures and technology have a big influence on the visitor experience, more research is needed to determine how restaurant employees affect patron happiness. The study serves as a foundation for further research in this area and provides restaurant managers with useful insights for enhancing customer satisfaction through the use of CRM systems.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Guest Satisfaction, Technology Integration, Fine Dining, Restaurant Management, Service Quality.

PGRC-029

Exploring Romblon Island's Tourism Dynamics: A Comprehensive Analysis of Visitor Profiles, Travel Behaviors, and Motivational Factors

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Abstract

Romblon Island, part of the larger Romblon province known as the Marble Capital of the Philippines, is emerging as a distinct tourist destination with its unique blend of natural beauty, historical sites, and rich cultural heritage. While the province as a whole has seen increased tourism, with 60,196 guest arrivals recorded in 2017, specific data for Romblon Island is lacking. This gap in localized tourism information hinders targeted development and marketing efforts for the island. Despite its potential, the municipal tourism office of Romblon Island lacks comprehensive research on visitor profiles and motivations, which is crucial for effective tourism planning and sustainable growth.

This study aims to address this knowledge gap by conducting a focused assessment of Romblon Island's tourist market and its travel motivations. The research will analyze tourists' socio-demographic profiles, including age, nationality, education, and income, as well as their travel behaviors such as length of stay, travel companions, and expenditure patterns specifically on Romblon Island. Additionally, the study will explore both the push and pull factors that motivate tourists to choose Romblon Island as their destination. By providing this island-specific data, the research seeks to inform strategic tourism development for Romblon Island, enhance targeted market segmentation, and ultimately contribute to the growth and sustainability of the island's tourism industry within the broader context of Romblon province.

This descriptive research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a self-prepared survey questionnaire to collect data from 120 local and foreign tourists in Romblon Island, Philippines. The sample was selected through purposive and convenience sampling at various tourist spots. The questionnaire, validated by experts and pre-tested for reliability, comprised three parts: demographic profile, travel information, and motivational factors. Data collection was conducted in person, with surveys administered in English and taking 15-20 minutes to complete. The study ensured ethical considerations by obtaining permission and maintaining respondent confidentiality. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations, to examine demographic profiles and identify significant motivational factors for choosing Romblon Island as a travel destination. Results were presented using tables, graphs, and charts for clear interpretation.

The study revealed diverse characteristics and motivations among tourists visiting Romblon Island. Demographically, most respondents were young adults (18-35 years), predominantly female, and local Filipino tourists. Most were single and college-educated, with a significant portion working as teachers. Travel behavior analysis showed that many visitors originated from nearby Tablas Island, often traveling with 1-2 companions, primarily friends or family. Visitors' main purposes were seeing friends and leisure, with moderate spending patterns (P1,000-P10,000). Information about Romblon was mainly obtained through personal connections and social media. Key motivational factors for visiting Romblon included the desire to escape routines, seek relaxation, explore new places, pursue personal growth, engage in social interaction, and experience adventure.

The findings highlight Romblon Island's appeal as a destination for local tourists seeking a blend of social connections, relaxation, and novel experiences. To enhance tourism, it is essential to

tailor marketing strategies to the specific target market, leverage social networks for promotion, develop diverse tourism products and experiences, increase visitor spending, improve infrastructure, and prioritize sustainable practices. By implementing these strategies, Romblon Island can create a more appealing and sustainable destination, benefiting both the local community and visitors alike.

In conclusion, Romblon Island, primarily attracting a young, local, and female demographic, offers diverse experiences for visitors seeking escape, relaxation, and adventure. Social networks play a crucial role in influencing travel decisions to the island. While spending patterns are moderate, there's potential to increase the local tourism value chain through strategic development. Sustainable tourism practices are essential to preserve Romblon Island's unique attributes. By leveraging its appeal to its current market and exploring opportunities for broader appeal, Romblon Island can enhance its position as a desirable destination in the Philippines. Future tourism strategies should focus on balancing the needs of its current market while exploring opportunities to broaden its appeal and increase its economic impact.

Keywords: Romblon Island tourists, Romblon tourism, tourist market, travel behavior, travel motivation

PGRC-030

Technology and Employment: Examining the Job Displacement and Cost Efficiency of Fast-Food Sector in Marikina City

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Abstract

The fast-food industry is experiencing a shift to automation and more particularly in the City of Marikina where there is a rapid adoption of technology. This study poses the problem of job displacement due to automation and how its barely seen costs on the fast-food business are worth it, largely in addressing the question whether performance is raised by the use of machines and how this disrupts employment. The research seeks to build up the existing literature on automation to the context of the present working populace in the fast-food industry.

The study employs the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Whaleboat students' automation, perceived usefulness and ease of use. This framework is used in looking at how fast-food chains try to get on with the new technology without losing its purpose i.e. cost and how to deal with the workers' issue.

A quantitative research framework was used, which involved only 30 respondents (managers and employees) from particular fast-food chains in Marikina City. Data was collected using the structured questionnaire method, aimed at gauging the knowledge on the effect of automation on job performance and costs. The study bas was taken within a 3 months period, after which statistics on the results were evaluated to make inferences on the results of automation.

From the findings, 71% of the respondents claimed that automation positively affects productivity as it reduces the time spent waiting and errors made. However, this was not without worries on job losses that were predominant among the youth. The respondents indicated 'cost cutting' as one of the gains of use of machine in regards to ordering and preparing meals. However, respondents indicated more difficulty with order filling that was complex in nature. Nonetheless, the process of unjustified fear of job loss has increased productivity through maximization of customers.

The findings of the study imply that although automation aids in improving operational efficiency, it calls for the establishment of retraining programs geared towards people most affected by job losses which encourages a more sustainable use of technology in the fast-food business.

Keywords: Automation, Job displacement, Cost-efficiency, Fast-food industry, Marikina City

PGRC-031

A Study of the Determinants of Students' Entrepreneurial Intention among Final Year Hospitality University Students in Malaysian HEIs: The Moderating effect of Psychological Capital

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship education has gained considerable attention as a strategic tool for enhancing the employability of graduates, especially within fields such as hospitality, where the dynamic and competitive market demands adaptive, innovative, and entrepreneurial mindsets. Strengthening entrepreneurship education by integrating entrepreneurial values into the curriculum is viewed as a pivotal approach to improving students' marketability upon graduation. Recognizing this, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has implemented various policies to embed entrepreneurship education across all higher education institutions (HEIs) with the goal of fostering an entrepreneurial culture and encouraging student enrolment in entrepreneurship-related courses and activities. These initiatives align with Malaysia's broader economic goals of nurturing a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem that can support innovation and drive economic growth, particularly in sectors like hospitality, which plays a significant role in the national economy.

Hospitality, as a sector, offers unique challenges and opportunities, with entrepreneurship seen as a key driver for addressing the evolving needs of the market, creating jobs, and offering sustainable business solutions. However, while the emphasis on entrepreneurship education is clear, the determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among hospitality students remain underexplored. Understanding these determinants is critical to formulating effective educational strategies that not only instill entrepreneurial knowledge but also foster the desire and capability to act on entrepreneurial opportunities. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the factors that shape entrepreneurial intentions among Malaysian hospitality students, with a specific focus on the moderating role of psychological capital.

Entrepreneurial intentions, defined as the individual's desire to start or manage a new business, are influenced by several psychological, sociocultural, and educational factors. The theoretical framework guiding this study integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with additional constructs such as perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, propensity to act, and subjective norms, to better understand how students formulate entrepreneurial intentions. Perceived desirability reflects the individual's attitude toward entrepreneurship and whether it is seen as an attractive career path. Perceived feasibility relates to the individual's self-assessed ability to successfully start and manage a business, while propensity to act captures the readiness or willingness to take action when opportunities arise. Subjective norms, derived from social influences, play a role in shaping individuals' decisions based on the perceived support or pressure from family, peers, and society.

Psychological capital, a relatively new concept in entrepreneurship research, refers to an individual's positive psychological state characterized by high levels of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. This construct is particularly relevant in the context of entrepreneurship education, as individuals with strong psychological capital are more likely to persist in the face of challenges, perceive risks as manageable, and maintain confidence in their ability to achieve entrepreneurial success. Thus, psychological capital may serve as a moderating factor that enhances the relationship between the aforementioned determinants and entrepreneurial intentions. By examining the moderating role of psychological capital, this study aims to shed light

on the importance of developing psychological resources alongside entrepreneurial skills in educational settings.

To achieve the research objectives, this study adopts a quantitative research design, utilizing an online survey to gather data from final-year hospitality students at six (6) Malaysian public and private universities. These students, who are nearing graduation and are preparing to enter the workforce, represent a crucial population for studying entrepreneurial intentions. The survey will capture responses on key variables including perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, propensity to act, subjective norms, entrepreneurial intentions, and psychological capital. Probability sampling, specifically systematic sampling, will be employed to ensure that the sample is representative of the larger student population across these institutions. The collected data will be analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), a robust statistical technique well-suited for testing complex theoretical models and exploring the relationships between latent constructs.

The expected findings of this research are anticipated to reveal several significant insights. First, the study is likely to identify which dimensions of entrepreneurial intention – such as perceived desirability, perceived feasibility, and subjective norms – are most influential in shaping hospitality students' entrepreneurial aspirations. Understanding the relative importance of these factors can guide educators and policymakers in designing more targeted and effective entrepreneurship education programs. Second, the study is expected to confirm that psychological capital plays a significant moderating role in enhancing entrepreneurial intentions. Specifically, students with higher levels of psychological capital may exhibit stronger entrepreneurial intentions even when other determinants, such as perceived feasibility or subjective norms, are lower. This finding would underscore the importance of cultivating psychological capital alongside entrepreneurship education to fully equip students with the resilience, confidence, and optimism needed to pursue entrepreneurial careers in the competitive hospitality sector.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its integration of psychological capital into the established TPB framework for entrepreneurial intentions. While the TPB has been widely used to explain entrepreneurial behavior, the inclusion of psychological capital as a moderator offers a novel extension that accounts for the role of positive psychological resources in shaping entrepreneurial mindsets. This expanded model can serve as a foundation for future research exploring the interplay between psychological factors and entrepreneurial behavior in different cultural and industry contexts.

From a practical perspective, the findings of this research will have direct implications for higher education institutions (HEIs) and curriculum developers. By highlighting the key determinants of entrepreneurial intentions and the moderating role of psychological capital, the study will provide actionable insights into how entrepreneurship education can be optimized to produce more entrepreneurial graduates. Specifically, HEIs can emphasize the development of psychological capital through experiential learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and activities that build students' self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Such interventions will not only enhance students' entrepreneurial intentions but also prepare them to face the uncertainties and challenges of the entrepreneurial journey with greater confidence and perseverance.

Moreover, the study's focus on hospitality students – a group often overlooked in entrepreneurship research – adds to the understanding of how entrepreneurship education can be tailored to the specific needs of different academic disciplines. The hospitality industry, with its emphasis on service, creativity, and adaptability, offers unique opportunities for entrepreneurial ventures, from starting independent businesses to developing innovative service solutions within established organizations. As such, fostering entrepreneurial intentions in hospitality students can contribute to the growth of the industry and the broader economy by encouraging the creation of new businesses and the revitalization of existing ones.

In conclusion, this research will provide valuable insights into the factors that drive entrepreneurial intentions among hospitality students in Malaysia and the role that psychological capital plays in enhancing these intentions. By demonstrating the significance of psychological capital, the study will offer a compelling case for HEIs to invest not only in entrepreneurship education but also in the psychological development of their students. Such an approach will better prepare graduates to succeed in the competitive and rapidly changing hospitality industry, positioning them as future entrepreneurs and innovators who can contribute to the growth and sustainability of the sector.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Education, Entrepreneurial Intention, Hospitality Students, Psychological Capital

PGRC-032

Business Performance of Restaurants in The CALABARZON Region: The Effects of Resilience, Self-Efficacy, Passion, and Innovation

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Abstract

The CALABARZON region, home to over 16 million residents and a key hub for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Philippines, faced significant disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the most affected sectors was hospitality, with restaurants experiencing severe operational challenges due to lockdowns, social distancing protocols, and reduced consumer spending. Many restaurants were forced to close temporarily or adapt their business models, such as shifting to takeout and delivery services. Despite these challenges, the crisis also showcased the resilience and innovative capacity of restaurant operators, who had to respond quickly to unprecedented market changes. This study addresses an essential gap in the literature by evaluating how resilience, entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), and entrepreneurial passion (EP) contribute to business performance in the restaurant sector, particularly during a crisis.

The research aimed to assess the business performance of small and medium-sized restaurants in the CALABARZON region amidst the pandemic, focusing on resilience, ESE, EP, and innovation. The study also explored the mediating effects of human capital, a factor often overlooked in restaurant performance studies. Grounded in Social Cognitive Theory, the study utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) via STATA to analyze data collected from 400 restaurant operators, including owners, managers, and operational decision-makers, who had been running their businesses for at least three years prior to the pandemic. The data was gathered using adaptive questionnaires, distributed through both Google Forms and face-to-face interactions, which provided a comprehensive snapshot of the industry's current state.

The findings reveal several critical insights into the current state of the restaurant industry in CALABARZON. A notable 85.8% of respondents had completed a college degree, yet a significant proportion (58.5%) lacked formal business or management training, and 81.5% reported no formal entrepreneurial or hospitality training. These gaps in formal education and training did not prevent operators from displaying strong resilience (mean = 5.20) and entrepreneurial self-efficacy (mean = 5.10). However, while resilience did not have a direct impact on business performance (p-value = 0.252) or innovation, entrepreneurial self-efficacy proved to be a vital driver, positively influencing both business performance (p-value = 0.036) and innovation (p-value = 0.000). Entrepreneurial passion also played a significant role, positively affecting business performance (p-value = 0.002), ESE (p-value = 0.000), and innovation (p-value = 0.001). Innovation activities, particularly those implemented during the pandemic, such as adapting menus and enhancing digital engagement, were crucial in maintaining operations and sustaining customer relationships. Innovation had a direct and significant impact on improving business performance (p-value = 0.000), highlighting the importance of creativity and adaptation in times of crisis.

The study also examined the mediating effects of human capital, focusing on variables such as educational attainment, prior ownership, management experience, and industry-related expertise. Educational attainment did not mediate the relationship between resilience, ESE, EP, innovation, and business performance. However, prior ownership and management experience partially mediated the effect of entrepreneurial self-efficacy and passion on business performance, indicating that experience in managing businesses during crises can enhance the positive impact of these traits. Entrepreneurial qualifications, in particular, fully mediated the relationship between resilience and business performance (p-value = 0.028), suggesting that

formal entrepreneurial skills, combined with resilience, significantly contribute to better business outcomes.

The implications of this study are substantial, both in theoretical and practical terms. From a theoretical perspective, the research extends the understanding of how entrepreneurial traits such as self-efficacy and passion influence business performance, particularly in SMEs within the hospitality sector. The findings align with Social Cognitive Theory, reinforcing the idea that personal traits like resilience and entrepreneurial passion are critical in shaping behavior and outcomes in business settings. More importantly, the study highlights that while resilience is essential for coping with crises, its impact on business performance is primarily mediated through other factors like entrepreneurial self-efficacy. This insight suggests that the development of resilience alone may not be enough to drive business success; it must be accompanied by a strong sense of self-efficacy and the ability to innovate in response to market changes.

On a practical level, the study has several significant implications for restaurant operators, industry stakeholders, and policymakers. Firstly, the research underscores the need for formal training and continuous skill development in entrepreneurial and hospitality management. The gaps identified in the operators' formal training suggest that targeted educational programs could enhance resilience, self-efficacy, and innovation capabilities, particularly during crises. Policymakers and industry associations should focus on developing accessible training programs that address these gaps, emphasizing practical skills that can be immediately applied in business settings. These programs should include modules on crisis management, digital transformation, and innovative business models, given the importance of innovation in sustaining operations during the pandemic.

Secondly, the study suggests that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and passion are crucial drivers of business performance. Industry stakeholders should consider developing mentorship programs that foster these traits among restaurant operators. Encouraging operators to engage in peer learning, networking events, and mentorship opportunities could help them build confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities and enhance their passion for their businesses. Additionally, fostering a culture of innovation should be prioritized. The research shows that innovation, particularly in times of crisis, is a key determinant of business performance. Operators should be encouraged to continuously seek out new ways to adapt their products, services, and business models to meet changing consumer demands. Policymakers and business organizations could support this by providing grants or subsidies for innovation-driven initiatives, such as developing new technologies, improving delivery services, or implementing digital marketing strategies.

Lastly, the findings suggest that human capital, particularly prior ownership and management experience, plays a critical role in mediating the effects of entrepreneurial traits on business performance. This has significant implications for recruitment and hiring practices in the hospitality sector. Restaurant owners should prioritize hiring individuals with entrepreneurial experience and management skills, particularly those who have demonstrated success in navigating past crises. Additionally, operators should be encouraged to invest in their own professional development, seeking out opportunities to enhance their entrepreneurial qualifications through formal education or on-the-job training.

In conclusion, this study makes a valuable contribution to the literature on the intersection of resilience, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, entrepreneurial passion, and innovation in the context of small and medium-sized restaurants during crises. While resilience alone may not directly affect business outcomes, its role in enhancing self-efficacy and facilitating innovation is crucial. The study also highlights the mediating role of human capital, particularly entrepreneurial qualifications and management experience, in driving business performance. These insights are particularly relevant for the restaurant industry in developing economies like the Philippines, where small and medium-sized enterprises form the backbone of the economy.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of resilience, ESE, and EP on business performance, particularly as the restaurant industry continues to recover from the pandemic. Additionally, future studies could examine the role of digital transformation, customer satisfaction, and community engagement as additional variables influencing business performance. A more diverse sample, including restaurants from other regions and countries, could provide a broader understanding of the factors that drive success in the hospitality industry during and after crises.

Keywords: business performance; entrepreneurial self-efficacy; entrepreneurial passion; resilience; innovation; hospitality industry

PGRC-033

Integrating Technology with Tradition: Leveraging Digital Tools for Sustainable Cultural Heritage Tourism at the Dazu Rock Carvings

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Abstract

As a dual driving force to promote economic development and cultural protection, cultural heritage tourism has attracted more and more attention from all over the world(Cai et al., 2021; Yang & Wall, 2022; S. Zhang et al., 2023). Cultural heritage is not only a symbol of a country's history and culture, but also an important resource for the local economy, especially in areas with strong tourism(Škrabić Perić et al., 2021; Zunaidi et al., 2022). However, as the number of visitors continues to increase, many cultural heritage sites face increasing physical degradation, environmental pressures, and resource management challenges(Mejjad et al., 2022; Yang & Wall, 2022). Dazu rock carvings, as a representative cultural heritage of Chongqing, China, have become one of the most important cultural heritage in China due to their unique religious and artistic value(Z. Li et al., 2020; Tang et al., 2024a, 2024b). In 1999, the Dazu stone carvings were listed as a world cultural heritage by UNESCO, and were also included in the list of China's national intangible cultural heritage, which has attracted wide attention from academic circles and tourism at home and abroad(Tang et al., 2024a).

Although the Dazu rock carvings attract a large number of tourists due to their unique cultural and historical value, the site also faces a serious risk of material damage(Sun, 2023). The increase in the number of visitors has led to an increase in the natural weathering of the artifacts, and the surface carvings have problems such as wear and tear, contamination and structural damage(Gomaa, n.d.; Hassan, 2020; Stanaszek-Tomal, 2020). In addition, the influx of tourists has increased the pressure on the surrounding environment, and the deterioration of the ecological environment is further threatening the sustainability of the site(Baloch et al., 2023). Therefore, striking a balance between meeting the needs of tourists for cultural experience and protecting fragile cultural heritage has become an important challenge for site managers.

In recent years, the rapid development of digital technology has provided new solutions for the protection and management of cultural heritage(Skublewska-Paszkowska et al., 2022; Taormina & Baraldi, 2023). The application of technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) has become a key tool to promote the sustainable development of cultural heritage(Cranmer et al., 2023). These technologies provide visitors with an immersive experience that meets the need for an interactive, personalized experience while reducing direct contact with the site and preserving the physical integrity of the site(Augello et al., 2021). Through digital technology, visitors can explore the historical and cultural background of the Dazu rock carvings in a virtual environment, reducing the load on the actual site(X. Li, 2024). In addition, the smart tourism platform provides visitors with a deeper cultural experience through personalized tours, interactive content and cultural background information, enhancing their sense of cultural identity and participation(Leung, 2022). The application of digital technology provides new management tools for Dazu rock carvings and other cultural heritage sites, which can not only effectively cope with the material degradation and environmental pressure brought about by tourism, but also enhance the cultural experience of tourists in innovative ways, providing strong support for the long-term protection of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism development(Leung, 2022; Z. Li et al., 2020).

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the application of digital technology in heritage site management, especially through VR, AR and smart tourism platforms, how to enhance the visitor experience and promote local economic development while preserving the Dazu Rock Carvings. Specific research objectives include:

1. To explore how digital technology can enhance tourists' sense of cultural engagement and identity.
2. To assess the potential of these technologies to reduce the physical wear and tear and environmental impact of the site.
3. To explore the potential contribution of smart tourism technologies to the economy of local communities.
4. To identify the implementation challenges and future opportunities of digital technologies in cultural heritage management.

Methodology

This study adopted a multi-party statutory study design to comprehensively analyze the application of digital technology in cultural heritage tourism (Shu et al., 2023). Firstly through a literature review, the latest research in related fields, including the role of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and smart tourism platforms in cultural heritage conservation and sustainable tourism, was systematically reviewed. This literature review not only provides a theoretical basis for this study, but also helps to identify the knowledge gaps and future development directions of current research. Secondly, this study takes the Dazu rock carvings as the main case and uses the case analysis method to deeply explore the specific practices of the site in implementing digital technology, and compares them with other cultural heritage sites (such as the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang) to evaluate the experience and challenges of different cultural heritage sites in the application of digital technology (Li et al., 2022; Zhao, 2024). In addition, through semi-structured interviews, this study gathers practical insights from site managers, technology providers, and local governments, exploring the effectiveness of these stakeholders' use of digital technologies and their practical role in heritage conservation. This multi-method research design ensures the diversity and depth of data sources, and provides a reliable theoretical and practical basis for research (Zhang & Dong, 2024).

Expected results

It is expected that this study will find that VR, AR and smart tourism platforms can significantly improve tourists' sense of cultural engagement and identity(Lee & Jan, 2022). These technologies will allow visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural value of the Dazu Rock Carvings through an immersive experience, thereby raising their awareness of their responsibility for cultural heritage. Second, it is expected that these digital tools will reduce direct visitor contact with artefacts, thereby reducing the physical wear and tear and environmental impact of the site(Xie, 2022). In addition, the smart tourism platform is expected to have a positive impact on the local economy by extending the length of stay of tourists and increasing their interest and consumption of the local culture through personalized guided tours and cultural contextual explanations(Lee & Jan, 2022).

Expected conclusions

It is expected that this study will conclude that the application of digital technologies in cultural heritage conservation and tourism management has important potential. By integrating VR, AR and smart tourism platforms, heritage sites can further promote the sustainable development of cultural heritage by providing visitors with a rich cultural interaction experience while reducing physical wear and tear. However, the successful implementation of these technologies may be challenged by high initial investment, technical maintenance, and training of

managers(Apriyandi, 2024). Therefore, future policies should support the digital transformation of heritage sites, providing the necessary financial and technical support to ensure the long-term effectiveness of these tools in heritage conservation. Through the cooperation of all parties, the protection of cultural heritage sites and the sustainable development of tourism can be expected to achieve a win-win situation (Marto et al., 2021).

The implications of the study

The findings of this study have important practical implications for cultural heritage managers, policymakers, and technology providers. First, for cultural heritage managers, this study provides practical guidance on how to effectively integrate digital technologies to balance heritage conservation with visitor experience(Liu, 2020). Through the use of virtual reality and augmented reality, heritage managers are able to enhance the immersive experience of visitors while reducing physical contact, thereby preserving the physical integrity of the heritage(Han et al., 2021). Second, for policymakers, the results of the study will inform the formulation of policies to support the digital development of heritage sites. Policymakers should encourage sites to use advanced technologies for sustainable tourism development and adopt regulations to ensure the rational use of digital tools(Johnston et al., 2020). Finally, this study points the way for technology providers to develop innovative digital solutions for cultural heritage sites. By working with heritage managers, technology companies can design user-friendly and scalable technology solutions that are more in line with heritage conservation needs(Poux et al., 2020).

Keywords: Cultural heritage tourism; virtual reality; augmented reality; digital tools; sustainable tourism；Dazu rock carvings

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PGRC-034

Battling for China's Existing Hotel Market: Founders' Narratives of Transformation Paths— A Case Study of Independent Hotels in Shenzhen

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Abstract

The Chinese hotel industry has witnessed unprecedented growth over the past few decades, fuelled by rapid urbanization, economic development, and a surge in both domestic and international tourism. This expansion has led to a highly competitive and saturated market, especially in major cities like Shenzhen—a global technology hub and gateway to China's economy. Independent hotels, which once thrived by offering personalized services and unique local experiences, are now facing immense pressure from international hotel chains and aggressive domestic brands that benefit from economies of scale, advanced technology, and extensive marketing resources. Additionally, the advent of digital platforms, changing consumer behaviours, and heightened expectations for service quality and innovation have further intensified competition.

Despite the critical role that independent hotels play in diversifying the hospitality landscape and promoting local culture, there is a noticeable gap in academic research focusing on their strategies to survive and grow in saturated markets. Existing literature predominantly addresses the expansion and operational efficiencies of large hotel chains, leaving the adaptive strategies of smaller, founder-led establishments underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of independent hotel founders in Shenzhen. By capturing their firsthand perspectives, the research seeks to uncover how these entrepreneurs identify and leverage opportunities within a crowded market, respond to evolving consumer preferences, and implement innovative strategies for reverse growth. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on founders' narratives, offering fresh insights into entrepreneurial resilience, strategic adaptation, and innovation in the hospitality industry. The research contributes to theoretical discussions on how founder-driven initiatives can influence organizational success in challenging market conditions.

Methodology

Adopting a qualitative research approach, this study utilizes first-hand interview data collected from fifteen founders of independent hotels in Shenzhen. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of experiences and strategies. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews allowed founders to share detailed narratives of their entrepreneurial journeys, market observations, strategic adaptations, and resource utilization. The interviews covered themes such as motivations for entering the hotel industry, challenges faced in a saturated market, strategies for differentiation, and visions for future growth. The data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis with NVivo software. This method facilitated the identification of recurrent themes and patterns, enabling an in-depth exploration of the founders' perspectives and the strategic nuances of their approaches to market challenges.

Results

The thematic analysis revealed several critical strategies and insights employed by the founders:

1. Strategic Opportunity Recognition: Founders exhibited a profound ability to identify and exploit niche markets within the saturated hotel industry. They capitalized on gaps such as the lack of personalized services for business travelers, the demand for culturally immersive

experiences among millennials, and the need for affordable luxury accommodations. This strategic positioning allowed them to attract specific customer segments that were underserved by larger hotel chains.

2. Dynamic Branding and Rebranding Efforts: Many founders undertook comprehensive rebranding initiatives to rejuvenate their hotel's image and appeal. This included redefining brand identity to align with contemporary trends, such as emphasizing eco-friendliness, local cultural integration, or wellness-focused amenities. They leveraged storytelling in their branding efforts to create emotional connections with guests, enhancing brand loyalty.

3. Innovative Marketing Strategies: The utilization of digital marketing platforms emerged as a common strategy. Founders invested in social media marketing, search engine optimization, and collaborations with online travel agencies. Some engaged influencers and bloggers to reach wider audiences, while others created virtual tours and interactive content to engage potential guests. These efforts increased their online visibility and allowed for targeted marketing campaigns.

4. Resource Optimization and Technological Integration: Founders focused on maximizing the efficiency of existing resources. Investments were made in technology solutions like property management systems, mobile check-in/out services, and personalized guest apps. These technologies improved operational efficiency, reduced costs, and enhanced guest experiences without the need for substantial capital expenditure.

5. Emphasis on Unique Guest Experiences: Differentiation through unique offerings was a key strategy. Founders incorporated local art, culture, and history into their hotel designs and services. Some offered themed rooms, curated local experiences, and personalized itineraries. By providing services that large chains could not easily replicate, they created a distinctive market position.

6. Building Strategic Partnerships: Collaboration with local businesses, tourism boards, and community organizations allowed founders to expand their service offerings. These partnerships facilitated the creation of package deals, event hosting, and participation in local festivals, further enhancing their appeal to guests seeking authentic experiences.

7. Adaptation to Market Feedback: A proactive approach to customer feedback enabled continuous improvement. Founders implemented systems to collect and analyze guest reviews, using the insights to refine services and address issues promptly. This responsiveness fostered higher customer satisfaction and repeat business.

The combination of these strategies led to measurable successes, such as increased occupancy rates, higher average revenue per available room (RevPAR), and improved online ratings. Founders reported that their hotels gained recognition for excellence in service and unique guest experiences, contributing to sustainable growth despite the saturated market conditions.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the success of independent hotels in Shenzhen's saturated market hinges on the founders' ability to adapt and innovate. By recognizing and exploiting niche opportunities, employing flexible branding and marketing strategies, and optimizing existing resources, these entrepreneurs have carved out competitive advantages. Their emphasis on providing unique, personalized experiences resonates with modern travellers, setting them apart from the standardized offerings of larger hotel chains. From a theoretical perspective, this research highlights the importance of entrepreneurial agility and strategic innovation in overcoming market saturation. It underscores how founder-driven initiatives can lead to organizational resilience and growth in challenging industry landscapes.

Implications

The findings offer significant implications for stakeholders in the hospitality industry:

For Independent Hotel Operators: Embracing innovation and flexibility is crucial. Operators should consider investing in technology, staff training, and unique service offerings to enhance competitiveness. Fostering a strong brand identity that reflects current consumer values can attract and retain customers.

For Industry Associations and Policymakers: Support mechanisms such as training programs, funding opportunities, and platforms for knowledge exchange can empower independent hotels. Policies that encourage innovation and collaboration within the industry can facilitate overall growth and resilience.

For Theoretical Development: This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of how entrepreneurial leadership and strategic adaptability can drive success in saturated markets. It provides a framework for analyzing how founders' perspectives influence organizational strategies and outcomes.

For Future Research: There is scope to expand this study to other regions and sectors within the hospitality industry. Comparative studies could examine whether the strategies identified are universally applicable or if regional variations exist. Longitudinal studies could also assess the sustainability of these strategies over time.

PGRC-035

Investigating TikTok's Social Innovation on Sustainable Green Tourism Awareness: AI-generated Network Dynamics

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of TikTok's social innovation in promoting awareness of sustainable green tourism, focusing on the platform's impact on drive-tourists in Vietnam. TikTok, recognized for its innovative content creation and engagement approach, offers unique tools that democratize influence, allowing users to become powerful advocates for various causes, including sustainability. Despite its growing influence, there needs to be more understanding of how TikTok's social innovation initiatives can enhance awareness of sustainable green tourism and influence user behavior. This research utilizes Social Network Analysis (SNA) framework to explore the complex dynamics of information dissemination and social influence within TikTok's network. The study identifies key influencers and communities that play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable tourism content by examining user connections, engagement metrics, and content spread patterns. Findings highlight the effectiveness of short videos and algorithmically curated content in spreading advocacy messages, revealing strategic insights for content creators, marketers, and policymakers. The study provides potentially valuable guidance on leveraging TikTok's platform to foster sustainable tourism practices, offering recommendations for targeted interventions, educational campaigns, and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable tourism development. This research contributes to the existing literature on social media's role in sustainability and informs practical strategies to enhance environmental awareness and responsible travel behaviors.

Introduction

The rapid rise of TikTok as a leading social media platform has significantly altered the landscape of digital communication and content creation (Ghosh & Bagai, 2023). Recognized by MIT's Technology Review as one of the top breakthrough technologies in 2021, TikTok's algorithm-driven approach democratizes content value, making it accessible and engaging for a broad audience. The research study focuses on several key objectives: identifying influencers crucial in promoting sustainable green tourism, analyzing how advocacy messages spread through TikTok's network and understanding the dynamics of community involvement in content dissemination. By examining these elements, the study provides insights into the effectiveness of TikTok's social innovation initiatives in enhancing environmental awareness and influencing user behavior in Vietnam. These findings are intended to inform content strategies for creators and marketers, offering practical recommendations for optimizing the spread of sustainable tourism messages.

Theoretical Foundation

Network construction

Network construction, a fundamental concept, is the key to understanding the intricate relationships and interactions within a system. Network construction is central to the networks, culture, and interaction (NCI) approach to relational sociology, as it focuses on how network relations are meaningfully constructed and evolve through dynamic processes of communication and interaction, thereby shaping cultural orientations and social relationships (Fuhse & Mische, 2024).

Network Structure

In the context of Social Network Analysis (SNA), Network Structure refers to the arrangement and interaction patterns among nodes (users) and edges (connections) within a network, providing insight into how information flows and influence is distributed (Browne et al., 2024).

Methodology

Characteristics of the Study Sample

The sample for this qualitative research study consists of 15 managers and executives currently working in the hospitality industry. Of this initial cohort, eight (8) participants are female, and seven (7) are male, representing a diverse mix of gender perspectives in leadership roles. The participants hold various high-ranking positions, such as Directors of Sales & Marketing, Front Office Managers, Directors of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), and Marketing Executives.

Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, allowing for a balance between guided questioning and open-ended responses. This approach facilitated in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, opinions, and insights while providing the flexibility to delve into specific topics as they emerged during the conversation. Each interview session was conducted individually, ensuring a private and comfortable environment for participants to share their thoughts openly.

Data Analysis Process

Table 1.

Individual view of AI-generated network dynamics (samples of 2 cases among 15 cases)

Cases	Firm	Central Actant	Human Actant	Non-human Actant	AI-generated dynamics
Case 1	Hotel/resort	The interviewee: GM	Content Behavior change	Likes Comments Watch time Algorithm	AI refines content using data, prioritizing authenticity for viewer resonance
Case 2	Hospitality Group	The interviewee: Director of MICE	Watch multiple videotapes in a row	Hashtag Run ads	AI uses hashtags and ads to expand reach for green tourism

Result and Discussion

Result

TikTok's sophisticated algorithm

One significant finding of this research is the potential for network construction, social-ecological network structures, and TikTok's sophisticated algorithm to drive social innovation in raising awareness about sus-tainable green tourism. TikTok's algorithm, by curating personalized content feeds based on user engage-ment metrics, such as likes, comments, and watch time, creates a tailored experience that enhances user interaction with content related to sustainable tourism (Narayanan, 2022; Ghosh & Bagai, 2023; 16 Minutes News., 2020; and Smith, 2021).

TikTok's use of ''Trending hashtags''

A finding of this research underscores the potential of network construction, social-ecological network structures, and TikTok's use of "Trending hashtags" to drive social innovation in tourism awareness.

TikTok's Boundary Testing

By actively testing its predictions, TikTok pushes the boundaries of users' interests by introducing content that is related to, but not exactly the same as, what they usually watch, and observes how they interact with new videos introduced on its "For You" page. This process, known as Boundary Testing, involves presenting users with content slightly outside their usual preferences to gauge their reactions and refine future recommendations (Hern, 2022 and; Ghosh & Bagai, 2023).

TikTok's Target Audience on Social-ecological networks

A key research finding is TikTok's ability to target a broad audience effectively by leveraging network structures and personalized algorithmic targeting to curate content that resonates with user engagement patterns. This approach aligns with the principles of network construction and social-ecological networks, fostering meaningful connections toward environmental awareness.

Influencers' impact on tourism awareness

A key finding of this research emphasizes TikTok's capacity to shape tourism awareness by leveraging its sophisticated use of real-time, in-app digital behaviors and a digital supply chain of personalized content feeds, significantly influenced by social media influencers.

TikTok's interest graph's outperformance

Insights from interviewees revealed that TikTok's short video format, ease of use, and engaging content make it particularly effective for reaching audiences interested in tourism, thereby positioning it as a power-ful tool for digital advocacy in sustainable tourism.

Discussion

Interpretation and Insights

The analysis of TikTok's social innovation in sustainable tourism awareness reveals six key themes. TikTok's sophisticated algorithm utilizes personalized content curation to engage users and promote awareness of sustainable tourism, aligning with the principles of network construction and social-ecological networks.

Recommendations

The findings highlight TikTok's ability to drive sustainable tourism awareness through its sophisticated algorithm, effective use of trending hashtags, and Boundary Testing, all of which leverage network construction and social-ecological network structures to foster meaningful engagement and cultural shifts.

Conclusion

The intersection of AI-generated network dynamics and human insights, particularly in Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI), represents a harmonious collaboration that enhances decision-making processes. Utilizing Social Network Analysis (SNA) within this framework allows researchers to explore the intricate dynamics of how content related to sustainable tourism spreads and influences TikTok's user base.

Keywords: TikTok, Network dynamics, Social innovation, Sustainable tourism, Interest graph, Boundary testing

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PGRC-036

Assessing the Impact of Rights Awareness and Travel Frequency on Customer Satisfaction Among Ferry Passengers at the Port of Manila

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of rights awareness and travel frequency on customer satisfaction among ferry passengers at the Port of Manila, a critical gateway for maritime transportation in the Philippines. As the nation prioritizes expanding its transport networks to accommodate a growing number of travelers, understanding factors that influence passenger satisfaction becomes increasingly vital. Customer satisfaction in ferry transport is significantly shaped by passengers' awareness of their rights and their experiences during travel disruptions. Despite efforts to educate the public about their rights, many passengers remain inadequately informed, which can adversely affect their satisfaction, especially during instances of service failure such as delays, cancellations, or mishandling of baggage. This research aims to assess the relationship between passengers' awareness of their rights, the frequency of their travels, and their overall satisfaction, providing valuable insights for ferry operators and regulatory bodies to enhance service quality and passenger experiences. The background of the study emphasizes the growing importance of customer satisfaction in transportation sectors globally, with a particular focus on maritime transport. Customer satisfaction is a key performance indicator in the ferry industry, influencing repeat business and the overall reputation of service providers. However, one critical aspect often overlooked is the awareness of passengers' rights. Understanding passengers' awareness of their entitlements, such as compensation for delays, refunds for cancellations, and accountability for baggage handling, is crucial for developing strategies that ensure a more equitable and satisfactory travel experience. This study fills a significant research gap by specifically examining the link between rights awareness and customer satisfaction in the context of ferry transport at the Port of Manila, where such factors have received limited scholarly attention. The study employed a quantitative research design with a correlational approach to explore the relationship between the level of rights awareness, travel frequency, and customer satisfaction among ferry passengers. A convenience sampling method was used due to resource constraints, targeting 253 domestic ferry passengers who frequently travel via major ferry operators at the Port of Manila. The study's methodology included the use of an online survey questionnaire designed to capture data on demographic profiles, rights awareness, travel frequency, and satisfaction levels. The survey instrument was validated through content and face validity assessments, and reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha, which demonstrated high internal consistency across the measures. Statistical analysis, including descriptive and inferential statistics, was performed using tools like Minitab to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data. Results indicated that while most respondents were aware of basic rights, such as the right to compensation for flight cancellations and delays, awareness significantly dropped when it came to more specific entitlements, such as compensation for baggage mishandling and service disruptions. The study found that passengers with higher levels of rights awareness reported slightly higher satisfaction levels, suggesting that being informed about one's rights contributes positively

to the overall travel experience. However, the correlation was found to be weakly positive (0.433), indicating that while rights awareness does impact satisfaction, it is not the sole determinant. Other factors, such as service quality, personal expectations, and the ability to exercise these rights effectively, also play crucial roles in shaping passenger satisfaction. In addition to rights awareness, the study examined the influence of travel frequency on customer satisfaction. Findings revealed that frequent travelers tended to be more knowledgeable about their rights and reported higher levels of satisfaction compared to those who traveled less often. This suggests that familiarity with the ferry services and the procedural aspects of travel may contribute to a more favorable perception of the overall experience. Frequent travelers, due to their regular exposure to ferry operations, may develop realistic expectations and strategies to navigate service disruptions, thus enhancing their satisfaction. However, the study also highlighted that occasional traveler, who are less familiar with their rights, are more susceptible to negative experiences during disruptions due to their limited knowledge and preparedness. The conclusions drawn from this research underscore the importance of enhancing passengers' rights awareness as a strategic component in improving customer satisfaction within the ferry transport sector. The weak positive correlation between rights awareness and satisfaction suggests that merely being aware of rights is not enough; passengers must also feel empowered to exercise these rights effectively. This highlights a critical gap in the current approach to passenger education and advocacy. The study suggests that improved communication and proactive engagement by ferry operators could enhance passengers' confidence in exercising their rights, thereby improving overall satisfaction levels. Ferry operators and regulatory bodies must prioritize clear, accessible, and consistent messaging regarding passenger rights to bridge this gap. Implications for policy and practice are substantial. For ferry operators, the findings suggest the need for more robust educational initiatives aimed at informing passengers of their rights in a manner that is easily understandable and actionable. This could include visible in-port signage, digital notifications, and onboard announcements that specifically address passengers' rights in real-time, especially during service disruptions. Regulatory bodies should consider mandating such practices and developing standardized guidelines that ensure passengers are consistently informed of their rights, regardless of which ferry operator they choose. Furthermore, this study calls for greater enforcement of passenger rights by implementing more stringent penalties for non-compliance among ferry operators, thereby ensuring that passengers' entitlements are upheld. The study also highlights the broader implications of enhancing passenger rights awareness for the overall competitiveness of the ferry industry. Well-informed passengers are likely to have higher trust in ferry services and demonstrate increased loyalty, contributing to positive word-of-mouth and long-term business sustainability. For policy makers, this study underscores the need to review and strengthen current legislation regarding passenger rights in maritime transport, ensuring that these laws are not only in place but are actively enforced and communicated to the public. This could involve collaborative efforts between government agencies, consumer advocacy groups, and ferry operators to launch awareness campaigns that educate the public on their rights and how to claim them when necessary. For future research, the study recommends exploring additional factors that influence passenger satisfaction, such as specific service attributes, personal travel motivations, and demographic influences. Further studies could also investigate the barriers that prevent passengers from exercising their rights, providing a deeper understanding of the disconnect between awareness and action. Moreover, expanding the sample size and incorporating a mixed-methods approach could offer more nuanced insights into the passenger

experience, including qualitative perspectives that capture the emotional and behavioral responses to service disruptions. In conclusion, this study provides critical insights into the interplay between rights awareness, travel frequency, and customer satisfaction among ferry passengers at the Port of Manila. It highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach to passenger education and advocacy, emphasizing that awareness alone is insufficient without the empowerment to act. By enhancing rights awareness and ensuring effective communication of entitlements, ferry operators can significantly improve passenger satisfaction, leading to a more customer-centric and resilient maritime transport industry. The findings serve as a call to action for ferry operators, regulators, and policy makers to prioritize passenger rights as a cornerstone of service quality and customer experience.

Keywords: Rights Awareness, Travel Frequency, Customer Satisfaction

PGRC-037

The Role of Digital HRM in Enhancing Employee Performance: A Study on Malaysia's Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

In today's era of rapid digital transformation, the hospitality industry is confronted with the critical task of incorporating digital technologies into human resource management (HRM) practices to enhance employee outcomes (Zhang and Chen, 2024). This paper explores the relationship between digitalization in HRM and employee outcomes, with a focus on Hilton hotels in Malaysia—a leader in adopting digital HRM practices. The study aims to uncover how digital tools and platforms impact various aspects of employee experiences, including training, engagement, satisfaction, and career development within the Malaysian hospitality sector. As the adoption of digital technologies promises improvements in workforce management and organizational efficiency, the specific outcomes of such integration, particularly in HRM, remain underexplored in the hospitality industry.

Technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital analytics have fundamentally changed how organizations manage their human resources (Chowdhury et al., 2023; Kambur and Yildirim, 2023). These tools enable automation of routine tasks, provide real-time data for decision-making, and allow for more personalized and scalable employee management solutions. While numerous industries have reported positive results from the integration of digital HRM practices, the hospitality industry, with its unique reliance on interpersonal skills and customer service, presents a distinct environment for studying the effectiveness of digital HRM.

The primary research question is how digital HRM practices influence employee outcomes in the hospitality industry. Specifically, the study explores whether employees perceive digital HRM tools as useful and easy to use, and whether these perceptions have a positive effect on employee engagement, satisfaction, and career development. Moreover, the research investigates whether the implementation of digital training programs can improve employee adaptability to ongoing technological changes in the workplace—a particularly important aspect in the dynamic hospitality industry, where the demand for both digital skills and customer service excellence are simultaneously rising.

To address these questions, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach. First, a quantitative survey was distributed to employees at Hilton hotels located in Malaysian cities, including Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The survey measures employees' perceptions of the usability and usefulness of digital HRM tools, their engagement levels, job satisfaction, and the perceived impact of digital training programs on their adaptability and career development. The quantitative findings are then supplemented by qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with HR managers and executives at Hilton hotels. These interviews provide deeper insights into the strategic implementation of digital HRM practices and offer practical perspectives on the opportunities and challenges presented by digitalization in HRM.

The research is grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which posits that the perceived ease of use and usefulness of a technology are the primary drivers of its adoption and subsequent positive outcomes. In the context of HRM, this study hypothesizes that employees who view digital HRM tools as both easy to use and beneficial will be more engaged, satisfied, and likely to experience career development opportunities. Additionally, the study extends the TAM

framework by integrating it with elements of training and adaptability, proposing that digital training programs serve as a mediator in enhancing employees' ability to navigate digital transformations in the hospitality industry.

Preliminary results from the surveys indicate a strong positive correlation between employees' perceptions of the usability of digital HRM tools and their overall job satisfaction. Employees who found these tools intuitive and useful reported higher engagement levels and a more positive outlook on their career progression within the organization. These findings suggest that digitalization of HRM has the potential to improve employee experiences, but only if the tools are perceived as beneficial and aligned with employees' day-to-day work activities. The data also reveals that employees who participated in digital training programs felt more confident in adapting to new technologies, further underscoring the importance of continuous learning in an increasingly digital work environment.

Interviews with HR managers at Hilton hotels provided additional context to the survey results. Managers emphasized the importance of organizational culture in fostering successful digital HRM integration. In environments where innovation and adaptability were encouraged, employees were more likely to embrace digital tools and participate in training programs. However, managers also highlighted challenges, such as the resistance to change among certain employee groups and the need for ongoing support to ensure that employees fully utilize the available digital HRM platforms. These insights underscore the role of leadership in ensuring that digital HRM practices are effectively implemented and supported at all levels of the organization.

In terms of broader implications, this research offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it expands the application of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) within the hospitality industry, demonstrating that employees' perceptions of digital HRM tools can significantly influence their work outcomes. Furthermore, by incorporating the concept of digital training and adaptability, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how employees in service-oriented industries respond to technological changes. Practically, the study provides actionable insights for HR managers and hospitality industry stakeholders. The findings suggest that digital HRM initiatives should prioritize the usability and relevance of tools to employees' daily tasks and ensure that comprehensive training programs are in place to support employee adaptability. Moreover, organizational culture plays a critical role in facilitating the successful adoption of digital HRM practices; hence, managers should focus on building a culture that encourages innovation and supports continuous learning.

In conclusion, this study highlights the positive impact that digital HRM can have on employee outcomes within Malaysia's hospitality sector, particularly when digital tools are perceived as user-friendly and beneficial, and when organizations invest in digital training programs to enhance employee adaptability. The research underscores the importance of strategic integration of digital technologies in HRM for improving employee engagement, job satisfaction, and career development in the hospitality industry. As the sector continues to evolve in response to digital advancements, these findings provide valuable guidance for HR professionals and industry leaders aiming to leverage digital HRM to foster both employee and organizational success.

Keywords: Digitalization, Human Resource Management (HRM), Hospitality Industry, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Employee Engagement

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PGRC-038

Unveiling the Ontological Shifts in Sustainable Tourism: A Critical Realist Analysis of Seminal Literature

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Abstract

The concept of sustainable tourism (ST) has evolved over the past 50 years, but its ontological foundations remain contested, potentially hindering effective implementation. This study adopts a critical realist perspective to examine the underlying ontologies shaping the dynamics of ST by analysing 200 seminal papers. Findings reveal a historical focus on cognitive aspects, particularly management for development. However, more recent trends indicate growing attention to the affective dimension (emotional responses to climate change) and the conative dimension (behaviours and green practices). The emergence of regenerative tourism, with its emphasis on behavioural shifts, challenges the traditional ST paradigm. This study contributes to understanding the evolving ontologies of ST and their implications for future research, particularly as the field moves toward regenerative tourism.

Introduction

Background and Objectives

Sustainability has an eternal ontology; one that is pre - Anthropocene (Lewis & Maslin, 2015) and possibility post Anthropocene. The fundamental truth about the need for balance and responsible resource use that existed long before humans and will likely continue to be relevant even if humanity ceases to exist.

The concept of sustainable tourism has matured over the past 50 years, evolving in response to growing concerns about the environmental and social impacts of tourism. However, the ontology of sustainable tourism (ST) remains contested (Fodness, 2017; Hardy et al., 2002; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Lu & Nepal, 2009; Moscardo & Murphy, 2014), which could be hindering the development of a coherent and effective approach to its implementation. What is Sustainable Tourism? How far apart are notions like responsible tourism and regenerative tourism from ST. Tourism academia is hustling to pick up the new trendy genre of regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2023; Bellato & Pollock, 2023; Dredge, 2022), a postmortem of ST seems warranted. Is regenerative tourism a genuine paradigm shift, signifying a paradigm death of the traditional sustainable tourism model, or is it a paradigm merger (Muñoz, 2016), representing an evolution and integration of existing concepts within the sustainable tourism framework? There have always been ideological concerns on directions and progress of sustainable tourism research (Hunter, 1997; Macbeth, 2005; Camargo et al., 2016; Kieżel et al., 2019; Moyle et al., 2021). Ontological examination of sustainable tourism research has been rare (Nunkoo et al., 2023; Ruhanen et al., 2015). Examining ontologies of seminal studies in ST reveals how differing views of sustainability have shaped sustainable tourism research, offering key reflection and clarity for future versions.

This study adopts a critical realist ontology. Critical realism (Bhaskar, 2013; L. Li, 2022) distinguishes between empirical realism, which posits that reality consists of observable objects and experiences, and subjective conceptual realism, which asserts that reality is constructed by observers and is inherently subjective. This study seeks to locate the contrasting ontological positions on the notion 'sustainable tourism' by critically analysing 200 seminal papers in the past 50 years on ST. Examining titles, abstracts, and keywords offers a valuable window into this underlying ontology.

Affective, Behavioural, and Cognitive dimensions (ABC) of Sustainable Tourism Research

Ruhanen et al., (2019) observes that the sustainable tourism research has been increasingly prioritising climate change, tourist behavior and attitudes, and theoretical development, while also maintaining a focus on sustainable tourism practices. However, Butowski & Butowski (2023) laments that sustainable tourism research revolves around its overemphasis on definitional debates and descriptive case studies, resulting in limited theoretical advancement. Considering the sudden emergence of regenerative tourism(Dredge, 2022) to the forefront of tourism scholarship, the relevance of sustainable tourism is in doubt forcing us to ask few fundamental questions.

Is sustainable tourism a behavioural model? There have been several studies focussing on the behavioural dimension of ST. A study by (J. Li et al., 2024) finds that research on sustainable tourist behaviour is rapidly growing, with key themes including pro-environmental behaviours, willingness to pay, and destination. However, a significant gap exists between tourists' intentions and their actual sustainable behaviours, and measuring actual behaviours can contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (Viglia & Acuti, 2023).

Is sustainable tourism merely an emotional response to a collapsing system? Studies claim that emotions (affective) significantly impact sustainable behavior and deserve greater consideration in research and policymaking. (Brosch & Steg, 2021; Martiskainen & Sovacool, 2021). Along with cognitive factors, emotions can strongly motivate pro-environmental transformation (Grund et al., 2024).

Is sustainability in tourism a cognitive process? Cognition encompasses how individuals perceive, interpret, and form attitudes based on their understanding of the world around. Juvan & Dolnicar (2014) stated that there is a disconnect between individuals' pro-environmental attitudes at home and their less sustainable behaviour during vacations. However, a study by Lee & Jan, (2024) found that tourists' perceptions of vulnerability and threat severity regarding environmental issues influence their pro-environmental behaviours.

Methodology

This study is grounded on critical realism. Critical realism (Bhaskar, 2013) provides a robust framework for exploring the ontology of ST. It acknowledges the existence of multiple layers of reality, encompassing both the empirical (observable) and the real (underlying causal mechanisms). Reality exists independently of human thought and language, emphasising the importance of ontology in understanding the world. According to (Archer, 2016) a structured and stratified account of reality that recognises causal mechanisms beyond mere empirical observation.

The research design employs keyword, abstract and title analysis of 200 journal articles on sustainable tourism, to efficiently categorise and uncover key themes over 50 years. This method allows for a focused examination of relevant literature, facilitating the identification of trends and dominant ontologies in ST studies. This simple process can provide valuable insights without the exhaustive scope of a full systematic literature review. First, the Abstract, Keywords and Titles of top 200 seminal papers on sustainable tourism published in high-impact journals over the past 50 years were downloaded from Scopus. Then, the content was analysed using KH coder using a code set after thematic analysis of key words. The selected papers were subjected to a critical realist analysis, focusing on the identification of ontological assumptions and implications and coded into four philosophical categories.

Findings and Analysis

The Critical Realist View:

The frequency analysis of keywords, title and abstract of 200 seminal works on sustainable tourism shows that words like development, management, change, impact and destination are on top.

Keyword Frequency Analysis
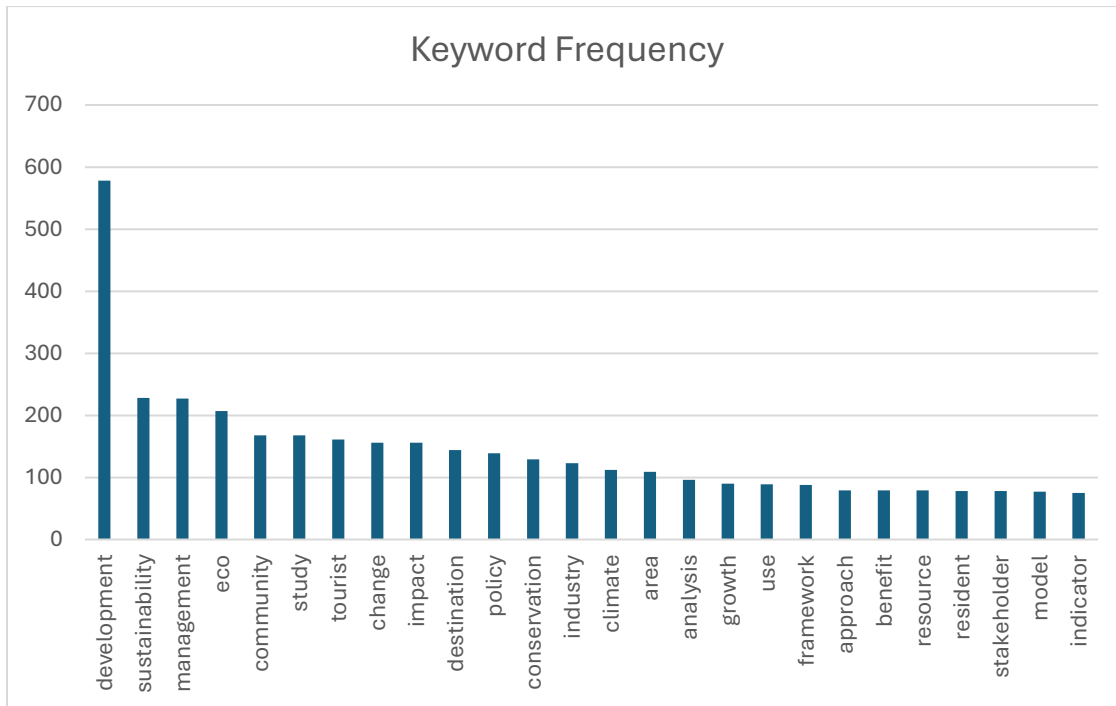
Figure 1. Frequency of Keywords

An analysis of high-frequency keywords in sustainable tourism research reveals a dominant focus on cognitive aspects, particularly on understanding the complexities of sustainability, developing frameworks, and considering stakeholder perspectives. While the research landscape primarily emphasises conceptual and strategic exploration, there's a growing recognition of the importance of behavioural and affective dimensions, pointing towards a need for future research to delve deeper into these areas for a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable tourism.

Cooccurance Network of Words Analysis

The co-occurrence network suggests that the analysed research papers explore the multifaceted nature of sustainable tourism, recognizing the need to balance economic development with environmental protection and social well-being. The following themes seems to have dominated the leading research papers in the last 50 years:

At the 1st level, most studies (D'Amato et al., 2017; Hunter, 1997; Liu, 2003; Raymond et al., 2010; Saarinen, 2006; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Sharpley, 2000) are interplay between economic growth (development, economic, growth) and sustainable practices in the tourism industry (tourism, sustainable). Studies (Gössling, 2002; Koens et al., 2018; Lee, 2013) examined the benefits and costs (cost, benefit) of tourism, on community, destinations and environment. At the 2nd level, a strong emphasis on the environmental dimension of sustainability, with a separate branch concerning climate change (climate change, carbon, emission). Researchers (Bejder L.; et al., 2006; Hall et al., 2020; Hassan, 2000; Ibn-Mohammed et al., 2021; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007; Sharma et al., 2021; Sims, 2009) investigated the impact of tourism on local area, impact of pandemic on tourism and impact of tourism on ecosystems (ecosystem, wildlife, local authenticity) and explored conservation efforts (conservation, protect). At the 3rd level, the studies focussed into the social

and cultural aspects of tourism, recognising the importance of community (community, resident) perspectives and the influence of cultural heritage (cultural, heritage). Researchers like (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Moscardo, 1996; Sun et al., 2016) examined how tourism affects local communities and their perceptions (perception) and possible solutions.

Figure 2. Cooccurrence Network of Words Analysis

Analysis of the co-occurrence network reveals that research on ST is predominantly cognitive, focusing on understanding the complex interrelationships between key concepts like tourism, sustainability, development, and the environment. This is evident in the prominence of terms related to analysis, modelling, and strategic planning. However, the network also highlights emerging interest in the affective and conative dimensions, as evidenced by the presence of words associated with community perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours. This suggests that while the field is still largely grounded in conceptual and theoretical exploration, there is a growing recognition of the need to incorporate the emotional and behavioural aspects of sustainable tourism to achieve a more comprehensive understanding and promote effective action. This is where regenerative tourism is taking a critical turn. It calls for a change in purpose of travel and that could be a paradigm death for sustainable tourism as we know it now.

Conclusion

This study revealed that leading research in sustainable tourism over the past 50 years has predominantly focused on the cognitive dimension, with a strong emphasis on managing tourism for destination and community development. More recently, climate change has emerged as a major concern, prompting studies that explore sustainability as an emotional response to its impacts. Finally, there is a growing body of research examining the behavioural aspects of sustainability, including actions, behaviours, and green practices.

By employing a critical realist perspective, this study aims to move beyond descriptive accounts and identify the underlying ontologies the fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality that shape the dynamics of sustainable tourism. The findings will have significant implications for the future of sustainable tourism research, particularly as the field transitions towards regenerative

tourism, which calls for a behavioural shift towards a more proactive and restorative approach to sustainability.

Keywords: sustainable tourism, ontology, affective, cognitive, behavioural

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PGRC-039

Exploring Value Proposition And Mechanisms Of Selected Restaurant Managers' Role In Region 4-A Calabarzon: Bases For Sustainability & Business-To-Business Marketing Framework

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Abstract

This study analyzes the value proposition and coping strategies of casual dining restaurants in Region 4-A, Calabarzon, with a focus on their sustainability and business-to-business marketing framework. This analysis explores the impact of these attributes on the restaurant's sustained profitability and its strategies for marketing to other businesses. The study aimed to identify the issues and difficulties encountered by restaurant managers in Region 4-A, Calabarzon, and create a guide for sustainability and a framework for business-to-business marketing. A hybrid research approach employed to examine and combine quantitative research methods, such as survey questionnaires, with qualitative data sources, including structured interviews, observations, and focus-group discussions. The data analyzed using frequency and percentage to determine the profile while value proposition and mechanisms assessed using frequency, average weighted mean, and ranking. Thematic analysis is used to evaluate the opinions and viewpoints regarding the difficulties encountered by managers, as well as the knowledge gained from industry experts. An ANOVA was used to assess if there is a statistically significant variation in the value propositions of the restaurants in Region 4-A, Calabarzon. The findings indicates that the restaurant management is adhering to the established protocols of the restaurant. Conversely, the interview responses from the participants regarding the typical issues that affect the restaurant's overall operation are not consistent. In conclusion, restaurants must improve the use of their resource material and management related to their value propositions to dominate the market. By enhancing their menu offerings, optimizing operational efficiency, and implementing effective marketing strategies, restaurants can attract and retain customers. Additionally, staying updated on industry trends and customer preferences will help restaurants stay competitive in the ever-evolving market. Managers and owners of restaurants face many challenges that require industry knowledge and character. Hard work, honesty, perseverance, and discipline drive restaurant management. Businesses need these traits for procurement, maintenance, marketing, and financial success. Management requires leadership, collaboration, creativity, and tradition. Effective sales and promotion strategies, hard work, and staff appreciation can help managers succeed. This method improves efficiency and fosters teamwork, helping the restaurant achieve its goals. Success in this fast-changing industry requires unwavering commitment to high standards, ongoing knowledge acquisition, and team leadership and motivation.

Keywords: Value Proposition, Mechanisms, Strategies, Role, Sustainability, Business-to-Business Marketing

PGRC-040

Assessment of Job Factors and Job Performance of Restaurant Employees in Calabarzon Region IV-A Towards an Employee Performance Strategic Roadmap

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Abstract

Employee job performance is a crucial factor that measures the overall well-being of restaurant employees. This study aims to determine employee job performance in the selected local restaurant in CALABARZON Region IV-A, Philippines, and to prove that drive work experiences presently exist in that area. This study employed a mixed-method research design with a total of 246 respondents in the Department of Tourism-accredited restaurants in CALABARZON Region IV-A. Pearson r Correlation was used to assess the association between contextual job factors evaluation towards employee job performance and Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA) was utilized to determine the significant predictors of the dependent variable from multiple independent variables.

The findings indicated a positive relationship with a correlation coefficient (r) of the following indicators namely role stress, employee motivation, work engagement, and contextual job factors respectively with r values of 0.4518, 0.3843, 0.4275, and 0.5612, signifying a strong positive relationship between variables. The results of the regression indicated a significant relationship between the contextual job factors towards role stress, work engagement, and employee motivation. The role stress, work engagement, and employee motivation significantly influenced contextual job factors across CALABARZON Region IV-A. Also, based on the interview conducted in the research, it was found that the challenges of the restaurant managers in their employee job performance are the attitude, guests' complaints, tardiness and absenteeism, benefits of the employees, and inconsistent work performance. On the other hand, it was also found that the strategies of the restaurant managers in improving their employees job performance are recognition and incentives, training and development, good working relationships, setting boundaries and time management, and trust and cooperation. Based on the results and findings of this study, the researcher developed a proposed employee performance strategic roadmap for better performance of the employees in casual dining restaurants.

Keywords: job performance, role stress, work engagement, motivation, local restaurant

Education

PGRC-101

A Case Study on the Shift from English for General Purposes (EGP) to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Teaching in A Chinese University

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Abstract

Tourism significantly impacts China's economy and there has been a notable rise in both inbound and outbound visitors (World Tourism Organization, 2019). As a result, there is a growing need for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses which can integrate language skills with professional knowledge to cultivate talents proficient in their specific areas (Li, 2012). Given the lack of ESP teachers, English for General Purposes (EGP) teachers need to make a shift from EGP to ESP (tourism) teaching to satisfy the social demands in China (Gai, 2017). This study primarily examined issues related to the shift from EGP to ESP teaching, mainly from the perspectives of EGP teachers. It aims to investigate EGP teachers' understanding of ESP and their recognition of the necessity of transitioning from EGP to ESP (tourism) teaching. It also delved into the challenges faced by ESP teachers during this shift and proposed solutions to enhance their training. Furthermore, the study explored and compared EGP and ESP (tourism) materials and syllabus to identify the differences, individual requirements and priorities as well as language-related issues to facilitate ESP teaching. Additionally, it explored the essential knowledge and skills considered necessary by various parties (such as EGP teachers, program leaders, and students) to help EGP teachers prepare for the shift from EGP to ESP (tourism) teaching comprehensively. In regard to the theories, besides the common theories for language teaching, theories such as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) Theory and Social Constructivism Theory also guide ESP teaching practices (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Both are applicable to the ESP teaching context.

This study emphasized Social Constructivism as the research paradigm. The qualitative study adopted a single case study of a specific institution - a tourism university in Guilin, China, during the academic year 2023-2024. The university, situated in Guilin, a renowned Chinese tourist destination, is experiencing a shift of English teaching from EGP to ESP, particularly tailored to the tourism industry. Ten participants were selected, including EGP teachers undergoing the shift to ESP, an ESP program leader, and students majoring in hotel management. Data collection involved three qualitative research methods: semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, non-participant classroom observations, and document analysis. Among them, the document analysis included the comparisons of EGP and ESP materials to aid teachers in adjusting their strategies and understanding ESP priorities and the language use analysis which was facilitated by Wordsmith (Version 6.0) to compare typical chapters of current EGP and ESP textbooks in this institution. Thematic analysis was employed for observations and interviews, with triangulation of informants and methods for data support. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations were paramount, with pilot interviews conducted for feasibility. In addition, participant consent was obtained, and privacy and confidentiality were maintained in the study.

The findings were examined for each research question from various perspectives: the outcomes of interviews with teachers, the program leader, and students; observations made in the classroom; and the analysis of documents, all of which contribute to a triangulation of sources. Regarding Research Question 1, teachers acknowledged the specificity of ESP depending on

majors, emphasizing the importance of tailored teaching content, syllabus design, and classroom activities. Furthermore, teachers acknowledged the importance of ESP in enhancing students' job skills and advancing their own professional growth. The study also explored how EGP teachers overcame challenges faced in teaching ESP during the shift, which was to answer Research Question 2. Challenges included lack of content knowledge, students' poor English proficiency, loan words, concerns in collaboration, textbook selection, and formal language usage. To solve the challenges, solutions were also provided, involving collaboration with content teachers, adjustments in teaching strategies, illustration of vocabulary origins and simplification of content. Findings also were drawn from textbook analysis, syllabus analysis, and language use analysis. They primarily addressed Research Question 3 but also supported the responses to other research questions, serving as a form of triangulation. Textbook analysis compared the purposes, content, and structural designs of both EGP and ESP textbooks used by the targeted students, aiding instructors in adopting appropriate teaching strategies. Syllabus analysis helped teachers understand the basic information, priorities, intended requirements of each course. Using Wordsmith software (Version 6.0), the analysis centered on the distribution of content words. The results showed a higher presence of content words in the ESP Corpus, which is a key characteristic of ESP texts. It also showed that the content words in the ESP Corpus are notably technical and professional, which closely linked to the tourism sector and encompass a range of travel-related elements. Additionally, the keyword list revealed that content words, particularly tourism-specific nouns, are used more frequently in the ESP Corpus. Therefore, nouns should be emphasized in ESP (tourism) vocabulary teaching. Findings also focused on the necessary knowledge and skills for EGP teachers transitioning to ESP teaching, which was mainly regarding to Research Question 4. Such knowledge and skills included temporary industrial posts for firsthand experience, participation in international professional training and seminars, textbook writing skills, staying updated with industry trends, and proficiency in teaching SOP. Related parties stressed the importance of integrating these skills through various training methods to facilitate a smooth shift to ESP teaching.

Integrating PCK and Constructivism Theory, the study provides implications for teachers at different stages of ESP teaching, emphasizing the importance of preparation, active teaching strategies, post-teaching development, and institutional support. In this regard, collaboration with content teachers can aid in content knowledge acquisition. In addition, class effectiveness can be enhanced by sharing firsthand industrial experience. Attention to SOP and formal language structures is also necessary for an effective ESP teaching. Besides, EGP teachers who are on the shift to ESP teaching also need to reconsider developing practice-oriented materials tailored to student needs and proficiency levels. Institutional support is indispensable for teachers transitioning from EGP to ESP teaching as well. The institution should provide platforms, incentive mechanisms, and funding to support ESP teachers effectively. For teachers to stay sharp and effective, regular programs like workshops, seminars, and even industry-led training are essential. Future studies could explore effective collaborative models and evaluate the outcomes to facilitate successful partnerships. In addition, assessing teachers' performance during the shift from EGP to ESP teaching is crucial to measure teachers' effectiveness and teaching quality. As for document analysis, future studies can conduct a more comprehensive document analysis to identify more lexical features in various specific fields. Finally, longitudinal studies tracing EGP teachers' development during the shift to ESP teaching are needed.

Keywords: ESP; EGP; EGP to ESP shift; case study; Chinese university; document analysis

PGRC-102

Validation of the Chinese Version of the 'Assessment of Reflective Practice Development Tool'

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Abstract

Teacher educators in China have traditionally focused more on theoretical knowledge than on the practical aspects of teaching and learning (Zhao, 2018; Huang, 2021; Yue, 2021). In China, much of the research on reflective practice among in-service teachers relies on Van Manen's (1977) three levels of reflective practice theory. Van Manen categorizes reflection into three levels: technical, practical, and critical. Studies (e.g., Slade et al., 2019; Ngololo & Kanandjebo, 2021; Özüdoğru, 2021) suggest that novice and pre-service teachers may require an extended period to reach advanced levels of reflective practice. However, Larrivee (2008) introduced an additional "pre-reflection" level, which describes teachers who operate on an automatic basis, contrasting with reflective practitioners. Özüdoğru (2021) find that pre-service teachers often engage in habitual action-type reflection in university courses, as this category involves the repetition of specific actions. Alsuhaibani (2019) and Wei Ann et al. (2018) observe that pre-service teachers may not be adequately prepared for effective reflection during their internships. In fact, since the 21st century, the Chinese government has prioritized reflective practice among pre-service teachers, leading to the development of supportive policies within teacher education (Wang, 2021). Despite policy directives emphasizing the advantages of reflective practice during teaching internships, there still remains a gap in understanding the levels at which pre-service teachers engage in reflective practice during this period (Mo, 2020; Le, 2018; Wang, 2021; Li, 2021). According to Larrivee (2008), progressing through the reflective hierarchy is crucial for teachers to ultimately become critically reflective practitioners. However, the instrument available in the Chinese language to gauge the levels of reflective practice are very limited, in fact almost none, in the Chinese language. Engaging in reflective practice allows these teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice, thereby improving their teaching capabilities and professional development (Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Yet, most instrument dedicated to measuring this important construct is lacking in China.

Larrivee (2008) developed the "Assessment of Reflective Practice Development Tool" to evaluate teachers' levels of reflection. This tool assesses four levels: pre-reflection (14 items), surface reflection (11 items), pedagogical reflection (14 items), and critical reflection (14 items), corresponding to the technical, practical, and critical levels in Van Manen's (1977) hierarchy. The reliability of the tool, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was found to be within the acceptable range (0.70), and it has been widely used in other studies (e.g., Wei Ann et al., 2018; Kholis & Madya, 2021; Daley et al., 2019; Cirocki & Widodo, 2019). Thus far, this important instrument has never been translated or psychometrically tested in the Chinese language.

This presentation describes the validation of the Chinese version of the "Assessment of Reflective Practice Development Tool" by Larrivee (2008) for use in teacher education programs in higher education in China. This tool, designed to evaluate reflective practice levels among pre-service teachers, has been widely used in English-speaking countries. However, its application in China has not been studied, nor has its effectiveness in the Chinese context been confirmed.

Data were collected from 198 pre-service teachers majoring in Primary Education at Colleges of Education in two higher education institutions in Nanchang, China. These participants completed their teaching internships between September 2023 and July 2024, with data collected in July 2024 upon their return to school. Before validation, two certified translators

conducted a back-translation of the questionnaire, and a comparison between the original English items and the back-translated items showed consistent expressions. The validation process proceeded in three stages: expert validation, structural validity testing and reliability testing. The final translated version consists of 28 items, with 4 dimensions (which are pre-reflection, surface reflection, pedagogical reflection and critical reflection).

Expert validation involved two experts in teaching reflection from Chinese higher education institutions, who assessed the language, format, and content of the tool. The researchers prepared a content validity table using a four-point Likert scale for each item. Cohen's Kappa was used to assess consistency between the experts, yielding a value of 0.83, indicating high agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Foremost, to ensure that the sample was appropriate for the analysis, two indicators were used. First, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy index was conducted and presented an index of 0.898. The second test, the Bartlett's test of Sphericity, had a significant result of 0.000, $p < 0.0001$. These two indicators revealed that the sample and correlation matrix were within an acceptable range for the analysis (Snedecor & Cochran, 1989). Then An exploratory factor analysis was applied at the item level to investigate the internal structure. A principal factor analysis with an oblique rotation, was used to extract factors to facilitate the interpretation of the dimensions obtained. The factor loading criteria for inclusion was set at 0.5. The EFA showed that the Chinese version of the 53-item tool required the removal of 25 items to achieve a clear four-factor structure. The final dimensions were pre-reflection, surface reflection, pedagogical reflection and critical reflection, and each dimensions achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.829, 0.917, 0.902, and 0.848 respectively. Overall internal consistency was 0.883 which is regarded as high. On the basis of these findings, it is suggested that the items should be adapted to make them meaningful to the Chinese pre-service teacher respondents. Consequently, the new scales were adjusted by reducing the number of items under each factor to Factor 1 (6 items) 'pre-reflection'; Factor 2 (8 items) 'surface reflection'; Factor 3 (8 items) 'pedagogical reflection'; and Factor 4 (6 items) 'critical reflection'.

This study fills a gap in the literature by adapting and validating a widely used reflective practice assessment tool for the Chinese educational context. The findings have significant implications for teacher education programs in China. It supports teacher educators in understanding pre-service teachers' levels of reflective practice and in helping them to develop as reflective practitioners who are better equipped to navigate the complexities of the teaching profession.

Keywords: Reflective Practice, Levels of Reflection, Validation

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PGRC-103

The Relationship Between Mathematics Anxiety, Self-Efficacy, and Mathematics Achievement—A Longitudinal Study among Middle School Students in China

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Abstract

Mathematics achievement is a critical component of students' academic success and future career opportunities, making it essential to understand the factors that influence it (Wang & Degol, 2017; Zhang, 2020). Among the myriad of influences, psychological factors such as mathematics anxiety and mathematics self-efficacy have gained significant attention (Gao & Chen, 2017). Mathematics anxiety is an emotional experience that students encounter during the mathematics learning process, and mathematics self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in completing mathematics tasks (Ashcraft & Kirk, 2001; Bandura, 1997). Both factors are believed to play crucial roles in shaping students' mathematical achievement.

Existing research has established a significant correlation between mathematics anxiety, self-efficacy, and mathematics achievement (Cargnelutti et al., 2017; Luttenberger et al., 2018). High levels of mathematics anxiety are typically associated with lower achievement, while strong mathematics self-efficacy is generally linked to better performance (Huang, 2023; Pajares, 2005; Qin, 2019). However, much of the existing research has been cross-sectional, limiting the ability to understand how these relationships change over time. Cross-sectional studies capture only a snapshot in time, failing to account for the changing trends of psychological factors and their long-term impacts on academic achievement.

In recent years, with the deepening of research, it has been found that merely exploring the correlation between the variables is insufficient. To examine the deeper processes at work, it is necessary to investigate moderating mechanisms (MacKinnon & Fairchild, 2009). Thus, the question arises: are there other variables that play a role in the process of mathematics anxiety's effect on students' achievement? A review of existing research suggests that self-efficacy is likely an important moderator of the effects of mathematics anxiety on students' achievement (Bandura, 1986; Silke et al., 2018). However, existing tests of moderating effects predominantly utilize cross-sectional data, limiting the ability to understand how these moderating relationships change over time (Preacher et al., 2007). Despite the importance of understanding these changing moderating effects, longitudinal studies on this topic are rare (Jose, 2016). This gap highlights the need for more longitudinal research to better capture these effects over time.

Moreover, most studies have examined these relationships in a unidirectional manner, focusing primarily on how mathematics anxiety and self-efficacy influence mathematics achievement, without considering the potential for reciprocal relationships. For instance, while it is well-established that mathematics anxiety can negatively impact achievement, less attention has been paid to how poor achievement might, in turn, exacerbate anxiety (Meece et al., 1990). Similarly, while high self-efficacy is known to boost achievement, few studies have explored how success or failure in mathematics might affect self-efficacy over time.

There is a lack of longitudinal research on middle school students, even though this stage is crucial for developing attitudes toward mathematics. Most existing studies focus on primary and high school students, leaving a gap in understanding how these factors interact during the middle school years (Dowker et al., 2016).

This study aims to address these gaps by adopting a longitudinal design to explore the changing trends of mathematics anxiety and self-efficacy over time, as well as the reciprocal relationships

between these variables. Additionally, the study seeks to examine the moderating effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between mathematics anxiety and achievement.

Research Questions

To achieve these aims, the study will address the following research questions:

1. What is the trend of mathematics anxiety and mathematics self-efficacy among general public middle school students in Xingtai City, China over a half-year span of time?

2. Are there gender and grade-level differences in mathematics anxiety and mathematics self-efficacy at different time points?

3. What is the relationship between mathematics anxiety, mathematics self-efficacy, and mathematics achievement at different time points?

4. Is there a reciprocal relationship between mathematics anxiety, mathematics self-efficacy, and mathematics achievement over time?

5. Does mathematics self-efficacy play a moderating role between mathematics anxiety and mathematics achievement?

Methodology

To explore these questions, the study will employ a non-experimental, quantitative approach involving a longitudinal cross-lagged panel design. This design is particularly suited for examining reciprocal relationships and changes over time, as it allows for the analysis of how variables influence each other at different time points.

Sampling

The study will deploy a cluster sampling technique to select a representative sample in Xingtai City. Given the large number of middle school students in this study, obtaining a list of all public general middle school students and collecting data from a random sample spread across the city would be challenging. However, it is relatively easy to obtain a list of all schools and collect data from a subset of these (Lauren, 2020). This study will select research samples from general public middle schools, where the difference between schools is minimal, making cluster sampling suitable. Participants will be surveyed twice, with a six-month interval between surveys. This interval is consistent with the typical academic calendar in China, where there are two semesters in a school year and the interval between the final examinations of each semester is approximately six months. The study will also investigate grade-level differences in mathematics anxiety and self-efficacy. To ensure consistency in grade levels between the two surveys, the interval between surveys will be six months.

Instrumentation

The study will use several validated instruments to measure the key variables:

- Mathematics Anxiety: Measured using the Mathematics Anxiety Questionnaire, which assesses students' levels of anxiety related to mathematics tasks (Wu, 2001).

- Mathematics Self-Efficacy: Assessed using the Mathematics Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, which evaluates students' confidence in their ability to perform mathematics-related tasks (Wang, 1999).

- Mathematics Achievement: Measured using students' scores from their school's final mathematics examinations, providing a direct measure of their academic achievement.

Data Analysis

The analysis will be conducted in several stages:

1. Descriptive Statistics and Repeated Measures ANOVA: Used to analyze the changing trends of mathematics anxiety and self-efficacy over time and to determine whether there are significant gender and grade-level differences in these variables.

2. Pearson Correlation: Utilized to explore the relationships between mathematics anxiety, self-efficacy, and achievement, providing initial insights into how these variables are related.

3. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM): Employed to analyze the reciprocal relationships between the three variables, including the moderating effect of mathematics self-efficacy. SEM is particularly well-suited for this analysis as it allows for the examination of complex, multivariate relationships and can test the directionality of these relationships over time (Kline, 2015).

Expected Contributions

This study is expected to make several important contributions to the literature on mathematics education and educational psychology. By adopting a longitudinal design, the study will provide insights into how mathematics anxiety and self-efficacy change over time, offering a more dynamic understanding of these psychological factors. Additionally, by exploring reciprocal relationships, the study will shed light on the reciprocal nature of these relationships, providing evidence that can inform more effective interventions. Finally, by focusing on middle school students in China, the study will fill a significant gap in the literature, offering insights that are both contextually relevant and applicable to broader educational settings.

Keywords: mathematics anxiety; mathematics self-efficacy; mathematics achievement; longitudinal research; moderating effect

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PGRC-104

An Ecological Approach to English Major Teacher Agency in a Chinese University

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Abstract

English has been seen as a means of learning Western science and technology, researching Western philosophy and other concepts, and, more recently, as a modernizing tool through diplomatic, military, and intellectual exchanges with the West. (Cheng & Wang, 2012; Ross, 1993; Gao, 2009). For the past few decades, this ideology has impacted English major instruction in Chinese higher education by emphasizing language competency training. Nonetheless, other scholars took issue with the blatantly instrumental nature of English language instruction, contending that the focus should be on "the education of the person" as opposed to "instrument making" (Gao 2009).

The 2018 National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality of English Majors in Colleges and Universities marks a significant shift away from the former skill-oriented approach toward a more humanistic educational model (Chen et al., 2023). This change is thought to be a response to the serious challenges that English majors have had recently due to the substandard quality of graduates and the fierce competition in the labor market (Chen, 2019). Higher expectations and more challenges await English major teachers due to the new policy's increased emphasis on the complexity of the major, which integrates language instruction with other related disciplines like intercultural communication, law, journalism, tourism, etc.

On the other hand, China's education system is highly centralized, with national policy documents providing macro-level guidance to meso-level institutions and micro-level teachers (Gil, 2016; Hamid & Nguyen, 2016; Li & Hu, 2021). Macropolicies in such a big country exhibit ambiguity to address regional and institutional diversity, leading to varied interpretations of national policies. Within this framework, the development of teachers is limited by prescribed curricula, restrictive testing, inspection, and bureaucratic accountability regimes (Priestley et al. 2015). However, the eventual implementation of curriculum reform is dependent on teacher practice in their classrooms.

Teachers also don't just follow rules set by policymakers; rather, they play an active role in reshaping language policies through their pedagogical practices (Nguyen & Bui, 2016). As a result, teacher agency plays a crucial role in the implementation of English major curriculum reform, and it is worthwhile to investigate how English major teachers respond to related national policies to cope with the novel challenges that the new era presents to English major graduates.

Many of the studies on teacher agency tend to view agency as 'individuals' intentional acts to make things happen' (Bandura, 2001) or 'a socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (Ahearn, 2001). But the context of curriculum change requires an ecological perspective to view teacher agency as something individuals and groups can manage to achieve through the interplay of individuals' capacities and environment conditions (Priestley et al. 2015). Ecological theory differs from other theories in that it considers the impact of the social-cultural environment on individuals, as well as the impact of individual ability and psychology on the environment.

Studies on teacher agency in the context of China's curricular reform began quite late, but significant findings have emerged in recent years, confirming the importance of teacher agency in the field of curriculum reform. Researchers have concentrated on highlighting teacher agency as an individual trait in the few studies on the topic in China's educational context (Chen & Wei, 2019; Gu et al., 2022; Pei & Yang, 2019), overlooking the ecological perspective that

considers the interplay between individual capabilities and environmental factors. On the other hand, China's centralized educational system offers macro-level guidance while allowing for regional and institutional variations. However, existing limited research on teacher agency in curriculum reform in China primarily focuses on the interpretation and implementation of top-down policies (Liu et al., 2020; Qu, 2021; Tan, 2016; Tao & Gao, 2017; Wang, 2022), and there is a dearth of study on bottom-up and localized teacher agency. Nevertheless, relatively few of these empirical studies in China deal with higher education levels, and nearly all of them are based on the context of secondary or primary education.

The initial goal of this research is to explore how national education policies shape English major teachers' agency, influencing their professional practices and outcomes in the educational setting. Furthermore, another purpose of this study is to shed light on the ways institutional practices influence English major teachers' agency, particularly in terms of their acceptance and application of educational innovations. The final objective of the study is to investigate how English major teachers at a Chinese university exercise their agency in their classroom.

In view of the above research background and research topic, this study intends to adopt qualitative research methods to conduct case studies on English major teachers and department leaders who participated in the curriculum reform of English majors. The overall goal of qualitative research is to assist researchers in understanding social phenomena in order to obtain insight into individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors, as well as the meanings associated to them (Agius, 2013). And a case study is an in-depth examination from different perspectives of the complexities and distinctiveness of a certain project or system in a real-world setting (Simons, 2020). They both enabled the researcher to conduct in-depth analysis of teacher agency.

This study will be conducted in a non-elite foreign language university so that researchers could have a more comprehensive understanding of English major teacher agency in Chinese higher educational context. It will investigate how English major teachers in this university enact their agency in the classroom through observations and interviews. On the other hand, in order to get a deeper understanding of national policies on curriculum reform and institutional practices, interviews with department heads in this university will also be conducted to look at how these factors affect teacher agency. Through observation of English major teachers' decisions and actions in the real classroom as well as their self-descriptions of their own teaching-related activities, the research examines how teachers exercise agency and how it influences their effectiveness as educators.

In conclusion, this research aims to bridge existing gaps in the literature on teacher agency, particularly in higher education in China. It provides a nuanced understanding of the interplay between policy, institutional practice, and personal agency, highlighting the complexities that shape teaching experiences and outcomes in this unique educational landscape. The insights and recommendations derived from this study have the potential to inform and improve educational practices, policies, and teacher development programs, ultimately advancing English major education in Chinese universities.

Keywords: teacher agency; ecological theory; English major education; curriculum reform; higher education in China

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PGRC-105

Willingness to Communicate Among Chinese Postgraduates in a Multilingual Malaysian Classroom

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Abstract

Malaysia has been actively promoting the internationalisation of higher education through a series of policies in recent years. This has been achieved through the implementation of various policies, including the Private Higher Education Institutions Act (1996), the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP, 2007-2020), and the Malaysian Education Blueprint. The shift in trend has resulted in Malaysia transitioning from a country that sends students abroad to a country that attracts students from other countries, particularly China. This transformation has opened up new academic opportunities and choices for Chinese students (Bi & Ahmad, 2024).

As per the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, there has been a steady increase in the number of Chinese students choosing Malaysia as a prominent study destination from 2015 to 2024. The surge in popularity of studying in Malaysia can be attributed to various factors, such as the country's excellent educational resources, affordable tuition fees, close geographical and cultural ties with China (Hu & Wang, 2024), and the impressive rankings of several universities in the QS World University Rankings (QS World University Rankings, 2024).

The promotion of English Medium Instruction (EMI) programs in higher education aims to enhance global competitiveness and appeal through internationalization efforts (Zenkova & Khamitova, 2018). However, studies indicate that language continues to be a substantial obstacle for international students in the classroom (Trahar, 2014). English is commonly used as a lingua franca by non-native speakers, and proficiency in the English language is closely linked to academic success in international graduate education (Vinke & Jochems, 1993). Chinese students in Malaysia face significant challenges with language and cultural integration, especially in the classroom, where they show a reduced inclination to engage in English communication (Wang et al., 2017). Research has additionally demonstrated that the classroom setting significantly influences students' inclination to engage in communication (Li et al., 2022).

Given this issue, it is crucial to have a deeper understanding of the Chinese students' inclination to engage in communication within their educational environment during classroom instruction. This understanding is essential not only for enhancing teaching strategies, but also for enhancing their ability to adapt and achieve academic success in cross-cultural contexts. Despite Malaysia's successful implementation of policies to promote internationalisation in higher education, Chinese students still encounter notable language barriers and acculturation challenges during their studies in Malaysia. These challenges are particularly evident in the classroom, where these students demonstrate a reduced willingness to communicate.Research indicates that the classroom atmosphere has an impact on students' inclination to communicate, either directly or indirectly. Enhancing students' motivation to engage in communication is a key objective of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom education and teaching (Weda et al., 2021). The impact of higher education on international students' learning is significant as it enhances their willingness to communicate, enabling them to engage more successfully in the classroom and adapt to their new surroundings (Tan et al., 2018).

Most of the existing research has mostly concentrated on learners in Western settings, and it remains uncertain how these findings may be applied to Malaysia's multilingual and multicultural social context (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Malaysia, being a country with

multiple languages and cultures, has not received sufficient attention regarding its unique language environment and cultural background in terms of willingness to communicate. In addition, most of the current research has focused on measuring the willingness to communicate in the classroom, while overlooking the willingness to communicate in other situations such as acdemic group activities during classtime and outside classtime.

In addition, a significant amount of research on the readiness to communicate has neglected to consider the influence of contextual change and its dynamic nature, instead focussing solely on its unique characteristics (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017).MacIntyre and other researchers argue that to better understand the process of generating communicative willingness, research should focus on the dynamic components rather than the distinctive features of willingness to communicate. This shift in emphasis will provide a deeper understanding. To ascertain the different factors and methods that impact students' preparedness for communication, forthcoming study should concentrate on examining distinct classroom settings. This (Mystkowska-Wiertelak & Pawlak, 2017) will enable the development of more specific recommendations and instructional tactics.

This study utilised a completely qualitative research technique to conduct a thorough investigation of the preparedness of mainland Chinese postgraduates to engage in English conversations in a Malaysian university. The study primarily examined how newly enrolled students adjusted to a diverse environment characterised by multiple languages and cultures. The study specifically analysed the performance of willingness to communicate in three distinct classroom settings. The researchers employed semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to monitor students' academic progress during the initial semester. This approach allowed for the collection of extensive data on the fluctuations in students' readiness to engage in communication within different classroom environments.Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the qualitative data gathered from observations and interviews.

The primary objective of this research is to improve the applicability and global applicability of the willingness to communicate theory in non-Western contexts. It also aims to rectify the shortcomings in existing research on willingness to communicate in multilingual scenarios and promote the internationalisation and diversification of the theory. This study also examines how specific academic circumstances affect students' willingness to communicate. It offers theoretical perspectives from a contextual standpoint, deepens our understanding of the connection between contextual factors and individual communication goals, and generates new research questions.The results of this study will assist educators and educational institutions in developing more focused teaching strategies and supportive interventions to enhance students' inclination to talk and engage in classroom activities. The study will offer novel perspectives on instructional support strategies in international education, enabling educators to design instructional activities that are highly adaptable to the requirements of Chinese international students and aid them in assimilating into their academic and social surroundings. Comprehending the fluctuations in students' inclination to communicate in particular academic environments enables educators to enhance students' learning experiences by offering focused assistance and evaluation to assist students in surmounting communication obstacles, enhancing their language proficiency and self-assurance, and consequently enhancing their overall academic performance and contentment.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC), second language learning, Chinese Postgraduate

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PGRC-106

The Effects of Multimodal Tasks-Critical Reading Integrated Instruction on China's Rural Senior High School Students' Reading Achievement and Reading Motivation

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Abstract

One of educational reform that China is undertaking is to improve China's citizen's English language proficiency, but more specifically, to be competent in critical reading. There is a tendency to pay too much attention to grammar to improve students' reading comprehension which may bring great reading pressure to students without improving their critical reading abilities. This can be frustrating to the students and possibly dampen their motivation to further pursue reading. In addition, a teacher-centered approach may have improved students' vocabulary and grammatical rules, but not how to read critically. As a way of active learning, student-centered pedagogies are expected to help students identify what they have read, analyze what they have read, and how and where to use new information through in their reading which can lead to solution of a problem. For instance, there is a push for teachers in China to try to initiate the use of multimodality as one of the counterproposals to conventional teaching.

Discussion of multimodality and its use to teach specific aspects of critical reading is still needed. This is especially true for rural students in China, where studies of changing classroom practices must be conducted to better recognize multimodality as an alternative to the conventional pedagogy especially in the teaching of critical reading. The researcher also sees that the integration of multimodality is able to bring advantages to the enhancement of critical reading ability of high school students in rural schools in China. Therefore, the researcher proposes the integration of multimodality in the form of multimodal tasks as an alternative to the conventional method of teaching critical reading.

The purpose of this presentation is to present a study on the application of multimodal tasks in an English reading class in rural senior high school students. The application is characterized by the integration of multimodal tasks aimed at providing teachers an alternative approach for teaching critical reading. The overarching aim of this study is to examine the effects of the use of multimodal tasks with rural senior high school students in China using critical reading ability and reading motivation towards critical reading as the variables.

This study used a quasi-experimental research design with four intact groups of participants (Classes A, B, C and D). Classes A and B were experimental groups, while Classes C and D were control groups. This design is often described as a variant of the pretest-posttest intervention design. This design is like a pretest-posttest design in that it includes measurements of the dependent variable both before and after the treatment. It is a form of experimental research used extensively in the social sciences when the researcher usually lacks control over the sampling and assignment of participants.

All participants completed a critical reading pre-test, one prior motivation self-report questionnaire (MQ), one post self-report motivation questionnaire and a critical reading post-test for investigating the effects of the use of multimodal tasks in teaching critical reading. The questionnaire was used to investigate students' motivation to learn and read critically in both the experimental and control groups.

The scores of the participants in the experimental groups and the control groups were analyzed to measure the similarity or dissimilarity of the critical reading ability scores and motivation to

learn before and after the intervention. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis. All statistical tests were conducted on the SPSS version 27.

The Independent Samples t-Test for both pre-tests and pre-MQ was analyzed, which showed that on the pre-tests there were no statistically significant differences between the multimodal task groups (experimental groups) and non-multimodal task groups (control groups) of participants at the p<0.05 level. In other words, all groups were equivalent in terms of their critical reading ability and motivation level before receiving the intervention.

The post-test scores of the participants in the two groups were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics (Independent sample t-Test). The results showed that the average score of the experimental group was higher, at 64.54, while the average score of control group was 62.63. The result of the inferential statistical analysis suggested that the difference between the post-test scores of two groups were significant at the p<0.05 level (sig.= .011). This indicated that the participants in the experimental groups out-performed those in the control groups in the critical reading ability post-test at a significant level.

The post-MQ scores of the participants in the two groups were analyzed using the independent sample t-Test. The results showed that the average score of the experimental group was higher, at 65.64, while the average score of control group was 64.98. The result of the inferential statistical analysis suggested that the difference between the post-MQ scores of two groups was significant at p<0.05 level (sig.= .031). This indicated that the participants in the experimental group out-performed those in the control group in the learning motivation at a significant level.

The main findings obtained from the statistical analysis generated by SPSS (version 23.0) indicate that at the p<0.05 level, the improvement between the pre-test and post test of critical reading in the experimental group was significantly greater than that in the control group. This indicates that the integration of multimodal tasks has a positive impact on students' critical reading ability. Similarly, the results of the motivation survey questionnaire indicated that at the p<0.05 level, the experimental group showed a significant improvement in the reading motivation compared to the control group. This indicates that the integration of multimodal tasks has a positive impact on students' critical reading motivation.

The empirical evidence of this study provides insights into the use of multimodal tasks in actual English reading classrooms in the Chinese rural school context. The results of this study are consistent with previous research findings, indicating that multimodality (in this study in the form of multimodal tasks) have a positive effect on improving critical reading skills and enhancing students' positive motivation to learn and read. In addition, the research results have provided useful information to help inform the teaching of critical reading in rural senior high schools. The knowledge acquired should also be passed on to other teachers of the same subject.

Keywords: Multimodality, Multimodal tasks, critical reading achievement, motivation

PGRC-107

Teachers' Experiences with STEAM Instruction: a case study in a STEAM exemplary school in Southeast China

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Abstract

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) curriculum is increasingly recommended for integration into China's K-9 education framework. This initiative aims to enhance students' creative thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, ultimately producing graduates who are well-prepared for future job markets characterized by rapid technological and interdisciplinary advances. Recognizing the importance of these skills, the Chinese government established STEAM exemplary schools in 2017 to integrate STEAM education into the existing curriculum. These schools are expected to promote better educational outcomes by embedding STEAM principles into everyday teaching practices. Consequently, the introduction of STEAM exemplary schools represents a novel and unique dimension within the Chinese education system. Despite the presence of supportive educational policies and documents advocating for STEAM education, there remains a significant gap between these theoretical frameworks and their practical implementation within classrooms. This gap raises critical questions regarding the consistency and effectiveness of STEAM education in K-9 schools. It is unclear how teachers adapt and integrate the STEAM curriculum into the Chinese educational context. This qualitative case study aims to explore how teachers in STEAM exemplary schools describe their experiences with STEAM instruction. By examining teachers' experiences, this research seeks to explore the instructional methods used, pedagogical strategies employed, challenges encountered in implementing STEAM, and successful experiences of instructing STEAM.

Understanding teachers' experiences with implementing STEAM is crucial because these experiences directly influence STEAM practices within the classroom. Teachers' perspectives provide invaluable insights into the operationalization of STEAM education, revealing the practicalities of curriculum integration, instructional strategies, and the real-world challenges faced. This study is guided by three central research questions: (1) How do teachers experience implementing STEAM instruction in a STEAM exemplary school? (2) What challenges do teachers in STEAM exemplary schools face when implementing STEAM instruction? (3) What supports do teachers in STEAM exemplary schools receive during the implementation of STEAM? These questions are intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in STEAM practices from the perspective of the educators responsible for its delivery. To ensure a thorough examination of these questions, purposive sampling will be employed to select teacher participants who have taught STEAM for more than three years at the case school. This selection criterion ensures that participants have substantial experience and insight into the implementation of STEAM education. The participants, consisting of seven teachers, provided a diverse range of experiences and insights, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the STEAM implementation process.

Data will be collected through a multi-method approach, including three classroom observations, an individual interview for each participant, and document analysis. This triangulation of data sources could enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, allowing for a holistic understanding of the teachers' experiences. The interviews will provide detailed personal accounts and reflections on their teaching practices, while the classroom observations

will provide direct insights into the instructional practices and classroom dynamics during STEAM lessons. Document analysis will include a review of lesson plans, instructional materials, and school reports to understand the broader context of STEAM implementation. The collected qualitative data will undergo a rigorous six-step thematic analysis with inductive coding to generate themes related to the research questions. This method could facilitate the identification of patterns and insights that provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences with STEAM. The expected outcomes of this study include themes that illustrate exemplary STEAM school teachers' experiences with the STEAM approach, reflections on their teaching practices, the challenges they have encountered, and support they received for their STEAM teaching.

Expected results are anticipated to highlight several key areas. Firstly, themes are likely to emerge that detail how teachers integrate STEAM principles into their teaching, including innovative pedagogical strategies that promote interdisciplinary learning. For example, teachers may describe how they use project-based learning to connect concepts from multiple STEAM disciplines to foster a more integrated understanding among students. They might share specific methods that have proven effective in engaging students, fostering creative thinking, and improving problem-solving skills. Secondly, the study aims to identify the challenges teachers face in implementing STEAM education. These may include logistical issues such as insufficient time to plan and implement STEAM projects, a lack of resources or materials, and inadequate professional development opportunities. Teachers might also discuss the difficulties of balancing STEAM activities with traditional curricular demands and the resistance they encounter from stakeholders who are unfamiliar with or skeptical of the STEAM approach. For instance, a teacher might highlight the challenge of aligning STEAM projects with standardized testing requirements, which often prioritize rote learning over creative problem solving. Thirdly, the research will examine the types of support teachers receive in their efforts to implement STEAM education. This could encompass administrative support, access to professional development programs, and collaboration with colleagues. The study may also identify gaps in support and suggest areas where additional resources or training might be beneficial. Teachers might report on the effectiveness of professional learning communities in providing ongoing support and sharing best practices for STEAM instruction. They may also discuss how school leadership plays a role in facilitating or hindering STEAM implementation. The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into the practical implementation of STEAM education in China. They are expected to provide recommendations for deepening education reform and improving STEAM practices. The study's outcomes could contribute to the professional development of STEAM teachers by highlighting effective instructional strategies and identifying areas where further training and support are needed. In addition, the research seeks to bridge the gap between policy and practice, advancing the broader field of educational innovation and reform in China.

In conclusion, this study aims to shed light on the real-world application of STEAM education within Chinese classrooms, providing a detailed account of teachers' experiences, the strategies they employ, and the challenges they face. In this way, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational reform and the development of a more effective and integrated approach to teaching STEAM subjects. The insights gained from this research are expected to have significant implications for policymakers, educators, and researchers, ultimately contributing to the advancement of STEAM education in China. The findings will help to understand how STEAM education can be effectively implemented, what support structures are necessary, and how teachers can be better prepared and supported in their STEAM instruction. This research will also provide a foundation for future studies on STEAM education in various educational contexts, potentially leading to more innovative and effective teaching practices globally.

Keywords: STEAM education, STEAM exemplary school, STEAM instruction, teacher experience

PGRC-108

Relationships Between Writing Assessment Approaches and Students' Writing Proficiency in Higher Education in China

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Abstract

Writing assessment is pivotal in fostering student development, particularly in higher education, where writing is essential for academic success. The focus of this study is to explore the relationships between various writing assessment approaches and students' writing proficiency. In particular, the study examines how different forms of evaluation (self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher conference) impact students' ability to write more effectively. Writing proficiency refers to writing with coherence, organization, and clarity, incorporating proper grammar, syntax, and vocabulary, all of which are crucial for academic communication.

Given the rise of diverse teaching and assessment methods in higher education, this study seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of the specific relationships between writing assessment practices and student outcomes in terms of writing proficiency. Additionally, it examines the extent to which formative assessments impact students' long-term writing development.

This study situates itself in the context of the washback theory, which suggests that formative assessments are more effective in fostering learning because they provide ongoing feedback and opportunities for improvement. The research aims to fill gaps in the literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of how different assessment methods affect writing proficiency, and it seeks to offer practical recommendations for educators on how to enhance writing instruction through effective assessment practices.

Literature Review

Writing assessments can generally be classified into formative and summative types. Formative assessments, such as peer and self-assessments, are designed to be developmental and supportive of learning, helping students identify areas for improvement as they progress. Summative assessments, on the other hand, typically aim to measure learning outcomes at the conclusion of an instructional period. In higher education, both types of assessments are used, but their effects on students' writing proficiency vary.

Research has demonstrated that formative assessments, particularly feedback-rich forms like peer and teacher-student interactions, are associated with improved writing outcomes (Hyland, 2013). The feedback process allows students to reflect on their performance and make targeted revisions, fostering greater meta-cognitive awareness of their writing process (Sadler, 1989). By contrast, summative assessments often focus on grading final products without providing detailed feedback, which can limit their impact on long-term writing proficiency development (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Additionally, studies have shown that peer assessment encourages collaborative learning, allowing students to critique and learn from one another's work, which can lead to a deeper understanding of writing conventions and standards (Topping, 2009). Self-assessment has also been linked to greater student autonomy and responsibility in the learning process, fostering skills of self-regulation and reflection, which are essential for academic writing (Andrade, 2010). However, there is less consensus on the effectiveness of summative assessments, as they tend to focus more on evaluation than on instruction (Brown, 2004).

While these individual assessment strategies have been studied, there is limited research on their combined effects on writing proficiency in higher education settings. This study aims to explore how various formative assessment approaches interact to influence students' writing proficiency.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following research objectives.

1. To examine the relationship between formative writing assessments (self-assessment, peer assessment, teacher conference) and students' writing proficiency in higher education.

2. To analyze the role of formative assessments in shaping students' writing proficiency.

3. To explore the perceptions of students and instructors regarding the usefulness and challenges of different writing assessment approaches.

4. To provide practical recommendations for integrating assessment methods into writing instruction to maximize student writing proficiency.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What is the relationship between formative writing assessments and students' writing proficiency in higher education?

2. How do formative writing assessments impact students' writing proficiency?

3. How do students and instructors perceive the effectiveness of different writing assessment approaches in improving writing skills?

4. What are the key challenges associated with self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher conferences in the context of writing instruction?

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design will be adopted to address the research questions, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study will be conducted at a university in Sichuan Province, China, with participants including both undergraduate students and writing instructors.

Participants

The sample consisted of 200 undergraduate students enrolled in College English courses and 10 writing instructors. The students will be selected from different academic disciplines to ensure diversity in writing backgrounds and experiences. Instructors will be chosen based on their experience in teaching writing and using various assessment methods in their classrooms.

Data Collection

Quantitative data will be collected through writing proficiency tests and surveys. The writing proficiency of students will be measured at the beginning and end of the semester to evaluate improvements. The proficiency tests assess grammar, coherence, vocabulary use, and organization, with scores on each dimension used to calculate overall writing proficiency. Surveys will be administered to gather data on students' and instructors' perceptions of the different assessment approaches. The surveys include both Likert-scale and open-ended questions, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. In addition, focus group interviews will be conducted with a subset of students and instructors to gain deeper insights into their experiences and attitudes toward writing assessment.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical techniques such as correlation and

regression analysis to examine the relationships between assessment approaches and writing proficiency. Pre- and post-test scores will be compared to assess the impact of different formative assessments on student writing development.

The qualitative data from the open-ended survey responses and focus group interviews will be analyzed using thematic coding. This analysis helps identify recurring themes and patterns related to the perceived effectiveness and challenges of different assessment methods.

Expected Findings

The findings of the study indicate that formative assessments, particularly teacher-student feedback and peer assessment, are significantly correlated with improvements in students' writing proficiency. Students who receive regular feedback from instructors and their peers show great gains in writing coherence, organization, and grammar accuracy.

Peer assessment emerged as a valuable tool for fostering collaborative learning and critical thinking. Students reported that the process of reviewing their peers' work not only improved their understanding of writing standards but also enhanced their ability to self-assess and revise their own work.

Self-assessment, while less impactful than peer and teacher feedback, is found to be a useful strategy for promoting student autonomy. Students who engage in regular self-assessments demonstrate increased self-regulation skills, leading to more thoughtful revisions in their writing.

The qualitative data further revealed that students value formative assessments for the opportunity to engage in dialogue with their peers and instructors about their writing. However, they also highlight challenges, such as the potential for inconsistent peer feedback and the difficulty of assessing their own work objectively. Instructors, on the other hand, emphasize the time-consuming nature of providing detailed formative feedback, especially in large classes.

Discussion

The results of this study align with previous research on the benefits of formative assessment for writing instruction. The findings underscore the importance of integrating peer assessment, self-assessment, and teacher-student feedback into the writing classroom to promote student growth. The study also highlights the need for teacher training on effective feedback strategies. Instructors must balance the provision of detailed feedback with the constraints of time and class size. Moreover, institutions should encourage the use of peer and self-assessment as complementary strategies to reduce the burden on instructors and foster a collaborative learning environment.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that formative writing assessments (particularly peer assessment, self-assessment, and teacher conferences) are associated with significant improvements in students' writing proficiency. The findings have practical implications for writing instructors and educational institutions. By adopting a more formative approach to writing assessment, educators can help students develop the skills they need to succeed in academic writing. Furthermore, institutions should invest in professional development for instructors to equip them with the tools and strategies necessary for providing effective feedback.

Keywords: writing proficiency, formative assessment, peer assessment, self-assessment, teacher-student feedback, higher education

PGRC-109

'Voices' of Guizhou Ethnic Minority Children Regarding Parental Involvement in School and at Home

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Abstract

In 2021, China has formulated the 'Five-year Family Education Plan 2021-2025' to incorporate parental involvement plans or programs into its school schedule to assist students' academic growth. Such ambitious policy in China sets out to advocate greater parental involvement as a crucial element in students' learning outcomes and behavioural development at all levels of education. Parental involvement is generally perceived as the actions taken by parents to be involved in their children's education and children's life in any form in order to enhance their academic achievements. Research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning has demonstrated that parental involvement can socially, emotionally and academically promote children's English language development. Evidence shows that in Guizhou ethnic minority regions, there were insufficient teacher-child and parent-child interactions, and this may be detrimental in their English language development and proficiency. However, the implementation of China's 'Family Education 2021-2025' plan endeavours to change this situation, aiming to promote parents' awareness of the importance of children's education, and also facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. However, the policy's good intentions regarding parental involvement in ethnic minority children's English language learning process are not much known, especially from the perspectives of the children themselves. In any policy, the very group involved are seldom invited to provide their perspectives. Ethnic minority children are acknowledged as 'disadvantaged children'.

This presentation on Guizhou ethnic minority children's perspectives of the different parental involvement in school and at home to help their English language learning is a part of a larger study looking into parental involvement of Guizhou ethnic minority primary school students. A qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews revolved around nature and degree of parental involvement in children's English language learning process in school and at home from the children's perspectives. To enable rich and meaningful information, sixth graders (ages 11-12) from 4 different four primary schools in Guizhou ethnic minority regions of China were interviewed. The total participants were 20 children from Guizhou ethnic minority regions of School A in Qiandongnan (6 participants), School B and C in Qiannan (5 participants for each), and School D in Qianxinan (4 participants). These 20 students had differing English language achievement. Specifically, each principal from the schools asked the teachers to help select the students in their classes. All student participants were informed that any information regarding their participation would remain confidential.

To guarantee reliability, thematic analysis was used via repeated reading and comparison. Initially, an open coding through constant reading the interview transcripts were conducted and then it was organised into relevant excerpts in a systematically manner. The emerging codes from these excerpts were further read and examined through inductive analysis. Throughout the process, the emerging codes were classified and then grounded under each constructed category. Next, axial coding was utilised and themes emerged on the basis of student participants who indicated specific supportive involvement, and maintained two types of school involvement: 1) parent-teacher conferences; (2) school activities organised in Children's Day or sport meetings, together with five types of home involvement: 1) helping children with their homework; 2) the use of sibling resources; 3) monitoring; 4) private English education; 5) parent-

child discussions. In addition, the emerging themes about factors influencing school involvement were identified, which included 1) busy with work, and time shortage; 2) time clash with siblings' school activities, and home involvement were recognised, which contained 1) a lack of English knowledge; 2) a lack of time; 3) a lack of parenting skills; 4) the grade level. Finally, after the completion of the coding process, the emerging codes were re-read in order to ensure that themes reflected participants' authentic perceptions.

The interview data shows that the degree of parental involvement in school is high, with all parents attending parent-teacher conference as the priority, followed by school activities organised in Children's Day or sport meetings. As such, it indicates that many Chinese parents highly value children's academic performance, emotional welling and physical health. By contrast, the level of parental involvement at home is lower, with top priority offered to help with children's homework, the use of sibling resources, monitoring, private English education and parent-child discussions. Their direct assistance is mainly pertaining to children's mastery of English vocabulary and sentences by reminding their children to recite words. From the interviews, the children indicate that if their parents' educational level and English language proficiency is higher, more attention is given. The children state that, although their parents understand the importance of English language learning for their children, some challenges are prevalent. These challenges are insufficient English knowledge, lacking in enough time due to leaving home for work, scarcity of parenting skilling by using authoritarian parenting. Notably, although several lower educated parents seldom directly help their children with homework, they also are more likely to rely on using sibling resources, purchasing online courses, finding out private tutoring, asking other people for help.

The interviews have shown that higher educated parents were likely to depend on themselves to discover strategies to monitor and support their children, including encouraging their children to repeat the lessons, re-teaching, and providing emotional support. The children were aware of the significance of the parental role in their English learning, and the useful methods and the various support that their parent gave them. The children knew that their parents were concerned about what happened in school and frequently attended parent-teacher conferences to discuss with teachers, and better understand their children's educational learning process. More importantly, the children seemed to say that there should be more school-parent, and parent-teacher collaboration to facilitate their English language academic achievement and achieve affective outcomes such as confidence and self-efficacy. It would appear that ethnic minority children are aware of the importance of the English language to them.

Keywords: Guizhou ethnic minority children, parental involvement in school, parental involvement at home, English language learning

PGRC-110

An Intervention for College Student Engagement via the Think-Pair-Share Strategy in Blended Learning Classes

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Abstract

This paper focuses on student engagement in Blending Learning (BL) a global concern and phenomenon. In the BL mode, students must navigate between different delivery modalities, and they may suffer isolation and cognitive load leading to being distracted. Without being engaged, it will lead to poor academic performance, and the potential of BL cannot be fully realized. Studies (Ashraf et al., 2022; Deng, Peng, & Li, 2022) show that Chinese college students keep an inferior level of interactive and self-directed competence, which makes their engagement not as expected, thus limiting the transformative potentials of BL.

Think-Pair-Share (TPS) (Lyman, 1987), a most used and acknowledged cooperative learning strategy, has been capitalized in traditional and E-Learning classes. However, TPS has not been well employed in BL of Chinese higher education institutions. Most previous studies validated their interventions with self-report data, yet with an overlook of the dynamic of student engagement over a period. It remains to be seen whether and how TPS affects learners' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in BL classes in Chinese higher education. This study addresses three research questions: (1) What are the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement of college students when using the Think-Pair-Share strategy in blended learning classes? (2) What are the factors contributing to student engagement in blended learning classes via the Think-Pair-Share strategy? (3) How do college students in Henan province perceive the implementation of the Think-Pair-Share strategy in blended learning classes?

This study will conduct an intervention using the TPS strategy in College English BL classes in a Chinese college. Based on the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000), Cooperative Learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), and Academic Communities of Engagement framework (Borup et al., 2020), this study integrates TPS with the BL classes.

When BL classes exploit the TPS strategy, this research expects to explore student engagement for depth over breadth. Since this study emphasizes the context, the process, and discovery, it will adopt a qualitative paradigm using the case study method. It will follow the rule of purposeful sampling and select about eight first-year participants in a college of Henan with different levels of technology learning experiences, quality and frequency of peer interaction, and academic performances.

The study will fully consider the advantages of two modes of BL to match TPS that will maximize the unique advantages of in-person interaction, synchronous meetings, and asynchronous written communication of BL to foster students' learning experience. In this study, the "Pair" will be asynchronous online discussions, and "Share" will be meetings online or face-to-face. For each lesson, there will be three stages: pre-class (online), in-class (face-to-face), and post-class (online). An evaluation instrument to validate the operationalization of the concepts in the CoI will be used as a guideline to help the teacher design the lessons. Specific approaches will be designed based on five cooperative learning principles proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1999) so that TPS can work well.

Data collection will be observations, interviews, students' reflective journals, and online discussion records. The observations and online discussion records will present cognitive,

emotional, and behavioural engagement over a semester. The classroom observation is to get data on behavioral engagement in offline learning. There are 6 indicators in face-to-face class: interacting with peers, answering questions, asking questions, taking notes, fiddling with the phone, and dozing. The researcher will take notes of those indicators via an observation checklist. In terms of behaviors in online learning, the data will be collected from Chaoxing (a learning management system) and WeChat (a social platform). There are 2 indicators in online learning: viewing learning materials uploaded by teachers and the absence of interactions in the "Pair" and "Share" phases. Students' reflective journals are adapted the model of Gibbs (1988) and Reflectors' Toolkit (The University of Edinburgh). It covers six parts: description of the experience; feelings and thoughts about the experience; evaluation of the good and bad experience; analysis to make sense of the situation; conclusion about what you learned and what you could have done differently; an action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future or general changes you might find appropriate. To investigate students' perceptions on TPS strategy in BL, open-ended questions will be asked at the end of the semester. Open-ended questions have more focus on participants' subjective experience. The researcher will also conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants individually to understand their engagement. Based on the three-series interview of Seidman (2006), the study will conduct three times of semi-structured interviews.

Content analysis will be conducted on postings on WeChat, students' reflective journals, and interviews. Students' reflective journals and interviews will be analyzed mainly by open coding, and postings on WeChat will be analyzed mainly by theory-driven coding. Open coding is to extract information not only about students' perceptions of the TPS strategy, but also about the factors which contribute to effective student engagement in TPS. Theory-driven coding will be the means to analyze the postings on WeChat regarding cognitive and emotional engagement. In this study, Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) and theories of educational psychology related to students' emotions (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012) will underpin the theory-driven coding.

This research will describe the development of student engagement in BL over a semester, thus further adjusting and optimize the design of the TPS strategy. Moreover, it will discover the factors affecting student engagement to recognize the needs of different students in BL.

Keywords: blended learning; Think-Pair-Share strategy, Chinese higher education institution; student engagement

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PGRC-111

Selangor In-Service Science Teachers' Nature of Science (NOS) Conception and Nature of Science Pedagogical Content Knowledge (NOS PCK)

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Abstract

Quality education is a cornerstone of societal progress, as highlighted in policy papers like MySITE, The Shared Prosperity Vision 2030, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A key component of quality education is the development of scientifically literate citizens, capable of engaging in civic, cultural, and economic activities. Scientific literacy, defined as the ability to understand and apply science in daily life (Demirbas et al., 2012), is closely linked to the understanding of the Nature of Science (NOS), which refers to "understanding science as a way of knowing, or the values and beliefs inherent to the development of scientific knowledge."(Lederman, 1992 as cited in Hanuscin et al., 2011, p.146). The literature consistently underscores the importance of a robust understanding of NOS as essential to achieving scientific literacy and fostering an informed public (Höttecke & Allchin, 2020).

The SDGs aim for all youths to achieve literacy, including science literacy, by 2030. Many countries including Malaysia have also enumerated achieving scientific literacy as a key educational goal in hope to cultivate the future generations to be scientifically literate citizens who are willing to engage in reasoned discourse about science and technology which requires the competencies to: (i) draw evidence-based conclusion to explain a phenomenon scientifically, (ii) design and evaluate scientific investigations; and (iii) aware of how science and technology shape our intellectual and cultural development (OECD, 2009).

Malaysia faces considerable challenges in realising its goal of scientific literacy. International assessments, such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), have indicated a decline in the scientific literacy of Malaysian students, with scores dropping from 438 in 2019 to 416 in 2022 (OECD, 2023). Teachers, who are crucial in fostering scientific literacy, often lack a sound understanding of the Nature of Science (NOS). Research has revealed that many teachers do not have sophisticated NOS conceptions, which hinders their ability to effectively teach this important aspect of science (Akerson et al., 2009; Dogan & Abd-El-Khalick, 2008; Guerra-Ramos, 2011; Kartal et al., 2018; Jain et al., 2013).

In Malaysia, the education system is often content-heavy and exam-focused, which impedes meaningful learning and the development of scientific literacy. This approach has led to a decline in student interest in science and underperformance in the subject (Yahaya & Chu, 2010; Fatin Aliah Phang et al., 2020). Although the Malaysian curriculum mentions NOS as one of the objectives in the educational blueprints, it is stated merely as a general objective with a lack of clear guidelines for integrating NOS into science lessons, leading to uncertainty about its effective teaching in classrooms (Ministry of Education, 2016).

This gap between the ideal and the reality in Malaysia's educational landscape has resulted in several negative consequences, notably the nation's divergence from its goal of achieving scientific literacy, as reflected in the recent decline in PISA scores. The pivotal role of teachers in students' education (Opper, 2019), the importance of sound NOS conceptions and appropriate teaching practices for developing scientific literacy, and the absence of clear guidelines for NOS implementation in classrooms should not be overlooked, as these deficiencies directly impact the development of scientifically literate citizens in Malaysia.

To address these issues, this study aims to investigate the NOS conceptions of Malaysian lower

secondary in-service science teachers, as well as their ability and practices in translating these conceptions into pedagogical content knowledge (NOS PCK). Recognizing the importance of teachers as the most influential factor in students' learning journeys (Lumpe, 2007), this study seeks to provide insights into the current state of Malaysian science classrooms, identify areas for improvement, and offer recommendations to help Malaysia achieve its key educational goal of scientific literacy.

Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted with the aim to study the NOS conceptions of lower-secondary in-service science teachers in Selangor, their ability and practices in translating their NOS conceptions to NOS PCK.

The specific objectives for this study are:

1. To investigate Selangor lower secondary in-service science teachers' NOS conceptions.

2. To explore Selangor lower secondary in-service science teachers are ability and practices to translate their NOS conceptions into NOS (NOS PCK).

Methodology

This mixed-method study was conducted in two phases. Phase One focused on assessing the NOS conceptions of Selangor lower-secondary in-service science teachers using an adapted version of the Views of Science Education (VOSE) questionnaire by Chen (2006). The questionnaire, available in English and Bahasa Malaysia, was pilot tested for clarity. Descriptive analysis of the data categorised teachers' NOS conceptions into three levels: naive, mixed, and sophisticated. Data in Phase One was also used to shortlist suitable participants for Phase Two of the study.

In Phase Two, the study explored how these teachers translate their NOS conceptions into NOS PCK. Data were collected through observations and interviews with five teachers, each participating in two rounds of observations and one interview. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in teachers' translation of their NOS conceptions in science instructions.

Results

Phase One

The majority of teachers (48 out of 66) had mixed NOS conceptions, with only eight participants demonstrating sophisticated NOS conceptions. The analysis of mean scores for each NOS tenet revealed that teachers only have sophisticated conceptions on one NOS tenet which is Tentativeness indicating that most participants recognize scientific knowledge as subject to change. However, they have mixed conceptions on the tenets of Nature of Observations, Theories and Laws, Use of Imagination, and Subjectivity and Objectivity, while teachers' conceptions of the tenets of Scientific Methods and Validation of Scientific Knowledge were at a naive level.

Phase Two

Four main themes emerged:

1. Compartmentalisation of NOS understanding and teaching: Teachers have the conceptions whereby science is tentative but did not translate this understanding into their teaching.

2. Missed opportunities to address NOS tenets: Opportunities to integrate NOS into lessons were often missed as teachers were not able to identify opportunities to address NOS which attributed to the lack of sophisticated NOS conceptions.

3. Translation of scientific methods as fixed procedures: Teachers perceived scientific

experiments as having fixed procedures, which was reflected in their teaching.

4. Translation of science as static knowledge: Teachers' method of teaching limit opportunities for students to explore science, leading to the perception of science as a set of static, memorisable facts.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Selangor lower-secondary in-service science teachers possess predominantly mixed conceptions of the Nature of Science (NOS) and face significant challenges in effectively translating these conceptions into their teaching practices, known as NOS Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). These findings are consistent with previous research, such as Akerson et al. (2009) and Clough (2012), which similarly identify gaps in teachers' NOS understanding and its impact on science instruction.

Implications

The study highlights the critical need for explicit inclusion of the Nature of Science (NOS) in teacher training programs to enhance teachers' understanding and their ability to integrate NOS into their teaching practices. It recommends revising teacher training curricula to emphasise the integration of NOS in science education and calls for ongoing professional development to further improve teachers' NOS knowledge and instructional strategies. Additionally, the research underscores the importance of developing a NOS Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) framework and providing clear curriculum guidelines to help teachers effectively incorporate NOS into their lessons, ultimately fostering improved scientific literacy among students.

Keywords: Nature of Science (NOS), Nature of Science (NOS) Conceptions, Nature of Science Pedagogical Content Knowledge (NOS PCK), Lower-Secondary In-Service Science Teachers in Selangor.

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PGRC-112

Decision-Making Involving Socioscientific Issues: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

With societal advancement, effective decision-making is essential for modern citizens. This task has been included in many science education standards and curricula worldwide (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993; National Science Education Standards, 1996). The OECD's PISA emphasizes integrating decision-making into scientific literacy, urging students to research and evaluate scientific information for informed actions (OECD, 2023). Enhancing the capacity for informed decision-making, as an integral aspect of advancing scientific literacy, not only warrants comprehensive investigation to understand the status of students' decision-making ability, but also needs science education researchers to create a learning environment suitable for students' level and conducive to their decision-making ability improvement. Socioscientific Issues (SSI), which encompass scientific, ethical, and social dimensions, are complex and unresolved in public discourse, requiring cultural and social considerations beyond scientific knowledge (Chen & Xiao, 2021; Sadler, 2004). Social Studies of SSI offer a plethora of information sources and diverse perspectives that are instrumental in fostering adeptness in informed decision-making (Rundgren & Rundgren, 2010). Integrating SSI into education enhances student interest, understanding, and decision-making skills (Betul Cebesoy & Chang Rundgren, 2021; Wu et al., 2022). Consequently, examining the decision-making proficiency of individuals through the lens of SSI holds promise in elucidating the nuanced dynamics and cognitive processes underpinning high-quality decision-making. However, current research indicates participants often demonstrate inadequate decision-making abilities in the face of different SSI (Dauer et al., 2022; Evagorou et al., 2012; Grace, 2009). In addition, there is a lack of consensus among researchers regarding the environmental elements that need to be created to effectively enhance decision-making skills. These issues limit the development of effective informed decision-making skills in science education.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to systematically review the research on SSI-based decision-making ability, understand the current research process of decision-making ability in science education, and provide advice for the subsequent science teaching and research on decision-making skills. This review aims to evaluate the application of SSI scenarios in decision-making research, to summarize the major aspect concerned on decision-making capacity in the existing research, and to assess the effectiveness of the different interventions to improve decision-making skills in current literature.

Methodology

Following PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), this systematic review examined studies from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, and ERIC. The search used terms related to SSI and decision-making. From 1,858 initial articles, 68 were selected for extensive analysis based on relevance to the research questions. Two authors independently reviewed the studies for compliance with the screening criteria, and uncertainties in the review process were resolved by discussion. All 668 articles were published in major peer-reviewed journals in the field and therefore met these criteria and were ultimately included in this study. Our data analysis involved four steps. First, the first author read and extracted the main features of each study. Second, two authors read the full text and extracted information from each study independently according

to the research questions: a) SSI scenarios used, b) SSI-based decision-making models used, and c) interventions effective in improving decision-making competence. Thirdly, we further combed through the information extracted under each research question to complete the coding of each category using an inductive approach. Each included study was carefully read independently by two authors to ensure the reliability of this review by co-coding the articles and discussing the findings to resolve disagreements. Finally, we summarized the findings according to the research questions and inductive categories.

Results

The review categorized SSI scenarios into environmental, bioethical, health-related, and miscellaneous topics. Environmental topics included ecosystem protection, energy and resources, site selection, global warming and whaling ban scenarios. Bioethics topics were related to genetically modified organism, gene therapy, stem cells, animal ethics and so on. Health-related topics included food safety, cancer prevention, sexual health, and response to pandemics such as COVID-19. SSI scenarios covered a wide range of global, regional, and individual contexts. The SSI scenarios used in this study were divided into single and multi-topic categories. SSI scenarios were divided into. Of the 68 studies, 44 explored teaching intervention impacts on decision-making abilities. Decision-making process models like Svenson (1996), Ratcliffe (1997), Lee & Grace (2012), Betsch and Haberstroh (2005), Fang (2019) and others were frequently used. Compensatory and non-compensatory strategies were emphasized (Eggert & Bögeholz, 2010; Papadouris, 2012). The SEE-SEP model (Rundgren & Rundgren, 2010) and SCDM process (Edelson et al., 2006) were applied to study decision-making processes in SSI contexts. The role of values and nature of science (NOS) had also been regarded as an important factor in promoting decision-making skills, thus becoming the theme of teaching intervention activities.

Conclusion

The review underscores the diversity in SSI scenarios for decision-making research across multiple subjects and dimensions. While SSIs offer insight into science-society relations, the same issues can lead to diverse decisions based on cultural contexts (Lee et al., 2019; Lee & Grace, 2012). This study provides a comprehensive analysis of decision-making models and teaching intervention approaches, suggesting that the application of SSI-based decision-making model can effectively guarantee the effect of teaching intervention for decision-making skill learning (Yapicioglu & Aycan, 2018; Zhang & Hsu, 2021). As a part of higher-order cognitive skills, critical thinking, self-regulation, reflection and other cognitive activities can effectively improve decision-making ability (Levy Nahum et al., 2010). In addition, whether in the information collection phase before decision-making or in the selection process of different types of decision-making strategies, integrating moral and ethical considerations enhances the informed decision-making skills (Tore et al., 2023; Tramowsky et al., 2022).

Implications

Considering the variety of decision-making in different cultural contexts, future research should explore cultural influences on decision-making and leverage the characteristics of SSI scenarios to foster reflective decision-making. Due to the inherent complexity of the SSI and high discussion in the different platform communities, it is worth continuously exploring the role of ethics, values, and comprehensive information in the decision-making processes to further enhance informed decision-making (Grace et al., 2015). As advanced strategies like compensation are critical, further investigation into cognitive load's impact on strategy choice in education settings is encouraged, and practical experience can be accumulated in the subsequent research to optimize science education (Gresch et al., 2013). The detailed effects of NOS, higher-order cognitive skills and metacognition on decision-making activities are also worthy of further research.

Keywords: Socioscientific issues, Decision-making, Science education

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PGRC-113

Lexical Bundles in Chinese Secondary School EFL Textbooks

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Abstract

"Lexical bundles" (Biber et al., 1999, p.990) are recurrent continuous sequences of two or more words found in discourse. Mastering them compensates for the limitations of short-term memory capacity (Wray & Perkins, 2000), provides advantages in language processing (Biber et al., 1999) and thereby facilitates English language comprehension and production (Boers & Lindstromberg, 2012). As the primary source of English language input (Tomlinson, 2011), the presentation of lexical bundles in English textbooks directly affects learners' use of them (Ma & Meng, 2021), especially in Chinese primary and secondary schools (Wang et al., 2022). However, there is a noticeable gap in the analysis of lexical bundles in Chinese secondary school EFL textbooks. The present study conducts a corpus-based analysis to explore the occurrence, structures and functions of three- and four-word lexical bundles in the latest editions of Chinese secondary school EFL textbooks published by People's Education Press (PEP). The analysis employs the structural and functional classification framework developed by Biber et al. (2004). This study extracts a list of lexical bundles from Chinese secondary school EFL textbooks and provides valuable insights for Chinese EFL learners, English instructors, and textbook developers.

Keywords: lexical bundles, corpus, EFL textbooks

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PGRC-114

A Phenomenographic Study of China's Novice University Teachers' Conceptions of Teaching Competence

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of higher education in China has led to the recruitment of numerous novice university teachers who often struggle to effectively convey their knowledge to students due to a lack of proper teacher education. While existing research has provided insights into school teacher teaching competence, the perceptions and experiences of novice university teachers, especially those involved in university education without proper teacher education, have scarcely been explored in China. The literature review and the context of the study reveal four problems. Firstly, there is a lack of insight into novice university teachers' interpretations and experiences of competence in China, despite the unique challenges they face that differ from experienced educators and impact their personal and professional lives. The voices of these new teaching staff are often unheard, and they are rarely invited to contribute to the debate surrounding the competent performance of practitioners within their own profession, leading to a significant gap in comprehending how they conceptualize teaching competence in relation to their specific context. Secondly, there is a lack of agreement regarding what signifies competence in China's novice university teachers' teaching, as evaluations conducted by universities often assume a uniform standard of competence for both novice and experienced teachers, failing to account for potential variations in novice teachers' understandings of teaching competence. Furthermore, limited research focuses on novice university teachers' teaching competence compared to school teachers. Thirdly, evaluations of novice university teachers are typically based on agreed-upon scales that do not reflect what constitutes good teaching, as they are predefined and do not capture the teaching competence needed to accomplish teaching, undermining their autonomy as reflective practitioners and treating them as mere performers in the classroom. The legitimate voices of novice university teachers about their own experiences are often ignored. Lastly, teaching competence evaluation tends to be one-dimensional, ignoring the relational nature of the teacher and teaching, overlooking important aspects of competence that are not immediately apparent or easily observable, and separating the teacher from their teaching, leading to an incomplete understanding of competence.

This study aims to bridge the gaps in understanding teaching competence from the perspectives of novice university teachers in China by employing a phenomenographic methodology. Phenomenography is a qualitative research approach that investigates the qualitatively different ways in which people experience, conceptualize, perceive, and understand various aspects of a phenomenon in the world around them. This approach is particularly suitable for exploring novice university teachers' conceptions of teaching competence in China, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of how these teachers make sense of the phenomenon based on their lived experiences. By adopting a second-order perspective, the research can gain insights into the different ways these teachers relate to and make sense of teaching competence within their specific contexts.

The research is guided by an overarching objective, which is to map the conceptual understanding of teaching competence among novice university teachers together with the variations between and within these conceptual understandings. The following research questions will guide the proposed study: (1) What are the lived experiences of Chinese novice

university teachers as it relates to their conceptions of teaching competence? (2) What variations exist among these conceptions? (3) How are the variations of conceptions of teaching competence related?

Data collection will be conducted through semi-structured interviews with novice university teachers in China, following purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of experiences and perspectives among the participants. The sample size will be determined by the principle of data saturation. Data analysis involves an iterative process of describing the qualitatively different ways in which teaching competence is experienced and understood by the participants. The categories of description will be further analyzed to identify the structural relationships between them, forming an outcome space. The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of teaching competence from the perspective of novice university teachers in China. By giving voice to a group of teachers who have been largely unheard in the discourse surrounding teaching competence in higher education, the study aims to provide valuable insights into how they make meaning of this phenomenon based on their lived experiences. The research has the potential to challenge and expand existing understandings of teaching competence in higher education, which often rely on externally-imposed criteria or observable behaviors that may not fully capture the complexity and contextual nature of competent teaching practice. The findings of this research can inform the design and implementation of professional development programs for novice university teachers in China, tailoring initiatives to address their specific needs and concerns. Moreover, the research has the potential to contribute to the broader field of higher education research, particularly in the context of China's rapidly expanding higher education system. As Chinese universities continue to recruit large numbers of novice teachers to meet the growing demand for higher education, it is crucial to understand how these teachers conceptualize and experience teaching competence within this specific context. In addition to its practical implications, this research also contributes to the theoretical understanding of teaching competence in higher education. By employing a phenomenographic approach, the study moves beyond the traditional competency-based frameworks and standards that often dominate the discourse on teaching competence. Instead, it seeks to illuminate the complex, contextual, and experiential nature of teaching competence as understood by novice university teachers themselves. This approach aligns with the growing recognition in the field of higher education research that teaching competence is not a fixed set of skills or behaviors, but rather a dynamic and evolving construct that is shaped by the interplay of personal, professional, and contextual factors. Furthermore, by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of novice university teachers in China, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on teacher development and support in non-Western contexts. While much of the existing research on teaching competence has been conducted in Western settings, there is a growing recognition of the need to understand how these constructs are understood and experienced in different cultural and educational contexts. By situating this research within the specific context of China's higher education system, the study aims to provide insights that are relevant and meaningful to educators, researchers, and policymakers in this setting, while also contributing to broader discussions on the cultural and contextual dimensions of teaching competence.

This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of teaching competence by exploring the conceptions held by novice university teachers in China. By employing a phenomenographic approach, the study seeks to illuminate the qualitatively different ways in which these teachers understand and experience teaching competence, shedding light on the complex interplay of personal, professional, and contextual factors that shape their conceptions. The insights gained from this research have the potential to inform policies, practices, and professional development initiatives that can better support the growth and success of novice university teachers in China, ultimately contributing to ongoing efforts to

promote teaching quality and enhance student learning outcomes in higher education. By situating this research within the context of China's rapidly evolving higher education landscape, the study aims to contribute to a more contextualized understanding of teaching competence, one that takes into account the unique challenges and opportunities faced by novice teachers in this specific setting. Ultimately, by giving voice to the experiences and perspectives of novice university teachers in China, this research hopes to contribute to ongoing efforts to promote teaching quality, support teacher development, and enhance student learning outcomes in higher education, both in China and beyond.

Keywords: Teaching competence, novice university teachers, phenomenography, higher education, China

PGRC-115

The Effect of Autonomy-Supportive Teaching on Field Independent and Dependent Chinese Architectural Higher Vocational College Students' Oral English, Intrinsic Motivation and Learning Autonomy

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Abstract

In China's educational reform, higher vocational education is vital for societal progress and enhancing workforce skills (Ministry of Education of China, 2022). Oral English education in Chinese architectural higher vocational colleges is crucial as it equips students with communication skills essential for global collaboration and access to resources in construction or architecture industry (Wang, 2019).

In the realm of second language acquisition, intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role. It instills a sense of enjoyment and interest in the learning process, thereby encouraging students to actively engage in learning activities and seek opportunities for oral English practice and feedback (Dörnyei, 2009). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is recognized as a key factor in developing a sustainable, effective, and autonomous approach to language learning (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Its close association with learning autonomy, another crucial concept in second language acquisition, underscores the importance of self-directed learning and practice in achieving higher levels of proficiency (Li, 2019). Furthermore, the researcher integrates field independence (FI) and field dependence (FD) cognitive styles as moderating variables within the study. Cognitive styles influence individuals' approaches to information processing (Zhang, 2017), making them pivotal in learning and problem-solving contexts. FI and FD have been extensively examined in existing literature, particularly concerning their correlation with learning autonomy and motivation in second language acquisition.

Autonomy-supportive teaching (AST), rooted in self-determination theory (SDT), was chosen as the intervention, yet its application specifically in Chinese vocational colleges remains under-explored. This study addressed this gap to examine AST's effectiveness in enhancing intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy, and oral English proficiency among non-English majored higher vocational students compared to traditional teacher-oriented teaching (TOT)'s. By assessing AST's applicability in the Chinese context, the study would offer actionable insights for policymakers, colleges, and English teachers, and bolster higher vocational students' confidence and proficiency in English communication, empowering them for success in global architectural careers.

Research Scope and Objectives

In response to common problems and research gaps, the researcher examined the effects of AST compared to traditional teacher-oriented teaching (TOT), taking into account students' FD/FI cognitive styles. The focus was on the different effects of AST and TOT on the participants' intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy and achievement in oral English within the research framework. To be specific, the study was designed to examine: (1) the impact of AST and TOT on Chinese architectural higher vocational college students' intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy and oral English achievement and (2) the interaction between FI/FD and AST/TOT in terms of the Chinese architectural higher vocational college students' intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy and oral English achievement.

The scope of this quantitative research study encompassed two classes of freshmen majored in

building construction, comprising 40 students in each, who are enrolled in an architectural higher vocational college located in Southwest China. Students in each class were divided into field independence (FI) and field dependence (FD) subgroups, with 20 students in each subgroup, based on their performance in the Group Embedded Figures Test (GEFT). Throughout the 8-week duration of the study, quantitative data collection and analysis were conducted to elucidate the different main effects and interaction effects among the variables.

Methodology

In this quantitative study, a quasi-experiment, 2 x 2 non-equivalent group was adopted. The study was conducted at an architectural higher vocational college in Southwest China, comprising a target population of 240 freshmen majoring in building construction. This college, with a student body of 12,000-13,000 full-time students, offers architectural-related majors and admits six classes of 40 students each year in the building construction program. Following the administration of the GEFT in all six classes, three classes were identified with an equal number of FD and FI learners. Then one class was randomly assigned as the experimental group receiving AST, while the other served as the control group receiving TOT. A total of 80 participants were not limited to different gender, background and experience. To reduce data contamination, two classes used the same textbook while they learned chapters in different order.

To reduce bias, two classes were taught by teachers meeting selection criteria: equivalent educational background, teaching experience, certification, teaching style, and understanding of the study's intervention and variables. After identifying three potential candidates, one was unavailable due to a scheduling conflict, leaving two qualified teachers. Teacher X, with a passion for AST, led the experimental group, while Teacher Y instructed the control group. Both teachers, female, hold bachelor's and master's degrees in English Education and possess over five years of teaching experience. Teacher X got trained before the intervention of AST.

Regarding to the teaching strategy applied in two study groups, differences between AST and TOT are shown in the aspects of (1) the role of teachers, (2) autonomy and decision making of students, (3)motivation and engagement, (4) learning environment and interaction, and (5) goal setting and assessment. In AST, teachers as a facilitator or guide, usually provide hints or help to students when needed and care more about students' intrinsic motivation and learning autonomy. More freedom and psychological support from the teachers are offered, so students are able to actively involve in personal goal-setting, decision-making, and problem-solving, and have a sense of ownership and responsibility for their learning. Through creating a collaborative and interactive learning environment, students are also encouraged to actively participate, share ideas, and engage in peer-to-peer interactions. Moreover, students are involved in reflecting on their progress and assessing their own learning in AST. The emphasis is on intrinsic goals and personal growth rather than solely on external assessments. While teachers in TOT are the central figure who make most decisions about learning goals, activities, and assessments. Students have limited input and control over their learning process. An effective TOT often relies on external motivators such as grades, rewards, or punishments to drive student engagement. The focus is more on compliance and meeting external expectations rather than fostering intrinsic motivation, following instructions, completing assigned tasks, and seeking validation from teachers. In many literature, TOT has been statistically reported to have EFL learners to be passive, lacking initiatives and motivations, dependent and non-autonomous, which is contrasting to the core philosophy of AST (Alrabai, 2021). The AST lesson plans in this study were were inspired from How and Wang's (2016) ASTS-PE Lesson Flow and matched Reeve's AST class requirements (2016). The classes also incorporated student-centered teaching and learning (SCTL) practices including flipped-classroom, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and Cooperative Learning, as they share some similar practices with AST

The first stage of the study was to identify the classes with an equal number of FD and FI learners through GEFT, then one experimental group (AST) and one control group (TOT) were randomly

assigned. The study lasted for 8 weeks. Both study groups took the Oral English Test graded by Speaking Grading Scale, Speaking Motivation Scale (SMS), and Autonomous Learning Scale for University Students (ALS-US) at the beginning and end of the study for comparison purpose. Prior to the formal study, the researcher conducted a pilot test to examine the reliability and validity of each instrument, the results were satisfactory.

Results

The main effects analysis revealed significant differences in the dependent variables between AST and TOT, with the experimental group (AST) exhibiting superior performance compared to the control group (TOT), and FI learners demonstrated notably better performance. The interaction effects of teaching strategies and cognitive styles on learning autonomy were found to be statistically significant, but no statistically significant interactions were observed for intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement.

The absence of interaction effects between cognitive styles and teaching strategies on intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement could attributed to several factors. Firstly, intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement are complex constructs influenced by various factors beyond cognitive styles and teaching strategies, such as personal interest, perceived autonomy, language proficiency, and task difficulty. The measurement sensitivity of the instruments used to assess intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement may have also played a role, potentially limiting the detection of small interaction effects. Moreover, sample characteristics, including size, composition, and homogeneity, could have affected the statistical power to detect interactions. Finally, the complex interplay between cognitive styles, teaching strategies, intrinsic motivation, and oral English achievement suggests the involvement of other unmeasured variables or contextual factors influencing the observed outcomes. Further research with larger, more diverse samples and refined measurement instruments may help clarify the underlying dynamics of these relationships.

Conclusions

While the study sheds light on the positive impacts brought by AST on architectural higher vocational learners' intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy and oral English achievement, it is essential to acknowledge and address its limitations that may impact the generalizability and robustness of the findings. First and foremost, the small sample size and limited sample selection restricted the extent to which the results could be generalized to a broader population, as only contained 80 participants in this study. Additionally, the geographical limitation and time constraints imposed on the research may influence the diversity and representativeness of the sample. The homogeneity of sample characteristics had posed the limitation considering no significant difference existing in the interaction effects between cognitive styles and teaching strategies in intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement. Future research endeavors should aim for a more varied and representative participant pool and an extended time length to enhance the external validity of the results. Moreover, the need for a more culturally-sensitive assessment is acknowledged. The constraints in the assessment tools may have overlooked certain nuances and intricacies that could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the variables under investigation. Although the three instruments used to assess intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy, and oral English achievement in this study demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability through statistical analysis in the pilot test, it is important to note that these scales were originally developed in cultural contexts outside of China, specifically in higher educational universities. Therefore, future research in similar settings may consider redesigning assessment scales to better capture a more nuanced and culturally appropriate range of data.

The findings held significant implications for the theories constructing the theoretical framework of this study.

Table 1 below summarizes the theoretical implications.

Theoretical Framework	Key Principles	Application in AST Class	Impact on Dependent Variables
Self-Determination Theory (SDT)	Emphasizes competence, autonomy, and relatedness as key motivators	Creating an autonomy-supportive environment, promoting competence through feedback, fostering relatedness through collaborative activities	Enhances intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy, and oral English achievement
Constructivist Learning Theory	Learning as an active, constructive process; emphasis on autonomy and self-exploration	Engaging students in hands-on activities, problem-based learning, self-evaluation, and peer assessment	Promotes active engagement, deeper understanding, and improvement in oral English skills
Social Constructivism	Emphasizes the role of social interactions in learning; knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue	Encouraging peer collaboration, group discussions, and cooperative projects in AST class	Enhances peer interaction, shared understanding, and collective problem-solving abilities
Experiential Learning Theory	Learning as a cyclical process: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, Active Experimentation	Role-plays, simulations, real-life language use scenarios for practical application	Enhances intrinsic motivation, deeper understanding, skill development, oral English achievement
Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis	Emotional variables (anxiety, motivation, self-confidence) impact language acquisition	Creating a supportive, low-anxiety environment; Positive feedback; Encouraging self-confidence	Lowers affective filter, increases motivation and self-confidence, enhances language acquisition
Student-Centered Learning and Teaching	Emphasizes active engagement, collaboration, real-world problem-solving (e.g., PBL, Cooperative Learning, Flipped Classroom)	PBL scenarios, cooperative learning activities, flipped classroom techniques	Enhances intrinsic motivation, promotes learning autonomy, improves oral English achievement
Cognitive Styles Theory	Field-independent vs. field-dependent learning preferences	AST benefits field-independent learners by enhancing self-regulated learning; Field-dependent learners need more structured support	Field-independent learners show greater improvement in learning autonomy; Both groups benefit in intrinsic motivation and oral English achievement

These findings offered valuable insights into the positive impacts of AST, providing practical recommendations for Chinese policymakers, vocational institutions, teachers, and students. Policymakers can use these findings to inform educational policies aimed at promoting AST practices in vocational colleges. Vocational institutions can incorporate it into their pedagogical approaches to better support student learning and development. English teachers can benefit from understanding the importance of AST implementation and cognitive styles recognition in

enhancing intrinsic motivation, learning autonomy and learning outcomes among vocational students. Students can experience improved motivation, autonomy, and English proficiency through exposure to autonomy-supportive teaching methods and recognizing personal cognitive styles, empowering them to succeed in their academic and professional endeavors. Future studies could explore AST effectiveness across various English subjects or different disciplines, using lesson plans from this study as inspiration.

Keywords: higher vocational education, oral English education, autonomy-supportive teaching, learning autonomy, intrinsic motivation, cognitive styles (field independence and field dependence)

PGRC-116

Conceptualizing a framework for online teaching of Mandarin to non-native speakers

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Abstract

In the context of globalization, the demand and diversity of language learning have shown a significant growth trend. As one of the most widely used languages in the world, Mandarin has an increasingly prominent international influence and status (Odinye, 2019). In line with this, the number of learners of Mandarin, especially non-native speakers, has increased significantly. This phenomenon is not only a sign of the success of language promotion but also exposes the problem of insufficient adaptability of current teaching methods and resources. In the process of learning Mandarin, non-native learners face many challenges such as language and cultural differences, unsuitable teaching resources, and difficulty in meeting personalized learning need (Liu, 2022. These challenges not only limit the effectiveness of language learning but also pose challenges to the global promotion of Mandarin.

The rapid development of information technology has provided new possibilities for language education, especially the rise of online education models, which has broken the time and space limitations of traditional language teaching (Sharrab et al., 2023). Online education should be an effective way to deal with language learning challenges. However, the actual results of online Mandarin teaching have not been as ideal as expected. The scientific nature of teaching content design, the pertinence of teaching methods, the depth of learner participation, and the effectiveness and availability of teaching resources have all become issues that need to be solved urgently in online Mandarin teaching. These problems reflect the current structural deficiencies in online Mandarin teaching (Gao& Zhang, 2020), calling for the designing of a systematic and scientific teaching framework to improve the learning effects of Mandarin for non-native speakers.

The core goal of this study is to systematically explore and verify effective teaching strategies to improve learning effects by constructing an excellent framework for Mandarin online teaching specifically for non-native speakers. First, the research will systematically analyze the status and challenges of online Mandarin teaching through rigorous literature review and expert interviews, and on this basis, determine the theoretical basis and core elements of the teaching excellence framework. The literature review will cover the main research results in the field of online Mandarin teaching, especially the design of teaching strategies and frameworks for non-native speakers. Through a systematic analysis of existing literature, the study will identify key factors that affect the effectiveness of online Mandarin teaching, such as the rationality of teaching design, the availability of learning resources, the depth of learner interaction, and the scientific nature of teaching evaluation. These factors not only lay a theoretical foundation for designing the teaching excellence framework but will also guide subsequent empirical research.

This study will adopt the theory of constructivism. Constructivism holds that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences - meanings for certain objects or things (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These meanings are varied, prompting researchers to look for the complexity of perspectives rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the study is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). These views are consistent with the need for this study to communicate, interact, and interview with online teachers as much as possible. In addition, constructivism as a paradigm or worldview assumes that learning is an active and constructive process. The information that

learners receive is constructed throughout the learning process (Burhanuddin et al., 2021). In an active online teaching environment, teachers are not only the transmitters of knowledge, but also the guides and facilitators of learning (Amineh & Asl, 2015). They need to design interactive, student-centered teaching activities to stimulate students' initiative and participation. Therefore, constructivism is adopted as the theoretical support.

Specifically, under the support of constructivist theory, a hybrid design of explanatory sequential will be adopted, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure the comprehensiveness of the research. The qualitative method uses in-depth interviews with teachers to deeply reveal learners' needs, views and actual learning experiences. The research subjects are Chinese teachers with online Chinese teaching experience in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. They mainly work in universities and middle schools, have undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and have a knowledge background in teaching foreign and second languages.

In the quantitative part, this study will use the questionnaire survey method, descriptive statistics, regression analysis and other quantitative analysis methods to quantitatively analyze the data, explore the impact of different teaching strategies on learning outcomes, and find out the key issues in online Chinese teaching. In the qualitative part, through in-depth interviews and qualitative analysis, detailed background information is provided for the construction of the framework, the first phase of research is explained and consolidated, and the practical application value and promotion potential of the framework are evaluated.

The study paid special attention to individual differences in the online learning process of Mandarin among non-native speakers. Individual differences, including learning motivation, language foundation, cultural background, etc., not only have an important impact on learners' learning effects, but also pose challenges to the effectiveness of teaching strategies (Griffiths & Soruç , 2020). Therefore, the research will delve into how to make effective teaching adjustments through personalized strategies to better meet the needs of different learners. The introduction of these emerging technologies is expected to improve the degree of personalization of online teaching, its actual effect and sustainability still need to be further verified. Especially in the design and implementation process of personalized strategies, how to balance technological innovation and the operability of teaching practice still needs to be discussed in depth.

At the theoretical level, this study aims to fill the current research gap in the field of online Mandarin teaching, especially in terms of online teaching framework construction and strategy optimization for non-native speakers. By constructing a teaching excellence framework, this study attempts to provide systematic guiding principles and methodological support for online Mandarin teaching in theory. This study hopes to provide a solid theoretical foundation and scientific method to support future research in related fields and promote the further development of Mandarin online teaching.

At the practical level, the excellent teaching framework constructed in this study and the effective strategies proposed will provide practical guidance for Mandarin teachers, educational institutions and online education platforms. However, how to effectively transform research results into teaching practice and promote application on a global scale is still a question worthy of in-depth discussion. In addition to overcoming technical and resource challenges, the promotion and application of online Mandarin teaching must also address educational adaptability issues in different cultural backgrounds. These problems not only affect the promotion effect of teaching strategies but may also have a profound impact on the spread and application of Mandarin as a global language and development.

Keywords: Mandarin online teaching; non-native speakers; teaching framework; teaching strategy; language learning effect

PGRC-117

Revolutionizing teaching Writing with ChatGPT in a Malaysian Primary School

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Abstract

This research investigates using ChatGPT to enhance English writing skills among Year 6 ESL learners in Malaysia. Recognizing the ongoing challenges in mastering a language and the need for more effective teaching methods, this study aims to offer a personalized and engaging educational experience through the integration of ChatGPT(Yu, 2024) . By harnessing ChatGPT's interactive and adaptive capabilities, the study seeks to create a dynamic learning environment where students can receive instant feedback, participate in meaningful writing exercises, and enhance their language skills in a supportive setting (Al Shloul et al., 2024). This research hopes to fill a gap in the existing literature by providing insights into the application of ChatGPT in Malaysian ESL classrooms, ultimately seeking to improve learning outcomes and writing proficiency among primary ESL learners.

The primary objectives are to assess the influence of ChatGPT on learners' motivation to improve their writing skills, observe changes in learner engagement in writing activities with ChatGPT integration, and explore learners' perceptions of using ChatGPT and its effect on their interest in writing tasks. The study will involve 38 Year 6 learners from a National school in the Klang district, selected through purposive sampling. Using an interpretive qualitative approach, this study will gather data through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and diary writing to explore how learners interact with ChatGPT. The interviews will delve into students' thoughts and feelings, using open-ended questions to uncover their motivations and perceptions about writing tasks. Classroom observations will capture real-time interactions with ChatGPT, observing both verbal and non-verbal cues to understand its impact on student engagement. Diary writing will provide a reflective account of daily experiences and changes over time, offering insights into the personal aspects of learning with AI. The research is divided into three phases: Phase 1 involves pre-intervention interviews to establish baseline attitudes; Phase 2 introduces ChatGPT, incorporating hands-on learning and diary entries to assess engagement; and Phase 3 includes post-intervention interviews to evaluate changes in motivation, engagement, and writing skills. Together, these methods provide a comprehensive view of ChatGPT's effects on learners' writing development and overall engagement.

This study utilizes ChatGPT to improve English writing abilities in Malaysian primary ESL learners, drawing on Piaget's constructivism theory (1973), Dewey's active learning theory (1938), and Zimmerman & Schunk's self-regulated learning theory. Constructivism is operationalized through interactive writing tasks that require students to actively engage with content and feedback provided by ChatGPT, thereby constructing knowledge through direct interaction. Active learning is promoted as students engage in writing and peer feedback sessions, fostering a deeper understanding through experiential involvement. Self-regulated learning is reinforced by the AI tool's personalized feedback, allowing students to monitor their progress, set achievable goals, and adjust their strategies accordingly. Through ChatGPT, students can collaborate, enhance their writing abilities, and develop self-regulatory skills, making the learning process more dynamic and effective.

The data will be meticulously analyzed using both thematic and content analysis to identify patterns, themes, and insights that deepen our understanding of the research problem. Content analysis of diary entries will quantify and evaluate the presence and relationships of specific

words and concepts, offering an objective measure of learners' experiences and emotions. The research will be conducted in a controlled computer laboratory setting, allowing for detailed observations of how students interact with the AI in real-time during computer-based tasks. This specialized environment will enable a thorough examination of learners' engagement levels, communication patterns, and problem-solving strategies, providing rich, contextual insights into how ChatGPT is integrated into educational settings and its impact on student dynamics and engagement. This multi-dimensional approach aims to fully investigate the role of AI tools in enhancing educational practices.

This study attempts to address the existing gaps in ESL education by utilizing advanced technology to improve learning outcomes. The integration of ChatGPT is expected to provide instantaneous and personalized feedback to learners, representing a significant advancement from traditional teaching methods (Javaid et al., 2023). This innovative approach facilitates the rapid assimilation of corrections by learners and enhances their understanding of complex language rules, thereby reinforcing knowledge retention. Moreover, the study focuses on developing learners' metacognitive abilities, allowing them to self-monitor and self-regulate their learning processes. These skills are essential for fostering independent learners and critical thinkers who can effectively manage their educational growth and apply these abilities across different disciplines.

In conclusion, this research highlights the transformative use of ChatGPT in advancing English writing skills among primary ESL learners in Malaysia. By utilizing advanced AI technology, the study aims to overcome the limitations of conventional teaching methods, which often lack personalization and immediate feedback. ChatGPT delivers a customized learning experience with instant, adaptive feedback and engaging writing activities, allowing students to refine their writing skills more effectively and dynamically. The expected outcomes include improved writing proficiency, increased learner engagement and motivation, and valuable insights into the integration of AI in education. Additionally, the research provides practical implications for curriculum developers and educational policymakers interested in incorporating technology into ESL education. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to innovative educational strategies that close the proficiency gap, promote independent learning, and create a more dynamic and effective language learning environment for primary school students.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Primary ESL learners, English writing skills, Motivation, Engagement

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PGRC-118

Modelling of University Agile Leadership and its Relationship with Lecturer Agency and Lecturer Attitudes toward Change in Malaysian Universities

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed significant limitations of the traditional leadership models within Malaysian higher education, particularly those characterized by rigidity and hierarchical structures (Inayatullah, 2023). These models have struggled to adapt to the rapidly changing needs of universities, especially within the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment that has emerged (Canzittu, 2020). This underscores the urgent need for more dynamic and responsive leadership approaches. Among these, University Agile Leadership (UAL) has emerged as a vital framework, emphasizing flexibility, collaboration, and innovation --- qualities essential for navigating the complexities introduced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR 4.0) and the evolving landscape of Education 4.0 (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021; Tai et al., 2022). Such an agile approach is crucial for fostering innovation, collaboration, and lecturer empowerment, which are key to advancing modern higher education (Bush & Ng, 2019).

As Malaysia progresses towards its goal of becoming a high-income economy, especially in alignment with Malaysia's transition towards the Madani Economy framework, which emphasizes humane and sustainable economic growth, there is an increased focus on the development of higher education particularly in universities (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2023). This emphasis is crucial for equipping university leaders and lecturers to meet the evolving challenges and goals set by the nation. In this context, UAL is a pivotal factor that drives educational reforms and foster an environment of continuous development in all universities in Malaysia. To effectively guide their institutions through these challenges, university leaders must adopt more agile and adaptive leadership approaches. However, despite the growing recognition of agile leadership in various sectors, its application within the Malaysian higher education context remains largely unexplored (Akkaya & Bagieńska, 2022).

Meanwhile, Lecturer Agency (LA) is crucial in higher education as it empowers lecturers to exercise professional judgment and adapt to complex educational environments. LA enables lecturers to navigate institutional demands, engage in self-directed professional development, and contribute to educational innovation (Bakar, 2021). However, the rapid pace of reforms and increased administrative burdens can diminish lecturers' sense of agency, leading to disengagement and a lack of motivation to pursue innovative teaching practices (Priestley et al., 2015; Côté & Levine, 2014). Additionally, inadequate institutional support and limited opportunities for autonomy can further reduce lecturers' agency, particularly in environments where hierarchical structures dominate decision-making processes (Zhao, 2023).

Lecturer Attitudes toward Change (LATC), on the other hand, play a critical role in shaping how lecturers respond to institutional reforms and new educational policies. Positive attitudes towards change are associated with a greater willingness to adopt innovative practices, leading to improved teaching outcomes and student performance. However, negative experiences with past reforms, resistance to new initiatives, or a perceived lack of support can result in reluctance to engage with change, thereby hindering educational progress (Oreg et al., 2011; Piderit, 2000). The increasing pressures of balancing teaching, research, and administrative duties often compound negative LATC, creating significant barriers to the effective implementation of reforms in higher education (Day & Gu, 2014).

Upon reviewing the existing literature, it is evident that there is no established model of UAL that specifically addresses the unique needs and dynamics of higher education institutions. Additionally, research that holistically examines the interplay between UAL, LA, and LATC is notably scarce, particularly within the context of higher education institutions in Malaysia. While individual studies have examined these variables separately or in pairs, there is a scarcity of comprehensive research that simultaneously investigates the relationships among all three variables. Moreover, the specific impact of UAL on LA, and how this, in turn, influences LATC, has not been thoroughly explored in the context of universities. To address these gaps, this study aims to (i) develop and empirically validate an UAL Model; (ii) examine whether UAL is significantly related to LA, and to what extent UAL influences LA; (iii) examine whether LA is significantly related to LATC, and to what extent LA affects LATC; and (iv) whether LA mediates the relationship between UAL and LATC, serving as either a partial or total mediator in this relationship.

The conceptual framework of this study includes three variables and 16 indicators:

1. Latent Variable 1 (independent variable): University Agile Leadership (UAL), which is examined by eight factors: *Change Agility, Contextual Agility, Emotional Agility, Flexing Reflexes, Sound Judgement, Liberate Thinking, Digital Empowerment, and Resilience and Persistence.*

2. Latent Variable 2 (mediating variable): *Lecturer Agency (LA), which is examined by five factors: Teaching Efficacy, Role Obligation, Professional Identity, Self-adjustment, and Decision Participation.*

3. Latent Variable 3 (dependent variable): Lecturer Attitudes Toward Change (LATC), which is examined by three factors: *Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioural responses.*

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in a collection of well-established theories and models that have evolved over time: Cashman's Dimensions of Leadership (Mundra, 2018), the Agile Model (Horney, Pasmore, & O'Shea, 2010), Leadership Agility (Joiner & Josephs, 2007), the Agile Leadership Model (Sahin & Alp, 2020), for UAL; Human Agency Theory and the Ecological Model of Teacher Agency (Bandura, 2001; Priestley et al., 2015) for LA; Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) for LATC; Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2021) for the relationship between UAL and LA; Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) for the relationship between LA and LATC; and Leadership-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) for the relationship between UAL and LATC.

UAL refers to the ability of university leaders to rapidly and effectively respond to changes and challenges within the educational environment. This type of leadership is characterized by flexibility, adaptability, and a proactive approach to problem-solving, enabling leaders to navigate the complexities of higher education with agility (Horney, Pasmore, & O'Shea, 2010; Joiner & Josephs, 2007). UAL involves fostering an environment that supports continuous learning and adaptation, essential for managing the dynamic nature of universities. Leaders who exhibit agile leadership are adept at steering their institutions through periods of rapid change, such as technological advancements or shifts in educational policy (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Sahin & Alp, 2020). They prioritize collaboration, encourage experimentation, and are skilled at managing uncertainty, ensuring that their institutions remain resilient and innovative (Doz & Kosonen, 2008; Sahin & Alp, 2020). This leadership approach aligns with the growing demand for higher education institutions to be more responsive to external pressures and internal demands (Horney et al., 2010).

LA refers to the capacity of lecturers to act intentionally and make choices that align with their professional values, beliefs, and goals. It encompasses the ability to influence their teaching practices, engage in professional development, and contribute to institutional change (Priestley et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2012). LA is rooted in the autonomy and decision-making power that

lecturers possess within their roles, allowing them to navigate the complexities of their professional responsibilities effectively. In universities, lecturer agency involves the ability to make independent decisions about teaching methods, curriculum design, and student engagement, thereby directly impacting the educational outcomes and institutional success (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Moreover, lecturers with a strong sense of agency are not only able to adapt to changes but also advocate for and implement changes that align with educational best practices and the evolving needs of students (Priestley et al., 2012; Biesta et al., 2015). The ability to exercise agency is critical in enabling lecturers to respond to the challenges and opportunities presented by institutional changes (Bandura, 2001).

LATC refer to the perceptions, beliefs, and feelings that lecturers hold regarding changes in the educational environment, including curriculum reforms, technological advancements, and shifts in institutional policies (Oreg, 2006; Piderit, 2000). These attitudes are crucial as they can significantly influence the success or failure of institutional reforms. In a university setting, positive attitudes toward change are associated with a willingness to embrace new teaching practices, integrate innovative technologies, and contribute to the continuous improvement of educational outcomes. Conversely, negative attitudes can lead to resistance, hindering the implementation of necessary changes and potentially undermining institutional goals (Fullan, 2007; Ajzen, 1991). Understanding LATC is essential for university leaders as they design and implement strategies to ensure that changes are accepted and integrated smoothly within the academic community (Bandura, 1986; Deci & Ryan, 2000).

This study makes substantial contributions to both the theoretical understanding and practical application of leadership within Malaysian higher education. The introduction of the UAL model synthesizes established leadership theories to create a robust framework tailored to the unique challenges faced by modern educational institutions. It not only identifies critical leadership competencies but also provides a practical guide for university leaders to cultivate agility, resilience, and innovation in their practices. Besides, by exploring the dynamics between UAL, LA, and LATC, this study extends key theoretical constructs into the higher education context. Additionally, it investigates the mediating role of LA, offering new insights into how agile leadership can empower lecturers, enhance their autonomy, and foster a positive attitude toward institutional change.

Practically, the findings are expected to have far-reaching implications for leadership development within Malaysian universities. The model serves as a strategic tool for university leaders and policymakers, guiding the development of leadership programs to address the complexities of a VUCA environment. This study contributes to Malaysia's broader educational and economic goals under the Madani Economy framework, particularly in advancing the quality, inclusivity, and global competitiveness of the nation's higher education system.

In conclusion, this research enriches the academic discourse on leadership in higher education while providing actionable strategies to meet the evolving needs of Malaysian universities. The insights gained, particularly regarding the mediating role of LA, are expected to shape the future of leadership development in higher education, ensuring that Malaysian institutions remain at the forefront of educational excellence.

Keywords: University agile leadership; lecturer agency; lecturer attitudes toward change; higher education

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PGRC-119

Perspectives from EFL Trainee Teachers on Their Lived Experience of Their Teaching Practicum in Chinese Middle Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) trainee teachers during their teaching practicum in Chinese middle schools, focusing on their motivations, teaching styles, and mentorship dynamics. Through a qualitative research approach, this study seeks to reveal the challenges and opportunities faced by trainee teachers in their teaching practice, thereby providing valuable insights for improving teacher education programs.

EFL teacher training programs in China, such as the one at H Normal University, have a long history of preparing competent educators. However, these programs face contemporary challenges, particularly in balancing academic knowledge with practical teaching skills. The teaching practicum at H Normal University is designed to integrate theoretical understanding with hands-on teaching experience, helping trainee teachers prepare for real classroom environments.

This study is guided by several key educational theories, including Self-Determination Theory (SDT), Community of Practice, and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). These theories provide a framework for examining the motivations, teaching styles, and mentorship dynamics experienced by EFL trainee teachers. Self-Determination Theory emphasizes the importance of motivation in learning and professional development, distinguishing between intrinsic motivation (driven by personal interest and enjoyment) and extrinsic motivation (driven by external rewards and pressures). Community of Practice theory highlights the role of social interactions and participation in learning, particularly the role of cooperating teachers as mentors. Pedagogical Content Knowledge theory integrates subject knowledge with teaching skills, forming a unique knowledge base essential for effective teaching.

This qualitative study employs in-depth interviews and focus group discussions to gather detailed data from EFL trainee teachers and their cooperating teachers. The data is analyzed using thematic coding in NVivo to identify key themes and patterns in the experiences of the participants.

Motivation emerged as a critical factor influencing the practicum experiences of EFL trainee teachers. The study identified a range of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivations included personal goals, a passion for teaching, and the desire to positively impact students. Extrinsic motivations encompassed career advancement, professional recognition, and fulfilling institutional requirements. Trainees reported fluctuations in their motivation levels throughout the practicum, influenced by factors such as workload, student behavior, and the quality of support received from their mentors. High levels of motivation were generally associated with positive practicum experiences, whereas low motivation often correlated with challenges and difficulties in the classroom.

The study found that EFL trainees exhibited a variety of teaching styles, reflecting their adaptability and alignment with different pedagogical approaches. Many trainees preferred interactive and student-centered teaching methods, which they believed were more effective in engaging students and facilitating learning. However, transitioning from theoretical knowledge to practical application posed significant challenges for some trainees. Common difficulties included managing classroom behavior, differentiating instruction to meet diverse student needs, and

effectively using teaching aids. These challenges often necessitated adjustments in teaching styles to better align with the practical demands of the classroom.

The role of cooperating teachers as mentors was found to be multifaceted and crucial to the practicum experience. Effective mentorship involved not only providing practical guidance but also offering emotional support and constructive feedback. Trainees valued mentors who were approachable, supportive, and capable of offering useful critiques and encouragement. The study found that the quality of mentorship varied significantly among cooperating teachers. Effective mentors were those who engaged actively with trainees, provided regular feedback, and fostered a positive learning environment. Conversely, trainees who experienced less supportive mentorship often felt isolated and inadequately prepared for the challenges of the practicum.

Challenges faced by EFL trainee teachers during their practicum were categorized into four main areas: learning support-related factors, student-related factors, instructional factors, and communication factors. Learning support-related challenges included difficulties in accessing adequate resources and guidance. Student-related challenges encompassed managing diverse student needs and behaviors. Instructional challenges involved developing and implementing effective teaching strategies, and communication challenges related to interactions with students, cooperating teachers, and other stakeholders.

The qualitative analysis revealed that trainees often struggled with the anxiety of being observed and the transition from student to teacher roles. Classroom management was a significant challenge, particularly in dealing with low student proficiency levels and employing effective teaching techniques. Communication difficulties included navigating complex interactions with various stakeholders and receiving timely feedback from mentors. These challenges highlighted the need for tailored training and support to help trainees navigate the multifaceted demands of the practicum.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in EFL teacher training programs. Enhancing trainee motivation through recognition, career development opportunities, and a supportive learning environment can improve practicum outcomes. The diversity of teaching styles observed among trainees highlights the need for flexible and adaptive training programs that cater to individual preferences and strengths. Providing opportunities for trainees to experiment with different teaching methods and receive feedback on their performance is crucial for their professional growth.

Mentorship dynamics are critical to the success of the practicum. Establishing clear guidelines and training for cooperating teachers can ensure consistent and effective mentorship. Encouraging open communication and collaboration between trainees and mentors can enhance the overall practicum experience.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed to improve EFL teacher training programs. First, strategies to enhance both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations among trainees should be developed, such as recognizing outstanding performance, offering career development workshops, and creating a supportive and collaborative learning environment. Second, trainees should be provided with opportunities to explore and refine their teaching styles through practical workshops, peer observations, and reflective practice sessions. Third, training programs for cooperating teachers should be implemented to enhance their mentoring skills, establish clear expectations, and provide resources to support effective mentorship. Fourth, the teacher training curriculum should balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills, incorporating real-world teaching experiences, case studies, and interactive simulations. Finally, reflective practice should be promoted, encouraging trainees to critically evaluate their teaching experiences and providing tools and frameworks for reflection, such as journals, peer discussions, and mentor feedback sessions.

This qualitative study provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of EFL trainee teachers during their teaching practicum in Chinese middle schools. By focusing on motivation, teaching styles, mentorship dynamics, and the challenges faced, the research highlights key areas for improvement in EFL teacher training programs. Implementing the recommendations can enhance the professional development of trainee teachers, ultimately contributing to the quality of English language education in China. The findings underscore the importance of a supportive and adaptive training environment that addresses the diverse needs of trainee teachers, fostering their growth as effective and motivated educators.

Keywords: EFL teacher trainee, cooperating teacher, teaching practicum, teacher training programs in China, experiences, school-based research, qualitative approach

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PGRC-120

Examining the Relationships of Teacher Leadership, Teacher Agency, and Work Engagement among University Teachers in the Hainan Province of China: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

In the era of educational transformation, China has been committed to improving the professional development of university teachers to achieve the goal of modernizing education (You et al., 2022). However, in expanding higher education landscape, the challenges facing university teachers in China are multifaceted. The shift towards universal higher education in a relatively short span has strained teachers' ability to adapt to Education 4.0, cope with information technology's impact, and balance various roles (Shi, 2022; Fan & Wen, 2022). This results in a decline in teacher agencies and their engagement in work that leads to teaching ineffectiveness, impeding the professional growth of teachers and ultimately preventing schools from thriving and sustaining achievement gains (Chen, 2020).

To address the challenges faced by university teachers, scholars emphasize the importance of Teacher Leadership, Teacher Agency, and Work Engagement for developing high-quality university teachers to meet the requirements of this transformational era (Cai et al., 2022a; Priestley et al., 2015; Sun & Cheng, 2020). Teacher Leadership is viewed as a crucial component in promoting teacher professional development (Hallet, 2013; Poekert, 2012). By cultivating collaborative relationships among colleagues, supporting peer learning and professional growth, leading by example in refining teaching through evaluation and reflection, and actively engaging teachers in organizational decisions and enhancements, teacher leaders can enhance the agentic capacity and engagement of teachers in schools (e.g. Derrington & Anderson, 2020; Friesen & Brown, 2022). However, the theoretical and practical meaning of Teacher Leadership in China has been undervalued or ignored; the concept of Teacher Leadership has not received much attention (Sun & Cheng, 2020; Xie et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, Teacher Agency empowers teachers to exercise greater professional judgment and discretion within the contexts in which they work (Priestley et al., 2015). Agentic teachers take part in creative learning, adapt to various workplace demands, make independent judgments based on their goals, values, and aspirations, act pro-actively, and consciously work toward a specific goal (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020). These will lead to changes in teaching practices and have a beneficial impact on the culture of teaching and learning in schools (Tai & Omar, 2021). On the other hand, the constant engagement of teachers in their work is necessary for the continued growth of education (Cai et al., 2022). Engaged teachers are more efficient and involved in the workplace (Parker & Martin, 2009), and more active in attending different activities related to their professional development that link significantly with the effectiveness of instruction and student performance (Minghui et al., 2018; Shu, 2022). However, the rapid pace of university reform and the diverse demands of high-quality higher education often force university teachers to adapt to new complexities while balancing multiple roles. This often leads to demanding and stressful tasks that hinder the development of Teacher Agency and, consequently, reduce their levels of Work Engagement (Iancu et al., 2018).

While reviewing the literature, it was found that only few studies have examined the relationships of all these three variables in the context of the Chinese education system. To fill the gap in this

field, the study will examine the relationships among these three variables in the context of universities in the Hainan Province of China to identify if, i) Teacher Leadership is significantly related to Teacher Agency and to what extent Teacher Leadership affects Teacher Agency; ii) Teacher Agency is significantly related to Work Engagement and to what extent the former affects the latter; iii) Teacher Leadership is significantly related to Work Engagement and to what extent the former affects the latter; iv) Teacher Agency mediates relationship between Teacher Leadership and Work Engagement; and v) Teacher Agency serves as a total mediator in the above relationship among university teachers in the Hainan Province of China.

A conceptual framework was built to define the three variables, namely Teacher Leadership, Teacher Agency and Work Engagement as well as clarify the relationships among them. The conceptual framework of this study includes three variables and 14 indicators:

i.   Latent variable 1 (independent variable): Teacher Leadership (TL) which is examined by six factors i.e., *Association, Professional learning, Assessment, Instruction, Community, and Policy.*

ii.   Latent variable 2 (mediating variable): Teacher Agency (TA) which is examined by five factors i.e., *Teaching Efficacy, Role Obligation, Professional Identity, Self-adjustment, and Decision Participation.*

iii. Latent variable 3 (dependent variable): Work Engagement (WE) which is examined by three factors i.e., *Vigour, Dedication, and Absorption.*

Besides, the theoretical framework of this study is constructed through established theories or model that evolved: Formative Leadership Theory (Ash & Persall, 2000), Human Agency Theory and The Ecological Model of Teacher Agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Priestley et al., 2015), Work Engagement Model (Schaufeli et al., 2002), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999) (for the relationship between TL and TA), Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) (for the relationship between TA and WE), and Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) (for the relationship between TL and WE).

Teacher Leadership refers to the ability of teachers that encompasses more than performing intricate teaching duties in the classroom. It extends to creating a positive influence on colleagues, the school, and the community (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Teacher leaders function as coordinators and collaborators, fostering relationships among colleagues and within the school to facilitate collaborative efforts that can contribute to positive educational outcome (Friesen & Brown, 2022). They support peer learning and professional growth, led by example in refining teaching through evaluation and reflection, enhance community, school, and colleague connections as communicators, and actively engage in organizational decisions and enhancements (Jacobs & Crowell, 2018).

Teacher Agency refers to the capacity of teachers to make conscious, critical decisions and purposeful interventions aligned with their principles and values. It is shaped by teachers' involvement in their individual historical experiences, current roles, and pictured future selves, as well as teachers' sociocultural context (Phyak et al., 2022). Teachers with a strong sense of agency actively engage with the evolving educational landscape, staying attuned to ongoing reforms (Molla & Nolan, 2020). They effectively navigate complex challenges, fostering not only their own professional development but also that of their colleagues, while shouldering the responsibility for nurturing their students' comprehensive growth (Kettle et al., 2022; Molla & Nolan, 2020).

Work Engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that teachers experience in working (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Teachers with high Work Engagement will be enthusiastic about working and solving difficulties and finding the work full of meaning, pride, challenge, and satisfaction. In addition, they're able to work attentively and happily (Alazmi &

Al-Mahdy, 2022). Rather than a momentary and specific state, Work Engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective cognitive state.

The findings would provide practical insights for the Ministry of Education China in designing and planning of relevant professional development programmes to enhance the level of Teacher Leadership in schools. Additionally, the study would provide practical information for relevant parties in identifying and overcoming barriers through effective strategies and solutions in fostering Teacher Agency. The research also offers guidance to assist schools in better understanding how to strategically overcome obstacles impeding university teachers' Work Engagement in ways that yield gains in learning outcomes and promote continuous and sustainable school improvement.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, Teacher Agency, Work Engagement, University Teachers, Hainan Province

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PGRC-121

Examining the Relationships among Transformational Leadership, Teachers' Psychological Capital, and Adaptive Performance in Higher Vocational Colleges in the Hainan Province of China: A Conceptual Framework

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Abstract

Manufacturing upgrading and educational digitalization have exerted pressure on vocational colleges in recent years (Suganya, 2017; Ellahi et al., 2019). To effectively manage changes and address the demands of manufacturing upgrading, China has unveiled a series of policies to drive reform of higher vocational education (Mai & Fan, 2022; Yu et al., 2015). Despite some achievements, both college leaders and teachers still face a lot of challenges. On one hand, vocational college leaders not only need to adapt to and manage the ongoing change, but they also need to develop the capabilities that would help them guide colleges and competent teachers to respond well to unanticipated changes successfully (Drysdale & Gurr, 2017). Undoubtedly, these have posed tremendous pressures among college leaders to have effective leadership for addressing organisational change successfully (Somech & Oplatka, 2014).

On the other hand, teachers are now required to take the initiative for the adaptation to new technological changes, update their skills by regular enterprise practice, and improve their teaching abilities by various training programmes (Mai & Fan, 2019). However, heavy workloads make teachers difficult to meet the above requirements, which puts them under tremendous psychological stress (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). This will significantly lower their positive psychological capital, and affect their work performance (Sun & Mi, 2022). Worse still, some teachers even do not willingly adjust their behaviours and develop their professional capacities as necessary for the transition (Zhang, 2020; Magen-Nagar & Maskit, 2016; Yan & Sun, 2022). This may result in individuals' career stagnancy and organizational reform failure (Ashford, 1988).

In such status quo, to address the challenges faced by vocational college leaders and teachers, there is a consensus among scholars that effective leadership such as Transformational Leadership, Teachers' Psychological Capital and Adaptive Performance are important for change initiatives (Yacon & Cayaban, 2023; Daraba et al., 2021; Van de Heuvel et al., 2014). Transformational Leadership is viewed as an effective leadership style that inspires positive organizational changes, addresses complex challenges, and helps subordinates to adapt to change (Yacon & Cayaban, 2023). Transformational leaders influence subordinates' values and beliefs and enhance their capacity to embrace change (Masry & Stavissky, 2021), lead them to work towards the change goals, and stimulate them to follow the change strategy to adaptively perform beyond their expectations (Lei et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2021). Facing organizational change, subordinates' reactions, and adaptive behaviours are highly dependent on transformational leaders (Yacon & Cayaban, 2023). However, research on Transformational Leadership in educational settings in China is still in its infancy, with most of the existing studies focussing on Chinese K-12 and applying the instruments developed by Western academics instead of Chinese (Liu, 2018).

Meanwhile, previous studies on Psychological Capital and organizational change have shown that Psychological Capital is a positive resource that enables teachers to better cope with stressful events such as organizational change and enhance their ability to adapt to new situations (Abbas et al., 2012; Daraba et al., 2021). It gives teachers optimistic visions to seek

solutions for any new challenge and helps them bounce back quickly in the face of difficulty. Besides, it allows teachers to stay continuously updated and gives them motivation and energy towards success in challenging situations (Zyberaj et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2017). On the other hand, utilizing Teachers' Adaptive Performance to boost college reform is a feasible move as a Teacher's Adaptive Performance impacts the success of change (Bovey & Hede, 2001). Adaptive teachers are flexible, open-minded, innovative, and resilient; they can respond to and manage change effectively and quickly (Collie & Martin, 2016). These allow them to increase their performance capability and career success (Shoss et al., 2012; Collie & Martin, 2016) and organizations to improve effectiveness and change management (Griffin et al., 2007; Dorsey et al., 2010; Adero & Odiyo, 2020; Krauter, 2018).

When put together, Transformational Leadership, Teachers' Psychological Capital, and Adaptive Performance all may impact teachers' willingness, initiatives and capabilities for change so that they can effectively function in the process of vocational college transition (Masry & Stavissky, 2021; Lei et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2021; Abbas et al., 2012; Daraba et al., 2021; Bovey & Hede, 2001). However, few research has investigated the relationships among the three variables in educational setting in China (Lei et al., 2020). To fill the gap, this study will investigate the relationships of the three variables in vocational colleges of Hainan Province whether: i) Transformational Leadership is significantly related to Teachers' Psychological Capital and to what extent Transformational Leadership affects Teachers' Psychological Capital in vocational colleges of Hainan Province, China; ii) Teachers' Psychological Capital is significantly related to Adaptive Performance and to what extent Teachers' Psychological Capital affects Adaptive Performance; iii) Transformational Leadership is significantly related to Teachers' Adaptive Performance and to what extent Transformational Leadership affects Teachers' Adaptive Performance; iv) there is any significant mediating effect of Teachers' Psychological Capital between the relationship of Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Adaptive Performance; and v) Teachers' Psychological Capital is a partial mediator of the causal relationship between Transformational Leadership and Teachers' Adaptive Performance in vocational colleges of Hainan Province, China.

According to Lethem and Trafford (2007), a conceptual framework combines related variables, clarifies their relationships, and utilizes prior research and theories to design, interpret and conclude research. What is more, it coherently conceptualizes the study by building an innovative overall structure to guide researchers (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The conceptual framework of the study consists of three variables and 15 factors:

i. Latent variable 1: Transformation Leadership (TL) which is measured by four factors, namely *Moral Modelling, Articulate Vision, Individualized Consideration, and Charisma;*

ii. Latent variable 2: Teachers' Psychological Capital (PC) which is measured by four factors, namely *Self-efficacy, Hope, Optimism, and Resilience;*

iii. Latent variable 3: Teachers' Adaptive Performance (TAP) which is measured by seven factors, namely *Cultural Adaptability, Solving Problems Creatively, Proactive Learning, Physically Oriented Adaptability, Handling Work Stress, Handling Emergency or Crisis Situations, and Interpersonal Adaptability.*

Besides, the theoretical framework of the study links theories or models to provide theoretical bases to examine and interpret the variables in the study. The relevant theories include Transformational Leadership Model (Bass, 1985), Positive Psychology Theory (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), Adaptive Performance Model (Pulakos et al., 2000), Positive Leadership Theories (Cameron, 2012) (for the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Psychological Capital), Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) (for the relationship between Psychological Capital and Adaptive Performance), and Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) (for the relationship between Transformational Leadership and Adaptive

Performance).

Transformation Leadership (TL) refers to a leadership style in which leaders serve as role models, build a mutual trust relationship with teachers, influence their perceptions, motivations, values, behaviours, and further inspire and guide them to achieve higher performance and organizational goals (Masry-Herzallah & Stavissky, 2021). Besides, this leadership provides meaning and understanding to the work, intellectually stimulates and expands the followers' use of their abilities, and eventually assists them in achieving superior results (Islam et al., 2021).

Psychological Capital is teachers' positive psychological state of growth and development, which can be used to promote positive employee behaviour and achieve higher performance (Abbas et al., 2012). Individuals with high capital are confident about their capacities to achieve the desired outcome. Meanwhile, they have objectives, and they endeavour to attain goals (Daraba et al., 2021). They can build not only positive expectancies that motivate them to move toward their goals but also recover from adversity and achieve success (Kim et al., 2017).

Adaptive Performance refers to teachers' adaptive capabilities or behaviours of anticipating or coping with problems resulting from uncertain, complex, or dynamic changes in particular job tasks or new working conditions (Van de Heuvel et al., 2014). Adaptive teachers are flexible and highly enthusiastic about change; they can respond to and manage change effectively and quickly (Collie & Martin, 2016). These allow teachers to increase their performance capability and career success (Shoss et al., 2012; Collie & Martin, 2016).

The findings would provide insights into both the theoretical and practical aspects. At the theoretical level, this quantitative study first incorporates theories or models to analyse the relationships among the three variables in the context of vocational colleges in Hainan Province of China. It will provide a more holistic insight into the relationships among the three variables and a detailed explanation of how the key variables is conceptualized and measured in China. At the practical level, these insights would contribute significantly to the training centres of the Chinese Ministry of Education (CMOE) for leadership development. Secondly, it is helpful to inspire vocational college leaders to promote Teachers' Psychological Capital through proper intervention in meeting novel changes. Thirdly, the findings would provide an impetus for future intervention from the college human resource department to enhance Teachers' Adaptive Performance purposefully. Lastly, it is meaningful and helpful for vocational college leaders to identify the processes leading to improving Teachers' Psychological Capital and Teachers' Adaptive Performance for transition effectively.

Keywords: transformational leadership; psychological capital; adaptive performance; higher vocational college

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PGRC-122

Art Undergraduates' Learning Burnout based on an investigation of D Art University in China

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Abstract

Learning burnout is a growing problem among university students, including art university students. Nonetheless, few studies involved art undergraduates about learning burnout of these psychological and behavioral factors (Wen,2021). Therefore, we constructed a model and test it with a group of art education students, and explored them mediating effect of their professional commitment in the link between professional identity and learning burnout.(Mei, R., & Wei, Y. ,2022) Especially, with the rapid development of internet and smart phone, it is convenient to use these tools to search for some knowledge which they are interested in, leading to lack of learning interests of which teachers taught. Meanwhile, most of art undergraduates have poor self-controlling and form some bad habits such as academic procrastination (Niazov et al., 2022), mobile addiction (Shen et al., 2021), and also emotionally inducing depression (Jiang et al., 2021), reduced mental health (Aloia and McTigue, 2019), and even suicidal tendencies (Okechukwu et al., 2022). Freudenberger(1974) believed that people would experience extreme physical and emotional fatigue when they faced an excessive work demands in working days in the service industry and proposed "Occupational burnout". Maslach and Jackson (1981) generalized the term of occupational burnout , believing that it refers to the state of emotional, behavioral and cognitive exhaustion that occurs when coping with long-term work pressure, such as emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, and low work involvement. Tukeav et al. believed that Maslach et al. jointly created a three-factor occupational burnout model, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low achievement. Actually, burnout does not only include long-term stress in over-heavy work, but also is a syndrome of exhaustion, depression and negative self-esteem causes lacking of active interest in work itself. Since 1980s, burnout was researched popularly in Europe and USA, but it triggered Chinese scholars' interest after 2000. Its usage is expanded to multiple fields such as school education and student training with the in-depth research of burnout. Pines (1981) believes that learning burnout refers to students' negative attitude towards academic studies and school activities, and their mental state shows exhaustion. Silvar (2001) gives an definition of learning burnout as the result of students who often are over the school's academic rules because of lack of self-control, ineligibility to deal with high academic achievements, interpersonal tension and high expectations. Tuominen-Soini et al. (2014) believe that learning burnout is a stress response which students can't able to cope with academic pressure. Its essence is the emotional, attitudinal and behavioral exhaustion caused by students' inability to meet learning needs. Lian Rong et. al. (2005) make a scale of learning burnout for college students in China and it is a symbol that learning burnout is becoming prevalent in Chinese scholars. In their study, they pointed out that learning burnout reflects students' negative attitude in front of learning stress and academic performance. They respond without passion and no interest in learning.

Objectives

Many researchers focus on the symptoms of learning burnout among common university students, high school students and primary school students, rarely to concern on art undergraduates' learning burnout. Therefore, art undergraduates should be pay more attention to their psychological health and behaviors.This study aims to investigate the situation of college students' learning burnout in D art university through the scales among 1109 students.

Methodology

The design of this study is a quantitative and descriptive by using a questionnaire instrument called the adolescent learning burnout scale compiled by Wu Yan et al. (2010) . The questionnaire consists of 16 items, and the total score of each sub-scale indicates the learning burnout of the subject and its degree in each dimension. The higher the score, the higher the degree of learning burnout of the individual. The electronic questionnaire was compiled through the software "Wenjuanxing". The questionnaire can be filled in by scanning the QR code. Demographic variables were added, such as gender, age, grade, parents' education level, etc. According to the three main factors affecting learning burnout: demographic variables, internal factors and external environment, an electronic questionnaire survey was conducted on 1,109 art undergraduate students from art universities on their voluntary basis. Descriptive data is analyzed by using IBM SPSS and AMOS Statistics software.

Results

① The detection rate of mild learning burnout among art undergraduates is 22%, the detection rate of moderate study burnout is 67.4%, and the detection rate of high degree of study burnout is 10.6%. ② Demographic variables have a significant impact on learning burnout. Conclusion is that the problem of learning burnout among art university students is relatively serious, and further research is needed to improve their learning psychological conditions.

Conclusion

Art undergraduates suffer from learning burnout to varying degrees, with the majority of people experiencing moderate levels of burnout. There are significant differences (P<0.05) in the learning burnout scale, emotional exhaustion, pan-humanization, and low sense of achievement variables among only-child art undergraduate students (P<0.05). It can be seen from the average scores that they are only-child art undergraduate students. The scores are slightly higher than those of children who are not only children, and the scores of senior art undergraduate students are slightly higher than those of lower-level art undergraduate students. There are significant differences in the learning burnout scale, emotional exhaustion, and low sense of accomplishment variables among art undergraduate students with different family economic status. The scores of urban art undergraduate students are slightly higher than those of art undergraduate students from towns and rural areas. The scores of art undergraduate students with better conditions are slightly higher than those of art undergraduate students from average and poorer families. The scores of art undergraduate students whose parents have higher education levels are higher than those of art undergraduate students whose parents have lower education levels. The older the students, the higher the score. Arts undergraduate students scored higher on academic burnout than younger arts undergraduate students.

Implications

Rarely scholars pay more attention to the impact of learning burnout in art undergraduates. This paper focuses on art undergraduates through the survey which has 1109 samples in art universities. Totally, they has different levels of learning burnout. Some of them has slight learning burnout; and some of them has severe learning burnout. It provides basis to improve their psychological health and let them feel well-being during their learlives in art universities.

Keywords: art universities, art undergraduates, learning burnout

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PGRC-123

Content Analysis of the 4th And 5th Editions of China's Vocational College English Textbooks to Investigate its Native Culture Representation

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Abstract

In 2014, the President of China, Xi Jinping first mentioned the term 'cultural confidence' and emphasized the importance of cultural confidence. Cultural confidence could be understood as the full affirmation and active practice of a nation, a country, and a political party for its own cultural value, and firm confidence in the vitality of its culture. Since then, many educational policies in China have highlighted the importance of developing and improving students' intercultural awareness in teaching and learning. However, throughout different-level English teaching in China, there exist one-sidedness in increasing cultural content, that is, emphases were only put towards introducing cultures of English-speaking countries rather than on the cultural background of the students' own LI culture in China, which leads to 'Chinese Cultural Aphasia' first put forward by Cong (2000). This ran contrary to Xi Jinping's call for more awareness of own Chinese culture. To reinforce the importance of students' own culture in education, two polices such as The 'Guidelines of Perfecting Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Education' and the 'Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheritance and Development of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture' were made mandatory. The 'Higher Vocational Education English Curriculum Standards, 2021' ('Standards 2021' in short) released by the MoE of China reiterates the importance of being able to confidently tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese culture in English. In short, these policies specify that higher education English content must promote 'native culture' and build cultural confidence in order to make Chinese students play the role of Chinese cultural communicator and better meet the challenges in this globalized world.

This presentation reports an investigation on how Chinese culture is included and addressed in the current Chinese vocational college English textbooks, and whether there are any changes in two versions of the textbook according to 'Higher Vocational Education English Curriculum Standards, 2021'. To be more specific, the presentation will report the differences in culture presentation (target culture vs native culture) between the two editions of a popularly used vocational college English textbooks in terms of the coverage and level of cultural content.

The textbooks were explore empirically by comparing the coverage and level of cultural material embedded in two different editions of a popular textbook used in the vocational colleges in order to determine the cultural content and the changes in English teaching textbooks in China. A content analysis approach was used to examine for the classification of culture coverage into two parts: target culture and native culture. Content analysis is an analytical approach used to identify patterns of meaning through systematic readings that leads to labelling and coding their different themes. The framework for analysis were based on Cortazzi and Jin's (1999) categorization of cultures in EFL textbooks, which divided cultures into native culture, target culture and international culture. In the current research, the content analysis only focused on native culture and target culture to compare the changes. In addition, the level of culture refers to the specific cultural aspects represented. The level of culture from these categories (native culture versus target culture) were further analyzed with five cultural dimensions according to Moran and Lu (2001) such as products, practices, perspectives, communities and persons.

The findings showed that the representation of native culture elements and target culture elements were divided into five dimensions: products, practice, perspectives, communities and

persons in the 4th edition the 5th edition textbook respectively. Native culture saw a significant increase in representation in the 5th edition compared to the 4th one, while target culture representation decreased. Through the content analysis, in the 5th edition textbook, the rate of native cultural elements increased was 73%, which meant in the latest edition textbook, the amount of native culture elements saw a significant increase. However, in the 4th edition textbook, the quantity of target cultural elements showed negative growth, which is -35%. This suggested a strong shift towards incorporating more native cultural content while reducing focus on the target culture in the latest edition textbook. The change in the ratio represented the fact that the native cultural elements had more importance in the current English textbook. From the data analysis, native culture were mainly embodied in the dimensions of products, practice and perspectives, especially product, which appeared 58 times in the 5th edition textbook compared to only 8 times in the 4th edition. A marked difference was that a section on 'Appreciating culture tips' were replaced by Chinese native cultures rather than target cultures.

In summary, the new edition of the vocational college English textbook reflected the response to the policy in content of native culture. The increase in native culture representation in the 5th edition could enhance cultural understanding by offering more diverse perspectives and practices. This may lead to greater appreciation and awareness of students' own native cultures. With native culture becoming more prominent, students may gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of those cultures, potentially fostering greater empathy and appreciation. The reduction in target culture content might shift focus away from previous emphasis, potentially altering the balance and depth of cultural exchange. For practical English teaching in Chinese vocational colleges, with the increasing proportion of native culture in the current English textbook, English teachers will consciously integrate native culture elements into their classes. Teachers will extend more and deeper Chinese cultural content to stimulate students' interest in learning, so as to enhance students' awareness of local culture in the process of learning English, and spread Chinese culture to the world through English. The increase of native culture in English textbooks is also a coexistence of opportunities and challenges for English teachers. The emphasis on local culture requires teachers to re-look at how to integrate local cultures for teaching purposes. Teachers will now place greater emphasis on native cultures, which is in line with the current educational trend in China.

Keywords: Chinese Cultural Aphasia; target culture; Chinese native culture; vocational college EFL textbooks

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PGRC-124

Human Behavior of Academic Organizations in Cebu, Philippines

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Abstract

The manifestation of positive and pro-social behavior among the employees in the organization is essential towards the attainment of its vision, mission, goals, and objectives. Human behavior enables individuals from an organization to cooperate viably. As individuals know the significant manner on how to interface with each other, they can impart successfully and construct great working connections that enable organization targets to be sought after with most extreme impact. The study determined the manifestation of human behavior of the employees in an academic organization. Specifically it answered the: 1) Profile of the respondents; 2) Degree of perceived manifestation of the two groups of respondents of human behavior in the organization; 3) Significant relationship between the profile two groups of respondents and the degree of their perceived manifestation of human behavior in the organization; 4) Significant difference in the responses of the two groups of respondents on the degree of their perceived manifestation of human behavior in the organization. The results served to sustain and enhance the manifestation of positive behavior in the organization. This study applied the descriptive-correlational research method with the use of a researcher-designed survey tool to gather the data on the profile and the responses of the teaching and non-teaching employees perceived manifestation of desirable human behavior. This was conducted at Cebu Technological University Main Campus and the satellite campuses in Moalboal and Barili. Using random purposive sampling technique, there were 180 respondents who were the teaching and non-teaching employees in the university. Statistical treatments used were simple percentage, weighted mean, Chi Square Test of Independence, and One-Way Anova to analyzed the data gathered.

For the teaching employees, there were more respondents who belonged to the age bracket of 40-49 years old, had served the university for 1-3 years, and were ranked as Instructor 1. Majority of them were females, married, master's degree holder and had attended research trainings. This result indicates that the respondents were at the middle adulthood stage and were expected to have gained more experiences in teaching from private school or previous work experience as they are in the beginning years of government service. In addition, they are expected to dispose maturity in dealing with the students, especially those with learning difficulties and those with behavioral problems. For the non-teaching personnel, there were more respondents who are aged within 30-39 years old, had been employed for 4-6 years, were employed as Admin Aide 1, and had attended the personality development training. Majority of them were females, married, and college graduates, considering that the minimum requirement for non-teaching staff position is only a bachelor's degree in relation to their job or position.

Both the teaching and non-teaching personnel perceived that they highly manifested the human behavior in all aspects in terms of righteousness, propriety, helping behavior, diligence, and sportsmanship. This means that the employees of the academic organization are very particular with showing a feeling of deep admiration for someone or something elicited by their abilities, qualities, or achievements. This behavioral construct obtained the highest mean in the aspect of exhibiting the behavior in doing what is right and socially acceptable.

There is no significance relationship between the profile of teachers in terms of age, gender, civil

status, educational attainment, rank, and length of service and their perception on their manifestation of desirable behavior in terms of righteousness, propriety, helping behavior, diligence and sportsmanship. This means that the personality and personal circumstance of the teachers had no relation or connection on their point of view relating to their engagement of varying actions that are positive towards the attainment of the goals of the university, being the center of molding the young generation or the students. There is significant relationship between the non-teaching personnel's length of service and their perception on the manifestation of diligence and sportsmanship. This result reveals that the non-teaching human resources' length of employment in the university relates to their understanding and adoption on the conduct of fairness, respect and degree of tolerance to some undesirable outcome while doing one's job. So, those who had been in the university may have higher degree of tolerance in dealing with diverse behavior and attitude with the colleagues compared to those who are newly hired. There is significant difference in the manifestation of the teaching and non-teaching employees of the various acts of desirable human behavior in terms of righteousness, propriety, helping behavior, diligence, and sportsmanship. This data signifies that there is variation of the point of view of all employees on their exhibition of actions that are all discretionary and contributory towards the success of the academic institution.

At the broader spectrum, the human resources in the state university engaged the human behavior that is contributory towards propagation of moral act, social acceptance, generosity, time consciousness and high tolerance in dealing with awkward situations so that there will be a harmonious and prosperous organization. It is essential that there should be a harmonious relationship among the employees especially those who are working in the academic organization since the people are considered as a role model of the students. Regardless of the life circumstance of the people, it does not influence how they do their job efficiently and effectively as well as how they socialize or interact with their colleagues. It is inevitable that in the university where there are numerous work-related conflicts that may arise due to diverse attitude, life philosophy and upbringing among the employees. If this situation will not be address by the top management of the higher institution, then there will be lots of instances that the employees will be in conflict with one another that will have a profound impact on their efficiency and effectiveness. This is helpful for teaching and non – teaching employees to behave in a more appropriate manner in the academic organization. Thereby, there should be concrete plans on providing motivation to conform to the required standards of the teaching profession. The researchers recommended as topics for further studies about the challenges experienced by the employees in the conduct of research on how leadership affects the organization culture in the academic environment.

Keywords: Human behavior, university, predictive-relational study, Cebu, Philippines

PGRC-125

A Phenomenological Study of Filipino Tourism and Hospitality Students' Internship Experiences in Hong Kong

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Abstract

International internships have a significant impact on tourism and hospitality education, providing students with a transformative opportunity to connect theory with practical, real-world industry experiences. According to Chen et al. (2017), such immersive experiences enable students to develop critical professional skills, enhance their cultural intelligence, and foster a global perspective. These invaluable experiences not only bolster students' employability but also empower them to become future leaders in the dynamic tourism and hospitality sectors. In the Philippines, internships are not merely an optional add-on but a mandated component of higher education, particularly in fields like tourism and hospitality. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED), the governing body for tertiary education, has issued several orders and memoranda emphasizing the critical role of internships in preparing students for the professional world. CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 104, Series of 2017, for instance, explicitly requires Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to incorporate internship programs into their curricula to equip students with "competitive skills and attitudes for employment" (Commission on Higher Education, 2017). This setting allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural dynamics influence and enrich the professional development of tourism and hospitality students. Baum & Flores (2012) explained the significance of how these students navigate cultural adjustments, language barriers, and professional expectations during their time abroad. The objectives of this study are to: explore the challenges and opportunities encountered by these students during their international internships in Hong Kong; and investigate the impact of the internship experience on their personal and professional development.; identify areas for enhancement in the support provided by educational institutions, administrative bodies, and government organizations to students participating in international internships; and develop recommendations for improving existing policies and frameworks related to international apprenticeships in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that seeks to understand the essence of lived experiences by exploring individuals' subjective perceptions and interpretations of a particular phenomenon. This interactive process facilitates a deeper exploration of the participants' perceptions and interpretations, enabling researchers to uncover shared themes and patterns in their experiences. The study's emphasis on confidentiality and informed consent fosters a safe and trusting environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their personal experiences openly and honestly. The data collected from the focus group discussions (FGDs) was analyzed using thematic analysis, a widely employed qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The study revealed that the students embarked on their Hong Kong internships with a blend of ambition and apprehension. They were driven by the allure of personal and professional growth, echoing Intern 1's sentiment: "*I pursued this internship... to apply what I have learned... and boost my personal growth*." The prospect of financial independence, expanding their social circles, and experiencing a multicultural metropolis further fueled their motivation. Yet, amidst the

excitement, there was an undercurrent of caution. Intern 3's recollection of pre-departure briefings reveals a sense of preparedness for the challenges ahead: "*We were taught—advice about expecting the worst here and to never let our guards down were instilled in our minds.*" Arriving in Hong Kong was a sensory overload for many. The towering skyscrapers, bustling crowds, and unfamiliar cultural norms triggered a sense of initial bewilderment. Intern 4 vividly captured this experience, stating, "*The first month I was here, it was very overwhelming... The transportation system was yes, very convenient, but I absolutely hate it because I still get confused and afraid to get lost.*" Beyond the physical landscape, cultural differences presented the most significant hurdles. Intern 4's observation about the "surprisingly rude" communication style of locals underscores the initial shock of encountering unfamiliar social norms. However, the students displayed remarkable resilience, learning to "*give the benefit of the doubt*" (Intern 5) and adapt their perspectives. Intern 6 eloquently summarized this journey: "*You just need one thing to live in a diverse country—that is respect. You cannot change someone's culture for your own comfort, and you have to respect that.*" The internship itself was a demanding crucible, forging resilience and refining skills. The high standards and fast-paced environment, particularly in the front office, pushed the students to their limits. Intern 7 recounted, "*You have to learn new things and catch up as quickly as you can because the hotel operation goes on and it won't wait on you.*" Yet, amidst the challenges, they found solace and fulfillment in guest satisfaction. Intern 2's words resonate deeply: "*Nothing is more rewarding in the hotel industry than to see that the guests appreciate and value the service you have given to them.*" The internship transcended mere skill acquisition; it ignited personal and professional transformations. Intern 8's reflection encapsulates this sentiment: "*This internship has changed my perspective because I have to deal with things on my own as I am living independently away from the comfort of my home.*" For some, the experience prompted a reevaluation of career paths, while others honed essential communication skills in a diverse setting. The Hong Kong internship left an indelible mark on the students, fostering resilience, self-awareness, and cultural sensitivity. Intern 9's poignant statement, "*Whatever they'll say or do to you, keep your value. Your value doesn't decrease because of someone's inability to see your worth,*" speaks volumes about the personal growth they underwent. The experience challenged their preconceptions, broadened their horizons, and instilled a profound appreciation for cultural diversity. As Intern 10 aptly concluded, "*Life changing. Many of my previous beliefs and values have been brought to challenge... We just need to know how to spot differences and adapt to those new beliefs and values that are not degrading and good, not just for yourself but to those around your sphere.*"

This study resonates with the existing literature on international internships, cultural adjustment, and the experiences of Filipino students abroad. The students' motivations for pursuing internships in Hong Kong, primarily driven by personal and professional growth, align seamlessly with previous research highlighting the transformative potential of international internships in fostering skill development, cultural intelligence, and global perspectives (Chen & Lin, 2017; Lee et al., 2015). This study provides profound implications for educational institutions, administrative bodies, and government organizations involved in facilitating international internships for Filipino tourism and hospitality students. Educational institutions must prioritize comprehensive pre-departure orientations that extend beyond logistical concerns to encompass cultural awareness, communication skills, and mental health preparedness. Integrating intercultural communication and adaptability training into the curriculum can further equip students to thrive in diverse work environments. Establishing mentorship programs and providing access to counseling services can offer invaluable support throughout the internship journey. Facilitating structured post-internship reflection activities can help students consolidate their learning and make informed career decisions. The experiences shared by Filipinos in tourism and hospitality pave the way for enhancing collaboration and communication between educational institutions, administrative bodies, and government organizations.

Keywords: Filipino-Students, Internship Experiences

PGRC-126

Reflective Practice in Teacher Education: A Case Study of Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions and Experiences

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Abstract

The study explored pre-service teachers' (PSTs') perceptions of reflection and their experience in engaging with the process. In initial teacher education (ITE), the reflective practitioner model encourages PSTs to engage in ongoing reflections to promote self-awareness and adaptability for continuous improvement in learning how to teach. Although there is well-established literature that supports the rationale for reflective practice (RP) in ITE, concerns have been raised about a lack of understanding of reflection, as researchers, teacher educators, in-service teachers and PSTs understand reflection differently (Saric & Steh, 2017). Ann, Swanto and Al-Saqqaf (2018) reveal that PSTs lack a clear understanding of what reflection means in terms of the levels and the extent to which they need to reflect. Due to this lack of understanding, PSTs resort to superficial teaching practices instead of reflective teaching (Goh & Wong, 2014; Too, 2013; Yee, Abdullah & Mohd Nawi, 2018). This can lead to varied interpretations of reflection, resulting in a fragmented learning experience, with some PSTs focusing on certain aspects of reflection while neglecting others. This lack of understanding also limits our ability to refine the reflection process in ITE effectively, thereby impeding the development of proficient teachers capable of meeting the needs of students while adapting to the evolving demands of real-world practices. This research gap underscores the premise that the understanding and beliefs about reflection affect how practitioners engage in the process.

Given this premise, this study attempted to explore PSTs' perceptions of reflection and their experience in engaging with the process. Thus, the two research questions (RQs) are:

RQ1: What are the pre-service teachers' perceptions about reflection?

RQ2: What are the pre-service teachers' experiences in the reflection process?

This study can contribute to the continuing debates on the ITE curriculum, particularly in relation to the roles of RP. It can also offer insights into the implementation of RP and suggest ways in which ITE programmes can facilitate opportunities for RP.

Methodology

Given the RQs, the qualitative case study methodology was used to understand the depth of this phenomenon. This methodology acknowledged the multiplicity of realities that arose from each participant's experience, consistent with the ontological assumption of multiple realities within the interpretivist paradigm. The case study refers to a collection of cases from PSTs who were chosen from an undergraduate ITE programme in a private university in Malaysia. The uniqueness of this programme lies in its distinctive focus on preparing educators for private schools, setting it apart from the majority of ITE programmes in the country, which are geared towards preparing teachers for public schools. It places importance on the integration of knowledge into practice and its structure is designed to develop reflective practitioners (Programme guide, 2017).

Five PSTs were selected as the participants through the purposive sampling method based on these criteria:

1. Have the necessary experience of teaching for at least 3 months.

2. Final-year students.

3. Verbally articulate.

4. Willing.

Two methods of data collection were employed. Firstly, unstructured interviews to explore the participants' perspectives of reflection. Secondly, document analysis such as reflection journals, e-portfolios and programme documents to examine the implementation of RP. Data from these two sources were triangulated to strengthen the methodological rigour and the trustworthiness of the findings. By adopting narrative and thematic analysis methods, the study gained insights into both the unique narratives of individuals and the broader themes that emerged from the entire dataset.

Results

Overall, the findings reveal that the PSTs had common and varying perspectives regarding the purpose and nature of reflection. For the most part, their reflections were driven by two primary purposes: personal benefit and students' learning. Personal benefit includes the effort to develop self-awareness, improve their teaching skills or obtain a good grade. Reflecting for the benefit of students involves their concerns about students' learning, even though they may hold different viewpoints on what constitutes effective learning.

Consistent with relevant literature, the participants' narratives revealed several key elements that characterised reflection, such as intentional, critical self-assessment, a constant pursuit of improvement, and the clarification of thoughts. Collectively, these elements underpin reflection by fostering self-awareness, encouraging critical thinking, and providing a framework for continuous learning and improvement among the PSTs. These characteristics align with the viewpoints of prominent scholars in the field such as Dewey (1904, 1933), Schön (1987, 1995, 2017), Boud et al. (2013), Rodgers (2002, 2020), Zeichner and Liston (1987, 2014), Korthagen and Vasalos (2005), and van Manen (1977, 2016).

The reflection processes were analysed using Dewey's (1933) six phases of reflection: Experience, Spontaneous interpretation, Naming the problems, Generating possible explanations, Ramifying the explanations, and Experimenting. These phases correspond to Lee's (2005) three levels of depth of reflective thinking: Recall (R1), Rationalisation (R2) and Reflectivity (R3). Results indicate that not all participants fully engaged in all six phases, with only one reaching Phase 6. The analysis of their e-portfolios further reveals varying levels of reflective thinking, with two PSTs achieving R3, two reaching R2, and one attaining R1.

The interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivators influenced their experience in the process. PSTs engage in reflection intrinsically because they find value, satisfaction, or personal meaning in reflecting on their experiences, using arbitrary written and non-written formats. Data suggests a genuine curiosity and interest in exploring one's thoughts, emotions, and actions to gain insights and make improvements. The extrinsically-driven approach, however, tends to be more directive and is typically undertaken out of academic obligation such as course assessment where there was an expected formality such as standard and structure. This process was also significantly influenced by key players such as their learners, mentor teachers and peers.

The contents of their reflection can be categorised into four themes: Pedagogy (including instructional skills, lesson preparation and delivery), Students (including student engagement, teacher-student relationship, readiness, learning needs and behavioural concerns), Subject matter (including curriculum and subject-specific knowledge), and Self-awareness (including personal identity, personal and interpersonal conflicts, feelings, tendencies, habits and attitudes).

Overall, there appears to be an aspired-transpired gap in the way the ITE programme

implements RP. A possible explanation could be the absence of a clear framework for RP within the ITE programme which may have resulted in the varied interpretations of reflection among the PSTs. This implementation gap was explored through the lens of implementation theory.

Conclusion

This study explored PSTs' perceptions of reflection and their experience in engaging with the process in an ITE programme in Malaysia. Data suggest that there are common elements that characterised reflection. There were also varied interpretations which could be due to internal and external factors and a gap in the way the programme implements RP. This affects the way the PSTs approach reflection and the contents and depth of their reflection. The study of PSTs' perspectives and experiences offers valuable insights into the ways in which reflection is understood, and implemented, and its impact on the development of reflective practitioners in ITE. Further studies are encouraged to explore on the implementation and integration of RP, as its continued refinement holds the potential to positively shape the landscape of education and contribute to the cultivation of reflective and effective educators.

Implications of the study

By exploring the perceptions and experiences of PSTs regarding reflection, the study provides a deeper understanding of how RP operates in ITE programmes. The study identifies intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive PSTs to engage in reflection, shedding light on the motivations behind RPs. By employing Dewey's six phases of reflection and Lee's three levels of reflective thinking, the study offers a structured framework for analysing the depth and progression of reflective thinking among PSTs. The study also highlights the influence of various stakeholders, including students, mentor teachers, supervisors, and peers, on the reflection experiences of PSTs, enriching the understanding of the social dynamics at play in RP.

This study offers valuable insights into the ways in which reflection is understood and implemented, and its impact on the development of reflective practitioners. The findings not only contributed to the existing body of knowledge on RP in ITE but also provided a foundation for evaluating ITE programmes. Overall, this study provides valuable insights that can inform the development and refinement of RP frameworks within ITE programmes, ultimately enhancing teacher preparation and professional development.

Keywords: Reflective practice; reflection; pre-service teachers; initial teacher education

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PGRC-127

Exploring Prepositional Usage Patterns in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks: A Corpus Study

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Abstract

This study investigates the usage of prepositions in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks using a corpus-based approach to analyze their frequency, distribution, and semantic patterns. Prepositions are essential components of English grammar, enabling users to express spatial, temporal, and logical relationships within sentences. These small but powerful words help connect various parts of a sentence and establish coherent meaning. Despite their importance, prepositions often pose challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in the context of Chinese language learners. The multifaceted nature of prepositions, combined with the lack of clear, systematic rules governing their use, makes them a difficult area for students to master. This is compounded by the differences in how prepositional concepts are structured in English compared to Chinese, further complicating their acquisition.

In Chinese Junior Secondary Schools, textbooks are the primary teaching resources used to guide students through the learning of English. They provide the structure and content that shapes the students' learning experience. However, previous studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that the teaching of prepositions in these textbooks is often inadequate. The lack of sufficient contextual examples, inconsistent coverage of different prepositions, and insufficient focus on their multiple meanings may leave students with gaps in understanding. This research addresses these concerns by analyzing the usage of prepositions in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks, offering insights into the ways prepositions are presented and how frequently they are used in educational materials.

The primary aim of this study is to explore how prepositions are used in these textbooks to provide a comprehensive understanding of their frequency, distribution, and semantic patterns. By focusing on these key linguistic features, the study aims to address the difficulties that learners face with prepositions and propose ways to improve the instructional practices surrounding them. Specifically, the study will examine the following research questions: (1) What are the frequency and distribution patterns of prepositions in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks? (2) What are the semantic patterns in the use of prepositions in these textbooks?Several previous studies have explored the role of prepositions in English language learning. For example, Eddine (2012) pointed out that prepositions serve as crucial links between different parts of a sentence, while Litkowski (2002) emphasized that prepositions are vital for expressing temporal, spatial, and logical relationships. Yu (2014) noted that prepositions are often a reliable indicator of a learner's proficiency level. Despite the recognition of their importance, few studies have focused on how prepositions are used and taught in the specific context of Chinese EFL instruction. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the presentation and use of prepositions in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks, offering a more detailed understanding of the challenges learners face and how they might be addressed.

The methodology for this study involves creating a corpus of Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks and analyzing it using AntConc, a widely used software tool for corpus linguistics. AntConc offers various functions such as frequency lists, concordance, collocation, and word clusters, all of which will be employed in this research. The frequency list function will be used to determine which prepositions occur most often in the textbooks. This analysis will give insight into the exposure students have to different prepositions and how frequently they

encounter each one in their reading materials.

Concordance and collocation tools will be used to explore the contexts in which prepositions appear, providing a more detailed understanding of their semantic functions. By examining the words that frequently co-occur with prepositions, this study will identify common prepositional phrases and explore how prepositions are used in relation to specific verbs, nouns, and other grammatical elements. This part of the analysis is crucial for uncovering the various meanings that prepositions take on in different contexts and for understanding how they are introduced and reinforced in educational materials.

The findings from this study will contribute to the field of English language education in several ways. First, they will provide a detailed picture of how prepositions are used in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks, highlighting any gaps or inconsistencies in their presentation. This information will be valuable for teachers, curriculum developers, and textbook authors who are involved in designing and delivering EFL instruction. By understanding which prepositions are most frequently used and how they are taught, educators can make more informed decisions about how to focus their teaching efforts and how to design activities that help students better understand and use prepositions.

Additionally, the study's findings will have broader implications for EFL pedagogy. By identifying common patterns in prepositional usage and the challenges that learners face, the research will offer practical recommendations for improving the teaching of prepositions in the classroom. These recommendations may include providing more varied and context-rich examples of prepositional use, offering explicit instruction on the multiple meanings of prepositions, and incorporating activities that help students practice using prepositions in meaningful contexts. The insights gained from this research can also be used to inform future textbook development, ensuring that prepositions are taught more effectively and comprehensively. Moreover, this study contributes to the growing body of research that applies corpus linguistics to the analysis of educational materials. The use of a corpus-based approach allows for a data-driven analysis of language usage, providing empirical evidence to support the study's findings. This methodology ensures that the study's conclusions are grounded in actual usage patterns, making them more reliable and applicable to real-world language learning contexts.

In conclusion, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of prepositional usage in Chinese Junior Secondary School English Textbooks, addressing both the frequency and semantic patterns of prepositions. By shedding light on how prepositions are presented and used in educational materials, this research seeks to enhance the teaching and learning of prepositions in EFL contexts. The findings will have significant implications for language education in Chinese secondary schools, contributing to more effective instructional practices and better learning outcomes for students. Ultimately, this study will not only improve our understanding of prepositional usage in textbooks but also offer practical solutions for overcoming the challenges that learners face when mastering prepositions.

Food Studies & Gastronomy

PGRC-201

Short Communication on the Comprehensive Review "Contemporary Food Design from Tradition to Technology"

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Abstract

Food has changed through different eras, and how food is presented has changed dramatically. According to Rajan (2023), food is embedded in the culture of the people and spread of people through methods such as colonization and migration. Food design has been used to gain more revenue from product innovation in the catering industry and is widely used in catering businesses. This study highlights the application of food design in multiple dimensions (XIA et al., 2024); for example, food plating technology and 3D printing technology are skillfully applied in catering-related businesses, this fusion of traditional food creativity and food printing technology not only enriches the diners' dual experience of food but also benefits special populations with special dietary needs.

Introduction

Food design is a discipline that has evolved from the traditional culinary arts to a complex area that combines art, science, and technology in recent years. This change is indicative of a larger trend in society where people are looking for meals that not only provide them with nutrition but also offer them new experiences and visual attractiveness. XIA et al. (2024) note that as a result, food design is now a vital component of the culinary sector, spurring creativity and innovation in ways that were unthinkable only a few decades ago. This thorough analysis explores how food design has evolved from its traditional roots to incorporate cutting-edge technologies like 3D printing. It also looks into the practices of food design today. Modern culinary science relies heavily on the integration of technology and tradition in food design, which not only improves diners' sensory and visual experiences but also caters to certain dietary requirements (Rajan, 2023).

Description

In modern times, people's need for food has expanded beyond mere sustenance to include a quest for innovative food concepts and unique culinary experiences. Chefs are described by society as culinary artists and painters, and creatively transformed food is more like a beautiful painting waiting to be appreciated by diners (Bao et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; Ma, 2015). In essence, the realm of food design has stood at the boundaries of culinary art, science, culture, and innovation; it is more like a fusion concept that interprets them as well. This is as mentioned in the article (as mentioned in the Introduction); it can make eating easier for diners who would otherwise have difficulty eating through the adapted structure of the food and through this change. Guiné et al. (2021) note that food design is a trophy of social development, and such success cannot be separated from the fusion of art and culture in society, allowing creativity, innovation, and society to have a close connection. This implies that food design has a different starting point than traditional culinary arts and that the 'design' in food design is purposeful (see, Figure 1.). Food design is characterized by the message conveyed to the diner through the chef, and the message conveyed is reciprocated through the interaction of the food experience.
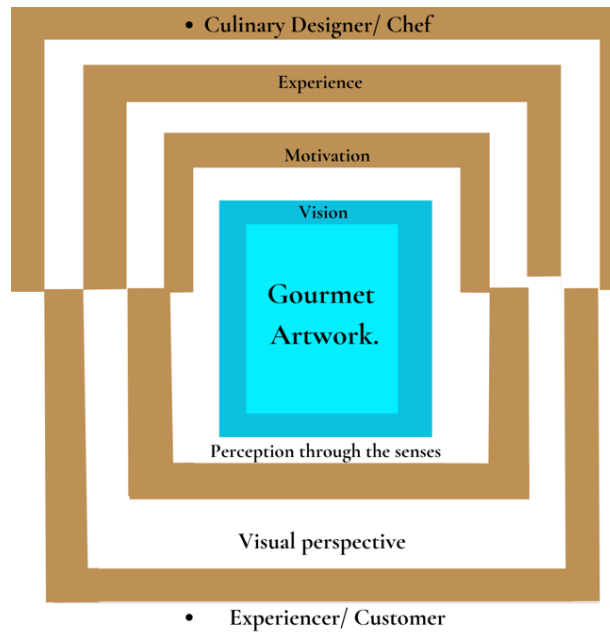
Figure 1. A model of chef-customer interaction signaling and motivational communication

The shift in food design that has occurred over the years relates directly to how consumers have shifted their expectations and tastes. Cooking experts are increasingly recognized as artists who use food materiality as they start realizing food's sensory and aesthetic aspects. Guiné et al. (2020) indicate that the artists have to keep up with customer preferences which are the motivations for innovative designs. Instead of being an afterthought or a mere nicety, food presentation is now an integral part of dining experiences. Modern procedures used by chefs also reflect this trend; each element must be prepared with a lot of care to design an appealing dish that would address the diner on many levels and narrate a story. For instance, Bao et al. (2023) discussed that the distribution of heat alters the attributes of food and the subsequent effects on the five senses, which in turn influences the overall food experience. Foods are judged not only by their taste and nutritional values but also by their physical appearance. In addition, the use of 3D printing technology in food creation can be cited as a significant step forward in developing new cooking qualities. With the help of this technology, foodstuff can be sculpted and formed in the most elaborate ways imaginable before, especially in terms of the level of detail this technology can provide. According to Mantihal et al. (2020), 3D food printing is not just a novel way of cooking; it is a remarkable tool that places chefs in a position where they can defy the conventions of food preparation in culinary arts (see, Figure 1.1). Some of the applications of this technology are in preparing food for individuals with specific dietary needs to enhance the quality and appearance of food.
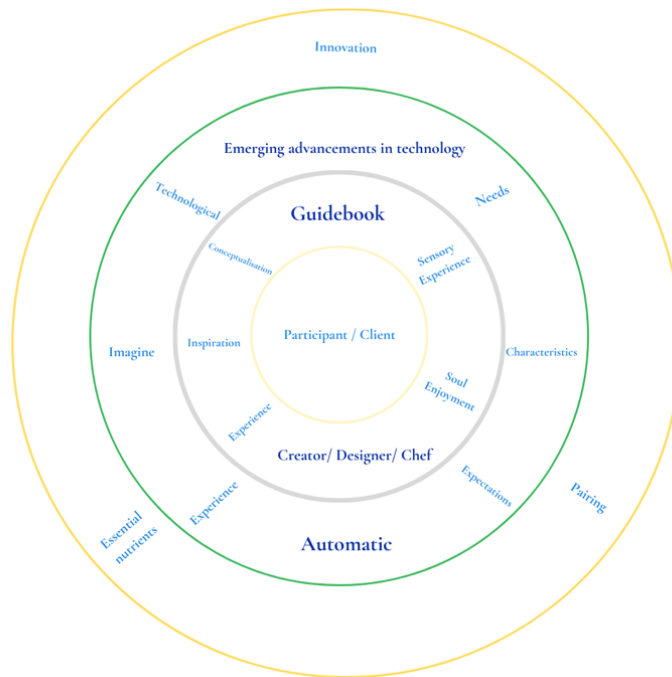
Figure 1.1 An interactive model of traditional and contemporary food design (Adapted from Bo et al., 2024)

In addition to technologies like 3D Printing, the culture and behavior conveyed through eating influence the current state of food design. Ma (2015) also underscores that culture plays a part in dictating eating patterns and food choices, which is very important in Chinese culture. Integrating up-to-date architectural techniques with traditional cooking practices contrasts a thriving society with conventional beliefs. Food design is borrowing from many cultures as it evolves, which means that the food, its presentation, and how it tastes are fascinating in many ways, and they are good to people of so many cultures worldwide (Guiné et al., 2020).

Furthermore, another crucial aspect is the influence of production and consumption on the environment and its long-term viability. In their study, Chen et al. (2023) examined the use of various food preparation techniques to reduce the presence of harmful compounds in fish products. Their research specifically investigates the interplay between the development of nutritious and environmentally friendly food and the mitigation of food-related risks. With the increased concern from customers about the effect of foods on the environment and their health, food design has to incorporate such techniques (Guiné et al., 2021). This covers everything from procurement and preparation of the components to the cooking process and even how the item is presented to the consumer.

The development of artificial intelligence and other newer technologies will further influence food design at some point. Therefore, since AI can process massive amounts of information while producing new ideas for meals and menu and dining experience concepts, this area of food design can be transformed by incorporating AI. As such, XIA et al. (2024) argued that the infusion of AI in food design will likely foster the production of unimaginable, unique edible creations that will significantly accommodate consumers' nutrient needs and desires. This technology integration demonstrates the next wave of food design, which will continue with the previous innovation and make the experience even more unique.

Conclusion

Rightly so, food design is a complex and evolving discipline. It is an integral part of contemporary lifestyles. Aspects of food design also provide a stepping stone to culinary development and culinary science research (Mantihal et al., 2020). The researcher must admit that the current field of food design is no longer limited to traditional cooking techniques and plating ideas but is more about how to innovate food to make it more appealing to the eye and to satisfy the consumer experience of the diner. The researcher thinks food design innovation needs to incorporate the concept of innovation in all dimensions. More technology (e.g., AI) is gradually being injected into the traditional means of food design. The dosage of printing technology sets the available models to maximize food consumption control. From a macro perspective, the catering industry should utilize 3D printing technology to eliminate boring traditional food models and allow diners to taste innovative new concepts with curiosity.

Keywords: Food design; Culinary innovation; 3D printing technology

Competing Interest

There are no potential disputes of interest in that short communication.

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PGRC-202

More Than Just A Drink: Exploring The Cultural Significance And Preservation Efforts Of Tagayan Ritual In Quezon Province

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Abstract

The cultural landscape of the Philippines is deeply linked with its rich traditions and practices, many of which are centered around food and drink. Among these is the Tagayan ritual, a communal practice involving the consumption of Lambanog, a traditional Filipino distilled spirit made from coconut sap, commonly referred to as "The Philippine Vodka." This practice is not merely a social activity but a cultural expression that reinforces community bonds, honors ancestral traditions, and celebrates local craftsmanship. Lambanog itself holds significant cultural, economic, and social value, especially in Quezon Province, where it has become a symbol of regional identity and pride.

Quezon Province's Lambanog industry is renowned for producing one of the world's most unique and potent spirits, with the sector playing a fundamental role in the local economy. It provides coconut growers with an alternative to copra production, offering significantly higher returns. The intrinsic purity of Lambanog, free from artificial additives, further elevates its status, making it a preferred choice among consumers seeking authentic and traditional beverages.

Despite these efforts, the Tagayan ritual, an integral part of the Lambanog culture, is in decline. Once a vital practice in religious rites and community gatherings, the Tagayan ceremony is slowly fading as modern influences and the challenges facing the Lambanog industry take their toll. Issues such as methanol poisonings, inconsistent product standards, and competition from large distilleries have weakened the industry's standing, mirroring the decline of the Tagayan tradition itself. The loss of this cultural practice represents more than just a shift in drinking habits; it signifies the loss of a cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations.

This study aims to document the gastronomic legacy of Lambanog and the Tagayan ritual, emphasizing their cultural relevance and the pressing need to preserve this regional heritage. The research explores the historical background of Lambanog, its role in the Tagayan ceremony, and the current preservation efforts. Comparisons also drawn with other cultural practices involving alcohol in Japan and Korea, such as the communal consumption of sake and soju, to provide a broader understanding of the social functions of traditional alcoholic beverages.

The researchers make use of different theoretical frameworks from international and national cultural charters as well as the Thick Description which is used to describe and interpret social actions observed in their specific context.

The study uses Grounded Theory, a qualitative research method, to explore the cultural dimensions of the Tagayan ritual and Lambanog industry. Data is collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, with a theoretical saturation sample size. Data triangulation enhances validity and reliability. The coding process categorizes and interprets the data, developing a grounded theoretical model explaining the Tagayan ritual's cultural significance and modern challenges.

The researchers developed the TUBA Framework with its acronym which stands for Tradition,

Understanding, Barriers and Action as a result of their findings, which provides a structured analysis of the key elements affecting the preservation of the Tagayan ritual and Lambanog production. The study contributes to the broader discourse on cultural preservation, highlighting the need for integrated efforts to safeguard traditional practices in a rapidly changing world. Traditions: The research reveals that the Tagayan ritual remains a deeply rooted tradition in Quezon Province, particularly among the older generation. It serves as a ceremonial practice that not only involves the consumption of Lambanog but also reinforces social cohesion and honors ancestral heritage. However, the study found that the ritual is increasingly seen as irrelevant by younger generations, who are more influenced by modern social practices. Understanding: There is a divergence in the community's understanding of the Tagayan ritual. While some view it as a vital link to their cultural heritage, others, especially the youth, perceive it as an outdated practice. This disconnect threatens the continuity of the ritual, as its preservation relies on its perceived relevance to contemporary life. The study highlights the importance of fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the ritual among younger generations to ensure its survival. Barriers: The research identifies several barriers to the preservation of the Tagayan ritual and the sustainability of the Lambanog industry. These include issues related to product safety, such as methanol contamination, inconsistent production standards, and competition from large-scale distilleries. Additionally, the lack of governmental support and the high cost of modernizing production techniques pose significant challenges. These barriers not only threaten the economic viability of Lambanog production but also contribute to the decline of the Tagayan ritual. Actions: Despite these challenges, there are ongoing efforts to revive and preserve the Tagayan ritual and support the Lambanog industry. Local communities, in collaboration with cultural and tourism organizations, are working to integrate the ritual into tourism programs and cultural festivals. These initiatives aim to raise awareness of the ritual's cultural significance and provide economic opportunities for local producers. However, the study suggests that these efforts need to be more coordinated and sustainable to achieve long-term success. The research highlights the need for a more comprehensive and integrated approach to preserving the Tagayan ritual, one that involves not just the local community but also national and international stakeholders.

This TUBA Framework underscores the importance of a holistic approach to safeguarding cultural practices, one that involves local communities, cultural organizations, tourism stakeholders, and government bodies. The study reveals that the challenges facing the Tagayan ritual and Lambanog industry—such as generational disconnect, safety concerns, and economic pressures—are not unique to Quezon Province. These issues resonate with traditional industries worldwide, where cultural practices are at risk of being overshadowed by modernization and global competition. By documenting and analyzing these practices, the research provides a model that can be applied to similar cases globally, where cultural heritage is threatened. This study contributes to a broader understanding of the role traditional practices play in contemporary society, highlighting the need for integrated, coordinated efforts to ensure their survival for future generations. In doing so, it not only enriches the cultural discourse in the Philippines but also offers universal lessons applicable to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage worldwide.

Keywords: Lambanog, Tagayan Ritual, Cultural Significance

PGRC-203

Gastronomic Events and Festivals: Their Role in Enhancing Makati's Culinary Tourism

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Abstract

Gastronomy has emerged as a potent driver of tourism, transforming local culinary traditions into global attractions. In the Philippines, a nation renowned for its rich and diverse culinary heritage, gastronomic events and festivals play a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing the country's tourism landscape. These events not only celebrate the nation's culinary diversity but also serve as catalysts for economic growth, cultural exchange, and regional development. The growing interest in food-related travel experiences highlights the significance of culinary tourism as a critical component of the broader tourism industry. According to the World Food Travel Association (2022), food and drink experiences are among the top reasons why tourists choose specific destinations, with 93% of travelers considering food a significant aspect of their travel experience (World Food Travel Association, 2022). This trend underscores the growing importance of gastronomic events and festivals in attracting visitors and enhancing their overall travel experience.

Makati City, situated in the Metro Manila area, is renowned for its diverse and sophisticated culinary landscape. As a major business district, Makati has developed a reputation not only for its commercial prowess but also for its rich array of dining options, from high-end restaurants to street food vendors. The city's culinary diversity reflects the broader trends in Filipino cuisine, characterized by a blend of traditional flavors and innovative culinary practices influenced by global trends (Bantug, 2023). This dynamic culinary environment provides a fertile ground for gastronomic events and festivals, which play a crucial role in enhancing Makati's profile as a leading culinary destination.

The primary objective of this study is to examine how gastronomic events and festivals contribute to the enhancement of Makati's culinary tourism. This overarching aim will be explored through several specific objectives that address various dimensions of the impact of these events. Firstly, the study aims to analyze the influence of gastronomic events destination appeal. This involves investigating how culinary festivals and events increase awareness and attract tourists to Makati through a destination appeal variable. "Destination Appeal" refers to the attractiveness of a location as a travel destination, particularly in relation to the experiences and opportunities it offers. Secondly, the research seeks to evaluate the economic impact of culinary festivals on local businesses and the broader economy. Sub-variables to be considered include revenue changes for local businesses, job creation related to event activities, and overall economic contributions to the city. Thirdly, the study will assess the role of gastronomic events in shaping the destination's culinary reputation and image. Key sub-variables include media coverage, social media engagement, and the impact of event-related publicity on the city's culinary reputation. Fourthly, the research aims to explore the impact of gastronomic festivals on community engagement and local culture. Sub-variables include community participation levels, the inclusion of local culinary traditions, and the enhancement of cultural exchange between residents and visitors.

The respondents of the study are composed of four groups which are the local community with a total population of 14,054 and using the Raosoft Sample Size calculator, it achieved a 374 sample size; the next group is respondent is the tourists/visitors with a total population of 969,927 tourist arrivals and using the Raosoft Sample size calculator, it achieved a 384 sample size; the next is the business owners in the Salcedo and Legaspi area where the actual locale is located

with a total sample size of 50 business owners using a purposive/judgmental sampling; and last is the influencer/vloggers during the event festival with a total sample size of 40 using the same set of sampling technique. The researcher decided to choose these groups of respondents to cover all the objectives of the study.

The output of the study is about the formulation of improved gastronomical and festivals event implementation plan that can further enhance the delivery of Makati city's gastronomic and food festivals. feedback, logistical challenges, and recommendations for improving future events. Through these, the research will provide a comprehensive understanding of how gastronomic events and festivals contribute to the growth and enhancement of culinary tourism in Makati.

Keywords: Events, Gastronomy, Festival, Culinary Tourism, Destination Image

PGRC-204

Eatertainment: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

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Abstract

The core of all service industries, including tourism and hospitality, is the need to satisfy customers. Understanding customers' needs and expectations is essential to ensure that services and products offered are designed and delivered to achieve a high level of guest loyalty and satisfaction   . The shift from a service-based economy to experience economy has resulted in many changes to hospitality services, including need to focus on creating memorable and meaningful experiences rather than providing standard products and services. In line with that shift, the concept of entertainment has evolved, giving rise to a new phenomenon: Eatertainment. This blend of gastronomy and entertainment has emerged as a dominant trend in the hospitality sector, offering many possibilities for both business and consumers. Combining gastronomy with cutting-edge technologies, the concept has transformed the traditional dining experiences into interactive games, multimedia events, immersive dining experiences and futuristic performances .

The rise of eatertainment is driven by a number of noticeable trends that reflect the ever-changing consumer preferences, advancement of modern technologies, as well as increased competition and evolving market dynamics. Firstly, we argue that there is an increased demand for technology-driven and experiential dining experiences which is stimulated by generations of tech-savvy and entertainment-seeking consumers, such as Millennials and Generation Z. Those consumers seek entertainment-led experiences, ones which can enhance their social media presence. This in turn stimulates the emergence of immersive, themed and more interactive dining experiences. Secondly, an important trend is the integration of technology, which serves an important role in enhancing the consumer experience. From augmented reality (AR) dining menus to interactive digital games, technology allows venues to offer personalized and immersive experiences that engage diners on multiple levels. The advent of virtual reality (VR) dining experiences, interactive table surfaces, and live streaming of kitchen activities adds a new dimension to the traditional restaurant model. This trend is particularly significant in the post-pandemic era, where safety concerns and the need for touchless interactions have accelerated the adoption of technology within the hospitality industry. Thirdly, eatertainment is also driven by a growing need for more personalized and tailored experiences. Businesses are increasingly investing on data analytics and collect more customer feedback to provide a more sophisticated and personalised experiences. This trend underscores the importance of understanding consumer behavior and adapting offerings to meet the specific needs of diverse customer segments, thereby enhancing customer loyalty and driving repeat business . What is important is also that the consumer interacts with a lot of tech-driven experiences outside of the restaurant sector. Therefore, the eatertainment drives a strong connection between younger generation consumers and their modern habits).

Despite the rapid development and expansion, the eatertainment sector is subject to numerous challenges that businesses must navigate to remain competitive. One of main ones is the high cost of creating and maintaining an eatertainment venue. The cost of venue design and execution of immersive environments could be an extremely high upfront investments in infrastructure, IT, and other related resources. Additionally, ongoing maintenance costs,

including staffing, technology updates, and performance scheduling, can affect profitability, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Businesses must therefore carefully balance the costs of delivering a high-quality experience with their revenue potential, ensuring that they do not compromise on either front. Further, there is the need to constantly innovate and invest in newly emerging and innovative technologies. Consumer tastes and preferences are continually evolving and ever-changing. In order to remain competitive, businesses must invest in their entertainment offerings, menu items, and technological features. This requires a flexible and adaptable business model that can respond to market shifts and emerging trends. Failure to innovate can lead to a decline in customer interest, particularly in a market that thrives on novelty and excitement.

Moreover, the eatertainment sector faces operational challenges related to staff training and management. The blend of food service and entertainment requires employees to possess a unique skill set, encompassing both hospitality and performance abilities. Hiring and retaining such talent can be difficult, particularly in regions with a shortage of skilled labor. Additionally, the dual focus on food and entertainment can create complexities in terms of management and coordination, as businesses must ensure that both aspects of the experience are executed seamlessly. This places additional pressure on managers to juggle multiple components of the business, from food preparation and service to performance scheduling and audience engagement.

Despite these challenges, the eatertainment sector presents various opportunities for growth and expansion. As consumer preferences continue to shift towards experience-driven dining, businesses that can successfully integrate entertainment into their offerings stand to benefit from increased customer loyalty and higher profit margins. One key opportunity lies in the use of data and technology to create hyper-personalized experiences. By leveraging data analytics, businesses can gain insights into consumer preferences, allowing them to offer tailored entertainment and dining options that cater to specific demographics or individual tastes.

Another opportunity for eatertainment businesses is the growing demand for sustainable and socially responsible dining experiences. Consumers are increasingly seeking out venues that align with their values, including environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community engagement. Eatertainment venues that can integrate these elements into their experiences— such as hosting eco-friendly events, promoting local artists and performers, or sourcing ingredients from sustainable farms—can differentiate themselves in a competitive market and attract a socially conscious customer base.

Finally, the global expansion of eatertainment presents opportunities for international growth. As the demand for experiential dining continues to rise, businesses that have successfully implemented the eatertainment model in one market may find opportunities to expand into new regions. This can be particularly lucrative in emerging markets where the concept is relatively new and untapped. Franchising and licensing models offer additional pathways for eatertainment businesses to scale their operations and reach a broader audience.

In conclusion, we argue that eatertainment is a dynamic and ever-growing sector that reflects a broader societal shift towards experience-driven consumption. As consumers increasingly seek out experiences that blend food with entertainment, businesses that can innovate, personalize, and create value-driven experiences will be well-positioned to succeed. However, navigating the complexities of high operational costs, constant innovation, and talent management will be critical for sustained success. Despite those challenges, we argue that eatertainment has a bright future and will thrive in the next years dominated by technological advancements and the need to provide more personalised and meaningful experiences.

Keywords: gastronomy; eatertainment; dining; experience; innovation

PGRC-205

The Contemporaries Of Wild Edible Plant Practices Among The Dusunic Communities In Kota Marudu

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Abstract

Wild edible plants that have a long history of human consumption and are used as a dietary supplement and for developing new commercial food products. These plants are also used as food and constitute an important part of modern food systems but have an indispensable role in the past and the cultures they were part of. The importance of wild edible plants has been highlighted especially during periods of hardship, nevertheless, in many cultures, a specific interest in plants gathered from the wild has prevailed even when other food sources are available. Preparing wild edible plants for consumption involves complex knowledge of local vegetation and ecological, and social environments. Traditional food systems comprise concepts, practices, and products passed down from generation to generation. Traditional food practices operate on several levels but generally encompass knowledge of food that includes how to gather or cultivate, prepare, and consume foods within specific cultural and ecological contexts. The diversity and dynamism of traditional food knowledge permits resilience and adaptability to gradually changing environments. In both indigenous and settler societies, customary food products have been transferred over time, developing cultural conventions that grant distinct meanings and practices to food systems. Traditional food can include cultivated plants, wild edible plants, and animal products, with wild edible plants being the most diverse and least researched of these groups.

The Dusun, one of the largest indigenous groups in Sabah, Malaysia, numbers around 500,000 individuals. The Dusun people are distributed throughout eastern and western Sabah, traditionally residing as farmers in tropical forests. The classification of Dusunic languages, within the Austronesian language family, includes a range of local dialects across the north, central, and south regions of Sabah. In Sabah, over forty subgroups are identified under the Dusun category. Collectively, they primarily engage in agriculture to meet daily food needs, utilizing diverse swidden agriculture farming systems to cultivate rice in abandoned forested areas. The Dusun harvests various wild palatable plant species from the lowland and hilly forests as supplemental food alongside rice cultivation and consumption. With the deforested areas and increased population pressure, a double-exposure effect of rapid habitat destruction and cultural erosion occurred, threatening the Dusunic tradition of palatable plant use that began in pre-agricultural periods. The identified wild edible plants are usually placed at an attainable distance from home gardens on farms and fallows cultivated with rice. Knowledge of environmental conditions, such as discrepancies in soil moisture and fertility, and factors influencing the environmental changes over time, such as mining activities and oil palm plantation development, concerning plant locations direct their active conservation and post-harvest management of wild edible plants.

In discussing traditional foods and their continuity of practice, one must gauge the motivation of oneself to ensure the continuation of traditional food practices. It is often the studies related to traditional foods that view this practice as an activity participated by a community and fewer are looking through the perspective of an individual practitioner. The erosion of traditional knowledge is inevitable as the changes in lifestyles are influenced by various factors, such as the

economy, environmental changes, globalization, industrialization, and technological advancements. The shift of focus on industrialization on agricultural activities and food production has somehow changed the dietary patterns, cultural diversity, and ecological diversity which can lower the resilience of traditional food knowledge. Another notion on the decrease of foraging areas is the diminishing numbers of domestic reserves and growing urbanization activities in Sabah. The changes in physical landscapes toward urbanization, agriculture, and commodification will ultimately diminish most WEP foraging sites, which are essential to the place-based learning activities for the indigenous people. With the growing urbanization and industrialization, the increased number of people migrating out from rural areas for employment and education has caused the accelerating loss of traditional knowledge of wild plants in Sabah. Therefore, there is a need to explore how the changes in the environment influence the community's past and current wild edible plant practices.

Two research objectives form the backbone of this research. These objectives are as stated below:-

1. To describe the role of external forces in shaping the local foodscape on the community's access to wild edible plants.

2. To investigate the behaviour, emotional and spiritual relationships that Marudu community members develop their sense of place through learning wild edible plant practices.

This ongoing qualitative single case study was carried out in two agricultural communities in Kota Marudu, where part of the population still relies on wild edible plants as a daily food source. Major variables possibly determining knowledge and therefore investigated were the types of wild edible plants, their availability, biophysical aspects of their environment, and the changes in how they are used. 11 key informants, whom are between 60 to 70 years old, were interviewed using a semi-structured approach and in Bahasa Malaysia. Each interview session lasted 1-1 ½ hours and the transcribed data was analyzed using Atlas. Ti 9.

There are a few wild edible plants mentioned by the informants that are frequently foraged by this Dusun community, Polod (Arenga undulatifolia), Lingkong (Lygodium circinnatum), Botu (Caryota mitis), Kulat Purak Mata (Lentinus squarrosulus), Tunjuk langit (Helminthostachys zeylanica), Kulat tahun (Termitomyces Sp), Rebung (Bambusa spp), Paku Uban (Nephrolepis acutifolia), Pisang hutan (Musa acuminata), Tangag (Kleinhovia hospita), and Lasas or Rattan (Plectocomiopsis geminiflora). Based on the analysis, it is found that the categories "biophysical factors", "economic factors" and "cultural factors" are the most prominent in affecting changes in wild edible plant utilization among the investigated community. In the "biophysical factor" category, the type of plant, plant availability, and foraging location are associated with the effort required to forage and the continuity of practice. As for "cultural factors", ethnic identity and familial traditions are other reasons for continuing to practice wild edible plants. However, the foraging taboos and the retribution system also influenced their access and approach to foraging. Sogit, the traditional retribution system of the Kadazandusun people, was implemented in their foraging practices concerning the dead, spiritual cleansing, and emphasizing land ownership. Under "economic factor", food security and logistics are frequently mentioned in the interview as factors that contribute strongly to the need to forage for wild plants for food. Surprisingly, the concern of allergic reactions when foraging was included as another reason for the growing reluctance of youths to forage. Land ownership was found to be a vital component in the current wild edible plant food practices as guarantees a place for the practitioners to continue practicing and teaching wild edible plant knowledge. Most of these wild edible plant dishes were simple and were prepared with minimum ingredients such as salt, dried/smoked fish, or coconut milk.

Despite the diversity of Dusunic ethnic groups in Malaysia, a unified goal of local community-led initiatives is to create awareness about the significance of wild edible plants and to protect

relevant knowledge among adults and youth in the community. The goals of ongoing initiatives not only revolve around environmental sustainability and the preservation of ecological knowledge but also concern culture and health. Some efforts strive towards strengthening the cultural identity of the Dusunic ethnic group through the demonstration and promotion of traditional food practices, while others are focused on promoting human and ecosystem health via the promotion of traditional foods. The community-led initiatives are believed to enhance cultural resilience, conserve local ecological knowledge for future generations, protect Dusunic identity and culture, and adapt to climate change, food and nutrition insecurity, and crises; either man-made or natural. Dusunic wild edible food practices also emphasize the notion of environmental sustainability, with diverse ecological and cultural knowledge embedded in the everyday food practices of Dusunic people

Food and food systems are basic human needs in a community and are important in cultural identity. However, these communities attempt to satisfy their basic human needs within a foreign food culture co-existing side-by-side with one another. The indigenous people became objectified, romanticized, and were made vulnerable to food insecurity and cultural disintegration due to the imposition of government schemes on development. The wild edible plant practices were undermined with the introduction of the "green revolution", modernization, and globalization. These changes have impacted the Dusunic food culture and indigenous rights to food sovereignty, therefore, they are returning to their roots by reclaiming their identity through wild edible plant practices. Practices relating to Dusunic wild edible plants represent an important aspect of their cultural identity, enable a particular way of living, and contribute to satisfying their basic food needs. This interweaving and collective practices on gathering, identification, processing, storage, preparation, consumption, passing down of knowledge and stories, connection with religious and social events, and modes of negotiation with each other and the environment stemmed from the Dusunic worldviews of things are sacred and responsibility to take care of lands. In the absence of the supposed object, food systems omit integral elements from gathering plants, experiencing the taste, connection to ceremonial/sacred stories, the knowledge of places, a deeper realization of the plant, to the enjoyment of collective cultural celebrations through gathering and consuming traditions.

There is a high level of cooperation in food gathering and sharing of Dusun families so that personal food supplies meet communal needs. These practices have culinary implications of preserving and creating the ethnic's distinct taste by evoking the full array of bodily senses and nourishing them holistically intellectual, spiritual, and emotional, rather than just physical satiation. However, there is a perceived deterioration of this food culture for the new generation. The Western education system alienated and diminished interest in this ethnic group's wild edible practice. Modernization brought people out of having and needing the food process of gathering, processing, and knowledge of the place. The Dusun's wild food gathering became a stigma of poverty and ignorance. The growth in cash economies has meant that the collection of wild plants has not been given the same priority as in the past so that today many plants are no longer collected.

Keywords: Wild plants, Dusun, Continuity, Food culture, Traditional food

The Mediating Effect of Cultural Awareness on Filipino Gastronomic Experience and Customer Repurchase Intention in Ongpin St. Binondo Chinatown

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Abstract

Studies firmly confirm the permanent mark of Chinese culture on Philippine history, highlighting its ongoing and essential role in defining the country's diverse heritage. Binondo is a tourist site with rich history and culture symbology that demonstrates the long-lasting influence of Chinese culture on Filipino gastronomy. The objective of this study is to contribute to the understanding of the effect of cultural awareness to gastronomic experience and customer repurchase intention in Ongpin St. Binondo Chinatown. The respondents of the study were the 400 customers who have already experienced eating in Ongpin St. Binondo Chinatown and data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) that tested the relationships of the variables. This study consists of four hypotheses, all hypotheses are positively and significantly related. The collected information and experience results showed the directionality of the relationships suggested that a heightened gastronomic experience is associated with increased cultural awareness and a greater likelihood of customers expressing a repurchase intention.

Introduction

Food transcends nourishment, shaping identities and cultures. In the Philippines, Chinese influence is evident in Filipino gastronomy, exemplified by Binondo Chinatown. Food experiences contribute to cultural awareness, influencing consumer decisions and repurchase intentions.

This study aims to analyze the interrelationships between gastronomic experience, cultural awareness, and customer repurchase intention in Ongpin St., Binondo Chinatown. By understanding these factors, we can improve Filipino gastronomic experiences and attract more visitors.

Literature review

Gastronomic Experience, Cultural Awareness, and Customer Repurchase Intention

Gastronomy is a reflexive process of cooking, preparing, presenting, and eating food; It is also not only related to the preparation of food, but also to how, with whom, where, and when the human consumes it (Cuffia et al., 2020). Knowing new ingredients, learning new cooking techniques, and enjoying food in new ways are all part of the gastronomic experience (Carvallo et al., 2023). The consumers' gastronomic experiences are unique and, in general, quite subjective (Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019

Filipino Gastronomic Experience effect on Customer Repurchase Intention

Gastronomic experiences are considered integral components of activity chains centered around food, elevating the experience to its highest potential (Sundqvist, 2023). These experiences contribute significantly to customers' enjoyment and satisfaction during their visit to the destination (Berbel-Pineda et al., 2019), becoming an integral part of their positive and memorable experience. Moreover, customers tend to utilize their recalled experiences as a cognitive reference for future intentions, such as revisiting specific locations or even reliving past moments (Birch and Memery, 2020). This is essential for organizations aiming to prosper in

competitive markets by creating a devoted customer base. Repurchase intention becomes a paramount indicator of a customer's willingness to repeat their purchase in the future. As a result, retailers must prioritize providing exceptional gastronomic experiences to enhance the likelihood of customers returning to repurchase their products. Thus, the following hypothesis was suggested:

Hypothesis 1: Filipino Gastronomic Experience has a positive and significant effect on Customer Repurchase Intention

Filipino Gastronomic Experience effect on Cultural Awareness

Food has the power to shape a person's perceptions, which, in turn, influence their attitudes, especially in the context of culture (Chen and Antonelli, 2020). The impact of food on perceptions is not only limited to taste; it encompasses a wider comprehension of cultural differences. Exploring a culture through its food goes beyond culinary knowledge, as inquiries about how something is made, what ingredients are used, or why something is called a certain way reveal insights into the way of life of that culture (Negrillo, 2019). The cultural aspect of gastronomy encompasses both tangible elements like ingredients and packaging, as well as intangible aspects like cooking methods, history, taste, and smell, all of which contribute to the customers' value and enrich the cultural essence of the place (Bukharov and Berezka, 2018

Hypothesis 2: Filipino Gastronomic Experience has a positive and significant effect on Cultural Awareness

Cultural Awareness effect on Customer Repurchase Intention

Each society takes pride in its distinct principles, beliefs, and traditions—which in turn shows the diverse feelings, thoughts, and actions of people from different cultural backgrounds, resulting in a profound impact of cultural diversity and inevitably reflected in customers' decisions on purchasing goods and services. (Albarq et al., 2023; Bashar et al., 2023). Having an in-depth understanding of cultural diversity is essential for understanding the intricate dynamics of consumer behavior, as diverse cultural subtleties influence individuals' preferences and decisions.

Hypothesis 3: Cultural Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Customer Repurchase Intention.

*Filipino Gastronomic Experience affects Customer Repurchase Intention through Cultural Awareness*

People who travel to a destination with cultural symbology are prepared to interact with the experience supplied by the tourist destination to have their own perceived experience (Zhang et al., 2018),). It was suggested that cultural factors have the most pervasive and significant influence on consumer behavior to purchase decisions (Ilyas et al., 2020). However, in this study, cultural awareness obtained from prior experience will be used to determine the significant influence of cultural factors on consumer behavior particularly on their intention to repurchase. Based on this evidence, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Filipino Gastronomic Experience affects Customer Repurchase Intention through Cultural Awareness

S-O-R Theory

The S-O-R model comprises stimulus, organism, and response. It suggests that an organism's state of being, or behaviors (person) are a result of the exterior environment (stimuli). The internal processing of the activation can occur at a conscious or unconscious level and includes perceptions and environmental interpretations that impact an individual's emotional state. This effect subsequently stimulates an emotion that results in a response and the process of decision-

making. The stimulus element refers to the factor that stimulates or arouses an individual. The organism component of the S-O-R framework refers to the cognitive and affective state of the customers. It represents the processes that occur between the stimuli and the customers' responses.

H1: Gastronomic Experience has a positive and significant effect on Customer Repurchase Intention
H2: Gastronomic Experience has a positive and significant effect on Cultural Awareness
H3: Cultural Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Customer Repurchase Intention
H4: Gastronomic Experience affects Customer Repurchase Intention through Cultural Awareness

Methods

Research design outlines the steps to conduct research effectively. It involves translating research problems into data analysis plans to answer research questions. This study used a descriptive correlational design and convenience sampling to collect primary data from 400 Filipino customers in Ongpin St., Binondo Chinatown. Questionnaires were administered using pen and paper and Google Forms. Data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 3.3.2. software using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The respondents were selected based on their prior experience of purchasing and consuming food products from Ongpin St. Binondo Chinatown. The questionnaire was designed to analyze the influence of cultural awareness on the gastronomic experience of Filipino customers and their repurchase intention in Binondo Chinatown.

Results and Discussions

The study used a Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships between the three variables: Gastronomic Experience, Customer Repurchase Intention, and the mediating variable Cultural Awareness. For preliminary tests, factor analysis was employed to assess the factor loadings of each observed variable to the latent variables. A threshold of at least 0.50 for factor loadings was used as recommended by (Hair et al, 2019). Additionally, construct validity and reliability were assessed before building the model. A threshold of >0.70 for Cronbach Alpha, composite reliability (CR) and rho_A were used for good reliability while a threshold of >0.50 for average variance extracted (AVE) was used for good reliability of the latent variables. In the second stage of the data analysis, bootstrapping technique was used to assess the structural model and test the proposed hypotheses.

A 0.05 level of significance was used throughout. Finally, goodness of fit was assessed where a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value less than 0.10 (Henseler et al., 2014) and normed fit index (NFI) greater than 0.90 (Lohmeller, 1989) were considered a good fit.

Structural Model Analysis
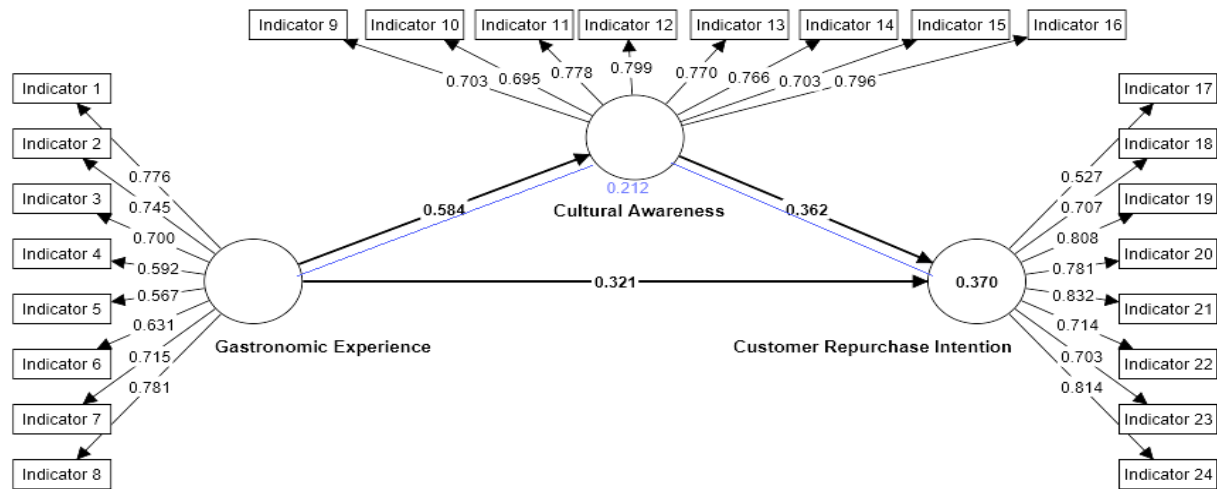
Businesses in Ongpin St., Binondo Chinatown, can enhance customer loyalty by focusing on providing memorable gastronomic experiences and promoting cultural immersion. These findings underscore the importance of creating a holistic dining experience that goes beyond taste and embraces cultural exploration.

Managerial implications

This study reveals the interconnectedness of gastronomic experiences, cultural awareness, and customer repurchase intentions in Ongpin St., Binondo Chinatown. To foster customer loyalty, businesses should focus on creating memorable experiences, promoting cultural immersion, and addressing practical concerns like waiting areas and parking. Understanding that gastronomy is not just about taste but also cultural exploration, businesses can strategically tailor their offerings.

Future research directions

Future research could explore the perspectives of managers and staff for a more comprehensive understanding. Expanding the sample size to include a more diverse group of customers, investigating additional factors that may influence purchase intention, such as price, service quality, and marketing tool, and comparing the findings of this study with similar ones in other cultural contexts may be done as well.

Keywords: Binondo Chinatown, gastronomic experience, cultural awareness, customer repurchase intention

PGRC-207

Development and Optimization of Nipa Sap for Popsicle Production

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Abstract

The quest for sustainable and nutritious food products has driven the exploration of various natural resources, with nipa palm (Nypa fruticans) emerging as a promising candidate. Nipa palm produces sap that is rich in sugars and essential nutrients. This study investigates the potential of nipa sap as a primary ingredient in popsicle production, aiming to develop a product that is both appealing and healthful. The research encompasses several phases: extraction and purification of nipa sap, formulation of popsicle mixtures, optimization of processing conditions, and evaluation of the final product's sensory and nutritional qualities. The initial phase involves the extraction of nipa sap using traditional tapping methods. This process is carefully monitored to ensure the quality and consistency of the sap. Once extracted, the sap undergoes purification to remove any impurities that could affect the flavor or safety of the final product. The purified sap is then subjected to a series of analyses to determine its sugar content, pH, and nutritional composition, including the levels of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. These analyses provide a baseline understanding of the raw material and inform subsequent formulation efforts. In the formulation phase, various popsicle mixtures are prepared by combining nipa sap with different sweeteners, stabilizers, and flavor enhancers. The goal is to create a range of formulations that vary in sweetness, texture, and flavor profile. Preliminary sensory evaluations are conducted to identify the most promising formulations. These evaluations involve a panel of tasters who assess the mixtures based on attributes such as taste, texture, and overall acceptability. Feedback from these evaluations is used to refine the formulations and select the best candidates for further optimization. To optimize the production process, a response surface methodology (RSM) is employed. This statistical technique helps determine the optimal conditions for freezing temperature, time, and ingredient ratios to achieve the desired texture, flavor, and stability of the popsicles. The RSM involves designing a series of experiments that systematically vary the processing parameters. The results of these experiments are analyzed to identify the combination of conditions that produces the best quality popsicles. This phase is crucial for ensuring that the final product is not only delicious but also consistent in quality. The optimized formulations are then produced in larger batches and subjected to comprehensive sensory evaluations involving a panel of trained tasters. These evaluations are more rigorous than the preliminary tests and involve a structured questionnaire that assesses attributes such as taste, texture, color, and overall acceptability. The feedback from these evaluations provides valuable insights into consumer preferences and helps fine-tune the final product. In addition to sensory evaluations, the nutritional value of the popsicles is analyzed. The content of essential vitamins (such as vitamin C and B-complex), minerals (including calcium, potassium, and magnesium), and antioxidants is measured using standard analytical techniques. These analyses confirm that the popsicles are a good source of essential nutrients and provide a healthier alternative to conventional frozen treats. The nutritional analysis also highlights the potential health benefits of nipa sap, which is rich in natural sugars and bioactive compounds. The shelf-life of the popsicles is another critical aspect of the study. The popsicles are stored under different conditions, and their sensory and nutritional qualities are monitored over time. This phase involves periodic evaluations to assess changes in taste, texture, and nutritional content. The results of these evaluations help determine the optimal storage conditions and shelf-life of the product. Ensuring a long shelf-life is important for the commercial viability of the popsicles, as it affects distribution and consumer satisfaction. The results of this

study indicate that nipa sap can be effectively utilized in popsicle production, offering a unique flavor profile and significant health benefits. The optimized popsicles are well-received by consumers, with high scores for taste, texture, and overall acceptability. Nutritional analysis reveals that the popsicles are a good source of essential nutrients and antioxidants, making them a healthier alternative to conventional frozen treats. The study also demonstrates that nipa sap can be processed and stored effectively, ensuring a long shelf-life without compromising quality. This research contributes to the diversification of nipa palm products and promotes the use of sustainable resources in the food industry. By utilizing nipa sap, which is often underutilized, this study highlights the potential for developing innovative food products that align with current trends in health and sustainability. The findings suggest that nipa sap-based popsicles could appeal to health-conscious consumers and those seeking natural and sustainable food options. Future research could explore the incorporation of additional natural ingredients to further enhance the nutritional value and sensory appeal of nipa sap-based popsicles. For example, adding fruit purees or extracts could introduce new flavors and increase the content of vitamins and antioxidants. Additionally, exploring different methods of sap extraction and purification could improve the efficiency and yield of the process. Further studies could also investigate the environmental impact of nipa sap production and its potential role in supporting sustainable agriculture and local economies. In conclusion, the development and optimization of nipa sap for popsicle production represent a promising avenue for creating sustainable and nutritious frozen treats. This study provides a comprehensive framework for utilizing nipa sap in food production, from extraction and purification to formulation and optimization. The findings underscore the potential of nipa sap as a valuable resource in the food industry, offering both health benefits and environmental sustainability. By tapping into this underutilized resource, the food industry can develop innovative products that meet the growing demand for natural and healthful foods.

Keywords: Nipa Sap, Popsicle production, Sustainable food products, Nutritional analysis, Sensory evaluation, Stabilizers, Flavor enhancers

PGRC-208

Development of Mackarel Scad Fish Floss As Substitute For Meat Floss

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Abstract

Meat floss is a popular food product produced from shredded and seasoned meat that is used as a topping, filler, or snack in a variety of cuisines. While pork, chicken, and beef flosses are popular, the growing demand for alternate, healthier protein sources has prompted the exploration of additional possibilities. Fish, particularly mackerel scad, is high in protein, omega-3 fatty acids, and vital minerals, making it an ideal choice for meat floss manufacture. Furthermore, using mackerel scad, a commonly available but generally underutilized fish, can help to promote sustainable seafood consumption and assist local fishing communities. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the development of mackerel scad fish floss as a nutritional, cost-effective, and sustainable alternative to traditional meat floss. The objectives of the study are to develop a fish floss product using mackerel scad as a substitute for traditional meat floss. To evaluate the sensory characteristics, nutritional content, and shelf life of mackerel scad fish floss. To compare the consumer acceptability of mackerel scad fish floss with that of traditional meat floss and to analyze the implications of mackerel scad fish floss production on nutrition, cost, and sustainability. The study takes a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study is divided into three phases. The first is Raw Material Selection and Preparation, in which Mackerel scad (Decapterus spp.) was chosen as the principal raw material. Fresh mackerel scad were obtained from local fish shops, cleaned, and filleted to remove bones and skin. The fillets were then steamed for 20 minutes to ensure that they were completely done. Second, the steamed fish fillets were shredded with a fork to replicate the texture of traditional meat floss. Sugar, salt, soy sauce, garlic, and cooking oil were all mixed together to make the spice. In a nonstick pan over low heat, stir fry the shredded fish with the seasoning combination. The shredded fish was then stir-fried with the seasoning mixture in a non-stick pan over low heat. The mixture was continuously stirred to prevent burning and ensure even drying. The process continued until the mixture achieved a dry, fluffy texture typical of floss. The finished fish floss was allowed to cool before packaging. Third, Sensory Evaluation, a sensory evaluation panel consisting of 50 participants was recruited to assess the appearance, texture, taste, aroma, and overall acceptability of the mackerel scad fish floss. A 9-point hedonic scale was employed, ranging from "dislike extremely" to "like extremely. Fourth, Nutritional Analysis, the nutritional content of the mackerel scad fish floss was determined through laboratory analysis, focusing on parameters such as protein content, fat content, carbohydrate content, and omega-3 fatty acid levels. Fifth, Shelf-Life Study, the fish floss was packaged in vacuum-sealed containers and stored at room temperature to assess its shelf life. Microbial growth and sensory qualities were monitored over a four-week period to determine product stability and safety. And sixth, Consumer Acceptability Comparison, A comparative study was conducted between the mackerel scad fish floss and a commercial meat floss product. A separate group of 50 participants was asked to evaluate both products based on taste, texture, and overall preference using a paired preference test. The findings show that the sensory evaluation of mackerel scad fish floss, using a 9-point hedonic scale, yielded generally positive results. The participants scored the flavor, scent, and general acceptability as 7 (like moderately) to 8 (like very lot), indicating that the product was well received. Many participants commented on the delightfully savory flavor and texture, which were similar to typical pork floss. However, the average scent score was slightly lower, about 6, due to several individuals reporting a mild fishy aftertaste. This shows that adjusting the seasoning blend could increase the product's sensory appeal even further. The nutritional study of fish floss

revealed that it is high in protein and contains considerable amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, both of which are good for heart health. In comparison to typical meat floss, mackerel scad fish floss included less fat and more important nutrients. This nutritional profile was highlighted during the sensory evaluation, when participants were informed about the health benefits, which influenced their ratings and raised the overall acceptance levels. According to the shelf-life study, mackerel scad fish floss can last up to four weeks in vacuum-sealed packaging at room temperature. Throughout the trial, sensory evaluation scores for taste, scent, and texture remained quite stable, ranging from 6 (somewhat) to 8 (very lot). The microbial study revealed no substantial growth of spoilage organisms, indicating that the drying process was successful in preserving the product's quality. The high sensory scores throughout the storage period highlight the fish floss's potential marketability as a shelf-stable food product. In the comparison research, where mackerel scad fish floss was scored against regular meat floss on a 9-point hedonic scale, 62% of individuals preferred the fish floss. It obtained higher ratings for flavor (average score: 7.5) and nutritional value, as participants valued its distinct flavor and health benefits. A minority (38%) gave higher grades to traditional beef floss, citing a preference for its more recognizable flavor profile. This preference divergence implies that, while mackerel scad fish floss is popular, some consumers may prefer classic meat floss flavors. To summarize, the development of mackerel scad fish floss as a replacement for traditional meat floss is a promising breakthrough in the food business. The product provides a nutritional alternative with a high protein content and valuable omega-3 fatty acids, meeting the needs of consumers looking for better and more sustainable food options. Sensory evaluation and customer acceptability studies revealed that the fish floss is well-received, while seasoning modifications could improve its appeal even more. The manufacture of mackerel scad fish floss has various consequences for nutrition, economics, and sustainability. First, by providing a high-protein, low-fat alternative to traditional meat floss, mackerel scad fish floss can help to maintain a healthy diet. Its omega-3 content is especially beneficial for individuals aiming to improve heart health and lower their risk of chronic ailments. Second, mackerel scad is generally less expensive than meat, making fish floss an economical choice for both customers and producers. Using an underutilized fish species also helps to diversify protein sources on the market. Third, using mackerel scad, a fish species with a lesser ecological impact than other seafood, is consistent with the principles of sustainable fishing. This strategy not only relieves pressure on overexploited fish stocks, but also supports local fishing communities. More research is needed to investigate other seasoning blends and cooking methods to reduce the fishy aftertaste reported by certain individuals. Furthermore, broadening the shelf-life study to incorporate other packing materials and storage circumstances may improve the product's marketability. Overall, mackerel scad fish floss is a healthy, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional meat floss, with the ability to suit the dietary needs of a health-conscious consumer base.

Keywords: Meat Floss, Fish Floss, Mackarel Scad, Sensory Characteristics,Consumer Acceptability, 9 point hedonic Scale

PGRC-209

Development Of Indigenous Vegetables: Baeg, Sigarilyas (Gabey), and Bataw–BSB Ice Cream

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Abstract

Vegetables are an essential part of a balanced diet due to their abundance of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients. Despite their benefits, consumption of vegetables is often low, particularly among children and adolescents, due to their texture, taste, or appearance. Indigenous vegetables such as Baeg (Winged Bean), Sigarilyas (Gabey), and Bataw (Hyacinth Bean) are nutrient-dense and easily cultivated in local agricultural settings. By incorporating these vegetables into a universally loved dessert, ice cream, this study aims to develop a nutritious yet palatable food product that promotes vegetable intake. The concept of vegetable-based ice cream is relatively novel, especially using indigenous vegetables. This research seeks to bridge the gap between healthful eating and consumer preferences, offering an alternative method to consume these nutrient-rich vegetables. Additionally, the product could support local farmers and contribute to the promotion of indigenous vegetables within the community The primary objectives of this study are: First, to formulate ice cream using indigenous vegetables (Baeg, Sigarilyas, and Bataw). Second, to evaluate the nutritional content of the formulated ice cream. Third, to assess the sensory qualities (taste, texture, aroma, and appearance) of the ice cream using a 9-point hedonic scale. Fourth, to determine consumer acceptance of the vegetable-based ice cream. Fifth, to explore the potential implications of using indigenous vegetables in mainstream food products. This research employed an experimental design for product development and a descriptive approach for sensory and market evaluation. The study involved the creation of an ice cream base using pureed indigenous vegetables. Fresh Baeg, Sigarilyas, and Bataw were sourced from local markets, washed, peeled, and blanched to reduce bitterness and retain nutrients. These vegetables were then blended into a smooth puree. Three different formulations of ice cream were prepared, each containing varying proportions of the vegetable puree mixed with the standard ice cream base ingredients (milk, cream, sugar, and stabilizers). Each ice cream formulation underwent nutritional analysis to determine its macronutrient (carbohydrates, proteins, fats) and micronutrient (vitamins, minerals) content. The results were compared to conventional ice cream products to evaluate the potential health benefits of the vegetable-based versions. A panel of 100 participants, including students, faculty, and community members, conducted the sensory evaluation. The participants rated the ice cream on a 9-point hedonic scale, where 1 indicated "dislike extremely," 5 was "neither like nor dislike," and 9 represented "like extremely." The attributes assessed included taste, texture, aroma, and overall acceptability. Following the sensory evaluation, a survey was distributed to 100 potential consumers to gauge market acceptability. The survey addressed participants' perceptions of vegetable-based ice cream, their willingness to purchase, and the price point they deemed reasonable. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the hedonic scale scores, with mean and standard deviation calculated for each sensory attribute. One-way ANOVA was performed to identify significant differences in preference among the three ice cream formulations. The vegetable-based ice creams demonstrated higher fiber, vitamin (particularly A, C, and folate), and mineral (calcium, iron, and potassium) content compared to conventional ice cream. They also contained lower fat levels due to the partial substitution of cream with vegetable puree. These findings highlight the ice cream's potential as a healthier dessert option. The sensory evaluation revealed that the formulation with a moderate amount of vegetable puree (Formulation B) received the highest scores across all sensory attributes. The mean scores on the

9-point hedonic scale were: Taste: 7.4 ("like moderately"), Texture: 7.1 ("like moderately"), Aroma: 6.8 ("like slightly"), Overall Acceptability: 7.2 ("like moderately"). Formulations with higher vegetable puree content (Formulation C) scored lower, particularly in taste (5.8, "neither like nor dislike") and texture (5.5, "neither like nor dislike"), indicating that an excessive vegetable flavor negatively impacted consumer preferences. The participants' feedback suggested that the key to acceptability was achieving a balance where the vegetable taste was subtle and complemented the sweetness of the ice cream. The market survey showed that 72% of respondents were willing to try the vegetable-based ice cream, with curiosity and perceived health benefits being the main drivers of interest. Approximately 65% of respondents expressed a willingness to pay between 50-70 PHP per serving, suggesting a viable market price point. The one-way ANOVA confirmed significant differences (p < 0.05) in the sensory attributes between the formulations, with Formulation B outperforming the others. This suggests that a balanced use of vegetable puree is critical to achieving desirable sensory qualities in vegetable-based ice cream. The development of ice cream using indigenous vegetables like Baeg, Sigarilyas, and Bataw has proven feasible and potentially beneficial for promoting vegetable intake in a novel and enjoyable form. Among the formulations, the ice cream with a moderate amount of vegetable puree (Formulation B) was most preferred, indicating that the integration of these vegetables can enhance nutritional value without compromising consumer acceptability. The study demonstrated that indigenous vegetable-based ice cream is not only nutritious but can also be well-received if properly balanced in flavor and texture. The positive market feedback suggests that there is a potential niche for such innovative products, particularly for health-conscious consumers seeking alternatives to conventional desserts. First, Health Promotion: Indigenous vegetable ice cream can serve as a nutrient-rich alternative to regular ice cream, thereby contributing to improved dietary habits, especially among individuals who typically avoid vegetables. Second, Food Product Innovation: This research showcases the potential of using traditional vegetables in modern food products, expanding the application of indigenous crops beyond their conventional use. Third, Agricultural Benefits: The increased demand for indigenous vegetables resulting from successful commercialization of such ice cream could support local farmers and stimulate agricultural growth in the region. Fourth, Further Research: Future research may focus on exploring other vegetable varieties, optimizing storage conditions, and developing marketing strategies to enhance consumer education and product adoption. In conclusion, the integration of indigenous vegetables into ice cream opens up new possibilities for food innovation, health promotion, and economic development. With appropriate product formulation and marketing, vegetable-based ice cream could become a unique, health-oriented choice in the dessert market.

Keywords: Indigenous Vegetables, BSB Ice Crean, 9 point Hedonic Scale, Sensory Evaluation, Consumer Acceptability, Taste

PGRC-210

The Transformation of Food Habits in Tepus, Gunungkidul, Indonesia

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Abstract

Food habits are affected by transformation of social structures and value systems. In Indonesia, the process was forced through the adoption of centralized governmental systems during the Soeharto regime, a second president. Women participation in the workforce makes them not considered homemakers but also actively participate as economic providers (Lan, 2015). But, the slogan "peran ganda" still embodies gender roles in society. The government program under Guidelines of development planning (GBHN) from 1978 and 1983 still continued to promote modern women as women-mother-wife and worker. There was a demand of middle-class women to balance workload and home and in 1950s crisis economic caused only women in middle-class who have housemaid. In early 1980, women started to try to separate work and housework through the existence of the kitchen. The demand of women participation in workforces made middle-class women start to have two kitchens and having domestic servants while in rural areas, the reconstruction of women materialized by making the concept of Mother a new space for arranging family, including during financial crises. Both types of survival, in fact, still put women to bear domestic burdens including childcare and providing financial support.

In Gunungkidul, Tepus district in Yogyakarta Special Region, the implementation of "Village Tourism" program is concomitant with the opening of the Trans-Java Expressway in early 2010s. The program encourages a local food promotion that makes restaurants escalate. It contributed to a switch from agricultural jobs to ones in connection with tourism activities. Tourism has provided opportunities for low-wages workers who earn a living as farmers to have their own domestic industries. This contributed to a rapid transformation of social organization close to "compressed modernity" in Asian countries (Kyung-Sup, 2006). However, social construction of gender in Javanese community and strong gender ideology of "ibuism" continues to promote a model of the ideal woman dedicated to serving her husband and caring for the next generation.

In addition, women's involvement in the workforce influences social organization of family life, mainly part of domestic work related to food; shopping, preparing, cooking, organizing of meals, and cleaning become less to no activity. Activities outside home make eating increase eating out; supported by booming restaurants, delivery orders, and food streets from tourism development. According to Neilsen's report (2016), Indonesians chose to eat out in street food stalls (44%) and during dinner time. The trend is changing after around 2014-2015 since online platforms, such as Grab and Go Jek started their operation to provide delivery orders or online orders. Commensal meals become less or no obligation and more informalized. The phenomenon described in different parts of the world (Gronow & Holm, 2019; Holm et al., 2016; Poulain et al., 2022; Sen & Stiven, 1998; Warde et al., 2007) takes place also in Indonesia (Nope-Williams, 2019) as shown by the Indonesia Food Barometer (IFB) (Khusun et al., 2022). In some cases, grandmothers' roles span within multi-generational households and reflect gendered division of foodwork. Yet, female remains carry the primary domain for food-related domestic work. Given the above transformation in Tepus district, this research aims at the consequences of modernization on food habits from dual perspectives which are strategies for organizing food-related work and gender inequality.

Modernization that often leads to individualization and reflexivity (Beck et al., 1994) makes transformation of social structure and value system in food habits not go accordingly (Spaargaren et al., 2012). The forms and nature of jobs, household structures, predetermine the timing and

access to resources. Values influence food choice and patterns of preparation and consumption. The whole constitutes the food social space (Poulain, 2017). The entry by gender distribution of the roles related to the domestic food activity allows to study interactions between action systems and values systems. It makes visible movements between public and private sphere (Stiven, 2019) between domestic and official work and gender inequality as consequences. It also makes it possible to study the effects of individualization, transformation of family structure and relation between generations.

This whole study was collected in the context of research on food habits during a three-month survey on observation between May and July 2024 with employs a mixed method with sequential explanatory design. Yet, this paper only focused on the quantitative method. The survey guideline is derived from Indonesia Food Barometer (IFB) (Khusun et al., 2022) which adapted from the situation in South East Asia (Poulain et al., 2014) and complement with observation to explore inhabitants' food-related activity. This research carried out survey with 399 individuals over the ages of 15 – 65 years old in 14 villages in Tepus, Gunungkidul. It collects food practices and norms; domestic activities (purchasing, food production), structures of food days and meals as well as social representations associated with food practices. Some questions about social gender roles and household composition added to those already existing. The data analyzed with SPSS.

The Tepus' primary location for eating remained the home and cooked by female. Breakfast and dinner are times where they will eat together with family but they preferred not talk each other. Eat out is not common for the Tepus although tourism increased their social-economic but females were likely to do it. The norm of the number of meals per day was dominated by the "three meals per day" pattern while the number of snacks/ in between food per day was two times. While the modernization insignificantly showing changes, however the signs of individualization and informalization could be detected. In addition, modernization gave a new space for women to have choices in terms of eating locations.

The understanding of modernization consequences on food habits to the construction of gender roles contribute to theoretical issues, as it contributes to the debate on food modernization. Second, this research gives empirical contribution to talk about the movement of gender ideology in Indonesia.

Keywords: food habits, food modernization, food-related work, gender

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PGRC-211

Feeding The Future of The Modernizing Nation: Kindergarten Gatekeepers in The Food Socialisation of Children Aged 3-6 Years in Changsha City, China

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Abstract

According to data from the World Obesity Federation, the number of obese children in China has reached 39 million, topping the world list. The Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents (2022) show that the overweight and obesity rate among Chinese children under 6 years old reaches 10.4%. By 2030, the number of obese children in China is expected to exceed 62 million. In China, people tend to think that a chubby baby is a sign of health. Especially in times of poverty, chubby baby was a difficult dream to achieve. But now that the dire consequences of childhood obesity are regularly reported in the news, the idea that chubby baby represent good health has been shaken. In medium and large cities in China, specialized summer camps for children to lose weight are organised, even though the actual effect of previous summer camps for children is very limited. Thus, there is an increasing focus on the public health of children in China that leads to a focus on children's food. However, so far these initiatives have not reversed the increasing prevalence of obesity in Chinese children in children. More globally, an unprecedented level of importance on medical sciences in everyday life is observed, leading to a medicalization of food and eating habits. The Dietary Guidelines for Chinese School-age Children (2022), the Regulations on the Working Regulations for Kindergartens, the Measures for the Management of Health Care in Nursery Schools in Hunan Province are already being implemented, but obesity rates remain high.

In China, almost all children between the ages of 3 and 6 attend kindergartens, where they have their daily lunch. This study is grounded on the gatekeeper theory, which was proposed by Lewin (1943), and transition theories. The core of the gatekeeper theory is how food is routed to the table through pathways controlled by gatekeepers. The kindergarten food system is mainly controlled by child-care-workers, chefs, and food designers, who function as layers of control over the kindergarten food channel. Models of the transition are hermeneutic and posits that the energy intake is primarily determined by dietary patterns, which are determined by socio cultural norms and values (Poulain, 2009, 2021). Socio-cultural and value changes are slower than the development of production techniques and technology. Obesity arises from two gaps at this point of time, one between energy needs and energy intake, and the other between culture and systems of action. Thus, the concepts of cultural lag and cultural factors in transition theory are playing a key role in this study.

This study aims to (1) identify the gap between the social norms of gatekeepers and the actual behaviours of kindergarten children's diets for lunchtime; (2) explore the influence of children's body shape on the food social norms and actual behaviours of kindergarten food helpers during the transition from food transition to obesity transition and (3) explore the barriers of the kindergarten food gatekeepers in implementing all levels of government on policies health.

This on-going study uses a qualitative research approach to study kindergartens in Changsha City, Hunan Province, China. The classification and size of kindergartens in Changsha was the main consideration for the selection of the study sample, leading to the selection of 12 kindergartens, inclusive of public kindergartens, model kindergartens, ordinary kindergarten, kindergartens in inner-city districts and out-of-city districts. The gatekeepers included in the study, including caregivers, cooks and food designers. The structure of kindergarten children's lunches is used as the main characteristic analyzed on based on the data collected from diet photographs and

face-to-face interviews. The Diet photograph method was primarily proposed to reduce the error of the "24h dietary recall" and adjusted to the context of this study the kindergarten food was captured twice times without consideration for the calorie and nutrient content. The first photograph focuses on the riginal visual state of dish in the tableware. while the second one separates the various food ingredients onto different parts of the plate as far as possible, mainly to reflect the structure and quantity of the food. Both photographs were captured by undergraduate students who are child-care-work internship in kindergartens the day before the interview. Besides providing researcher with data pertaining the actual diet structure and quantity of kindergarten food, photographs have been used during the interview to probe reflexivity of the gatekeepers on their behaviours. Additionally, the interviewees were asked to evaluate different children's body images to collect related social norms.

Some preliminary research results have been obtained in this study. In different kindergartens, food gatekeepers have different views on the nutritional imbalances that can arise from children leaving part of a meal on the table and the measures to deal with them. Nearly half of the gatekeepers chose to "correct" children's eating habits. And more than a quarter of the gatekeepers choose to replace dishes that children do not like with other dishes with similar nutritional content. In terms of meal frequency, more than one-third of the gatekeepers believe that the current meal frequency of three meals and two snacks in kindergartens is not reasonable. This means that they believe that children should have less frequent meals every day, while it has become a consensus among respondents that children should have another meal (or snack) after going home in the evening. In terms of food structure, more than half of the gatekeepers believe that lunch for kindergarten children should consist of a meat dish, a vegetarian dish, a bowl of soup and a staple food. In terms of children's body image, more than 90% gatekeepers claimed that the proportion of children in their kindergartens who looked obese was less than 5% or almost none, which is lower than the obesity rate indicated by the officially reported BMI (Body Mass Index) of children in kindergartens.

In terms of knowledge contributions, this study will be based on gatekeeper theory and will examine kindergarten children's food and kindergarten children's eating habits in the context of demographic transition, nutritional transition and food transition. This research conclusion explain part of the cause of childhood obesity from a theoretical level, that is, the gap between the cultural lag of food gatekeepers for children's diet and children's energy requirement. In dining environments such as kindergartens where gatekeepers control food channels, Transition Theory will gain a more important status. From a methodological standpoint, this study is expected to contribute to the enhanced data collection methods for norms and practices based on Diet Photograph method by visual sociology. In terms of contribution to the society, the study is expected to provide targeted recommendations for continuing education of food gatekeepers that could help bridging the gap between their norms and behaviours and improve the effectiveness of their work. The results are also expected to be of guidance for policies health makers, and thus may benefit Chinese children to have a healthy and yet, more feasible diet.

Keywords: Early childhood nutrition; Kindergarten catering; Gatekeeper Theory; Transition Theory; Food patterns

PGRC-212

Exploring The Role of Non-Malaysian YouTubers in Shaping Malaysian Culinary Identity: A Qualitative Content Analysis

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Abstract

The intersection of food, culture, and media has gained increasing attention in recent years, with digital platforms such as YouTube playing a significant role in the way food is represented and consumed by global audiences. Food tourism, in particular, has flourished in this digital age, where travellers document and share their culinary experiences online. These videos often reach a wide audience and shape how viewers understand the local food culture of the destinations being featured. Malaysia, a country known for its diverse food culture, offers a unique case study for examining how street food is represented through digital media, especially by non-Malaysian content creators.

The popularity of Malaysian street food among international tourists is well-documented, and YouTube has emerged as a dominant platform for sharing these experiences. Non-Malaysians who travel to Malaysia frequently use YouTube to showcase their food adventures, often framing these encounters as cultural explorations. These videos contribute to how Malaysian culinary identity is constructed in the global imagination. This study aims to explore how such YouTube videos shape perceptions of Malaysia's food culture, with a particular focus on non-Malaysians' portrayals of Malaysian street food. As the study is ongoing, the findings presented are preliminary and serve as an initial step in understanding how Malaysian culinary identity is represented through the lens of external observers.

Significance of the Study

The role of media in shaping cultural identity is a significant area of study in contemporary social sciences. Media representations, whether intentional or not, influence how cultures are perceived, both locally and globally. In the case of Malaysian street food, these representations are essential because they affect tourism, international perceptions, and even local pride in culinary heritage. Food is not just nourishment; it is a powerful cultural symbol. The way food is represented in media reflects broader narratives about national identity, cultural authenticity, and global interconnectedness.

The study also addresses a gap in existing research. While there is substantial work on food tourism, few studies focus specifically on the role of user-generated content, such as YouTube videos, in shaping culinary identity. Furthermore, there is limited research that addresses how non-locals portray local food cultures, particularly in the Malaysian context. This research contributes to a broader understanding of how national and culinary identities are mediated through digital platforms, offering insights into the power dynamics between content creators and the cultures they represent.

Research Objectives

The research is structured around two primary objectives:

1. To identify the prevalent characteristics of YouTube videos produced by non-Malaysians that feature Malaysian street food.
2. To analyse the ways in which these videos portray Malaysian culinary identity and to examine how these portrayals contribute to shaping global perceptions of Malaysia's cuisine.

By answering these research questions, the study aims to uncover the layers of representation that non-Malaysian YouTubers apply to Malaysian street food, shedding light on the broader implications for the country's cultural and national identity in a globalized world.

Methodology

This ongoing study employs a qualitative content analysis to examine the representation of Malaysian culinary identity in YouTube videos. The methodology is rooted in naturalistic inquiry, which allows for a deeper understanding of the phenomena as they occur in their natural setting—here, the digital space of YouTube. This approach is particularly useful for analysing the subjective portrayals and representations constructed by video creators.

A purposive sample of 20 YouTube videos was selected for analysis. The criteria for selection included videos produced by non-Malaysian YouTubers with a focus on Malaysian street food, a minimum of 100,000 views, and no prior personal or cultural connection to Malaysia. The selected videos represent a variety of content creators, ranging from professional food vloggers to casual travellers documenting their experiences. The diversity of the sample ensures a broad representation of perspectives and presentation styles.

The analysis is being conducted in two phases. The first phase involves a descriptive analysis of each video, focusing on elements such as production quality, the types of food featured, the settings in which the food is consumed, and the narrative structure of the videos. This phase also examines the role of visual elements, such as camera angles, editing techniques, and the use of close-up shots to enhance the sensory appeal of the food.

The second phase involves thematic analysis, where recurring themes, patterns, and visual motifs are coded and categorized. This coding process helps to identify common narrative techniques used by the content creators, as well as the cultural messages embedded in their portrayals of Malaysian street food. Thematic analysis also allows for the identification of deeper symbolic meanings, such as how concepts of authenticity, exoticism, and community are constructed and conveyed through the videos. The findings presented in this abstract are preliminary and will continue to evolve as more data is analysed.

Preliminary Findings

Initial findings suggest that non-Malaysian YouTubers place significant emphasis on the sensory and experiential aspects of Malaysian street food. Close-up shots of food preparation, paired with detailed descriptions of flavours and textures, are a common feature in many videos. These portrayals are often framed as personal adventures, with content creators positioning themselves as cultural explorers uncovering the hidden gems of Malaysia's street food scene. This framing contributes to the construction of Malaysian food as a sensory experience and an exotic culinary destination for foreign tourists.

The notion of authenticity also emerges as a central theme in many videos. Content creators often seek out "authentic" food experiences, presenting their encounters with local vendors and traditional dishes as markers of cultural legitimacy. However, this pursuit of authenticity is often filtered through a Western-centric lens, where the creators' preconceived notions of what constitutes "real" Malaysian food shape their narratives. This results in a selective portrayal of Malaysian street food that may oversimplify or exoticize the country's culinary diversity.

Another important theme is the focus on community. Many YouTubers highlight their interactions with local vendors and diners, emphasizing the communal nature of street food culture in Malaysia. These interactions are frequently presented as heartwarming moments of cultural exchange, further reinforcing the idea of food as a bridge between cultures. However, these portrayals also raise questions about the power dynamics at play, as non-Malaysians are positioned as cultural interpreters who shape global perceptions of Malaysian identity.

Discussion

The preliminary findings suggest that non-Malaysian YouTubers contribute significantly to the global representation of Malaysia's food culture, yet their portrayals often emphasize the sensory and entertainment aspects of the food over its cultural and historical significance. The focus on authenticity, as interpreted by outsiders, can lead to an oversimplified and exoticized view of Malaysian culinary identity. While these videos play a crucial role in promoting Malaysia as a food tourism destination, they also highlight the potential for misrepresentation and the reinforcement of Western-centric narratives about non-Western cultures.

As the study progresses, it will explore these themes in greater depth, particularly in relation to how these portrayals shape audience perceptions of Malaysia's food culture. The study will also examine the potential consequences of these portrayals for Malaysia's national identity, both within the country and in the global sphere.

Conclusion

This ongoing study provides valuable insights into how Malaysian culinary identity is constructed and represented in digital media by non-Malaysians. The preliminary findings highlight the ways in which YouTube videos contribute to shaping global perceptions of Malaysia's food culture, particularly through the themes of authenticity, exoticism, and community. As the research continues, the analysis will delve deeper into the cultural implications of these portrayals and the potential for alternative narratives to emerge.

Future research could expand this inquiry by examining content produced by Malaysian YouTubers, allowing for a comparative analysis of local versus foreign portrayals of Malaysian food culture. Additionally, audience reception studies could be conducted to understand how these videos influence viewers' perceptions and expectations of Malaysia as a food tourism destination. Ultimately, this research contributes to broader discussions about the intersection of food, media, and identity in the digital age.

Keywords: Malaysian culinary identity, YouTube, food tourism, cultural representation, qualitative content analysis

PGRC-213

Malunggay-Infused Tilapia Longganisa: A Culinary Research Study and Consumer Acceptability

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Abstract

This study assesses consumer sensory preferences and acceptability of Malunggay Tilapia longganisa, a unique fish-based sausage, using a nine-point Likert scale. Taste, acceptability, color, scent, and texture are the primary sensory qualities under consideration. Fish-based products are gaining appeal as healthier alternatives to traditional meats. Malunggay Tilapia longganisa, a Filipino sausage prepared from ground tilapia, is a novel twist on longganisa, providing a more sustainable and potentially heart-healthy option. The addition of malunggay (Moringa oleifera) to traditional tilapia longanisa provides a novel way to improve the nutritional profile of a beloved Filipino dish. Malunggay is known for its high nutrient richness, containing critical vitamins A, C, and E, as well as vital minerals like calcium and iron and potent antioxidants. Integrating this incredibly nutritious herb into the longanisa not only enhances its health advantages but also makes it a healthier alternative for health-conscious consumers looking to improve their dietary intake without sacrificing flavor. The numerous health benefits of malunggay highlight its importance as a culinary innovation. Its ability to boost immune function, reduce inflammation, and correct nutritional deficiencies corresponds to an increasing consumer interest in functional foods that promote general health. By integrating malunggay into tilapia longanisa, the meal not only obtains these nutritional benefits but also participates in the wellness movement, making it a viable option for today's health-conscious market. The study adds to the culinary arts by combining a traditional Filipino dish with a modern, health-focused touch. Reimagining classic tilapia longanisa through the lens of nutritional enhancement creates a novel product that responds to changing consumer desires for healthier options. This method not only broadens the culinary scene, but it also provides new, health-conscious variations on established dishes, enriching the dining experience with both creativity and nutrition. Balancing consumer tastes while increasing the nutritional content of longanisa is critical to the success of this new product. The study's goal is to keep the genuine taste that identifies classic longanisa while incorporating the health advantages of malunggay. The goal is to create a product that retains the beloved flavors of traditional longanisa while appealing to a large audience interested in healthy eating options, ensuring widespread acceptance and satisfaction. The study also underlines the necessity of cultural preservation while modifying traditional foods to fit new nutritional trends. By preserving the traditional character of Tilapia longanisa, the study indicates that Filipino culinary heritage can be maintained and kept while evolving to meet modern health requirements. This commitment ensures that the meal stays an authentic depiction of Filipino cuisine, successfully combining innovation with traditional purity. The study involved 100 from diverse group of respondents to ensure comprehensive insights and feedback. Culinary experts and chefs will offer technical guidance on integrating malunggay into tilapia longganisa,. A sensory evaluation panel will conduct taste tests to assess the dish's palatability and sensory attributes. Additionally, potential consumers will provide feedback on their preferences and acceptance of the malunggay-infused variant. Ensuring demographic diversity among participants—considering factors like age, gender, cultural background, and culinary preferences—will help capture a wide range of perspectives and enhance the study's overall relevance and applicability. The sensory evaluation was based on a nine-point Likert scale where: 1 = Dislike extremely 2 = Dislike very much 3 = Dislike moderately 4 = Dislike slightly 5 = Neither like nor dislike 6 = Like slightly 7 = Like moderately 8 = Like very much 9 = Like extremely. The mean ratings for each sensory attribute of Tilapia

Longganisa (n=50) are Taste 7.5, Acceptability 7.8, Color 6.9, Aroma 7.2, and Texture 7.6. The results indicate a generally favorable response to Malunggay Tilapia Longganisa. Acceptability had the highest rating (7), closely followed by texture (7.6) and flavor (7.5). Aroma obtained a relatively good score of 7.2, while color received the lowest score of 6.9, indicating that the product's appearance may require modification to increase customer appeal. The overall positive ratings for acceptability (7), taste (7.5), and texture (7.6) indicate that Tilapia Longganisa is well-liked by customers. The comparatively low color score (6.9) could be attributed to the distinct appearance of fish-based sausages vs traditional pig longganisa, which may affect first visual appeal. Improving the color, potentially by altering the spices or cooking processes, may increase the product's overall appeal. Tilapia Longganisa is a healthy alternative to traditional pig longganisa, which often obtains higher ratings for aroma and color due to the inclusion of lipids and seasonings, while retaining much of the taste and texture. The significantly lower score for scent (7.2) may be owing to the softer smell of fish than pork, but it still falls. The sensory evaluation of Malunggay Tilapia Longganisa, which was conducted using a nine-point Likert scale, reveals that it is a promising and well-accepted alternative to traditional pig longganisa. The product achieved high scores for key aspects such as general acceptability, taste, and texture, proving its capacity to meet customer preferences while providing a healthier option. Despite great performance in most categories, the sausage's color might be improved to increase its attractiveness and consumer perception. These findings demonstrate the viability of fish-based sausages as a viable option in the growing market for healthier and more sustainable food options, as well as the product's ability to meet current dietary trends and consumer demands for nutritious, innovative alternatives to traditional meat products. The implications of this study are significant for both the food industry and consumer health trends. By demonstrating that Malunggay Tilapia Longganisa is a viable and well-accepted alternative to traditional pork longganisa, the study highlights the potential for fish-based sausages to meet the growing demand for healthier, more sustainable food options. The positive ratings for taste, acceptability, and texture affirm that this innovative product can satisfy consumer preferences while offering enhanced nutritional benefits through the inclusion of malunggay, a nutrient-dense herb. However, the study also reveals areas for improvement, particularly in the color of the product, which could affect consumer appeal. These findings not only provide a basis for further refinement and development of health-oriented food products but also underscore the importance of maintaining cultural authenticity while adapting traditional dishes to modern dietary needs. Ultimately, the study supports the broader trend of integrating functional ingredients into classic recipes, contributing to a more diverse and health-conscious culinary landscape.

Keywords: Consumer Preferences and Acceptability, MalunggayTilapia Longganisa, Fish Based Sausage, Sensory Evaluation, Nine Point Likert Scale

Media & Communication

PGRC-301

Leveraging Big Data in Decoding Malaysia's EV Market: Consumer Preferences and Communication Strategies

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Abstract

The global electric vehicle (EV) market is experiencing rapid growth, yet remains in its nascent stage. Despite concerted efforts by industry leaders such as Tesla, it will still take time for consumers to build trust in EV technology and convert their preferences towards EVs (Carlucci, Cira & J.Lanza, 2018). Although global demand for EVs continues to rise, 2024 data indicates that EVs constitute merely 16.8% of the global market, suggesting substantial potential for expansion (China Passenger Car Association, 2024). There persists a significant knowledge gap regarding effective communication strategies to stimulate consumer EV purchases (Wee Win Yeoh, 2023).

Malaysia's electric vehicle (EV) market surged in 2023, with sales reaching 38,055 units in 2023, a 69% increase from the previous year (MAA, 2024). This growth trajectory is consistent with the objectives outlined in the National Automotive Policy 2020, which aims to position Malaysia as a regional EV hub (MITI, 2020). This growth is mirrored in social media engagement, with EV-related discussions gaining traction on platforms like Twitter and Instagram (Adnan et al., 2017), showing the range, pricing, and charging infrastructure influences consumers' adoption decisions (Noor et al., 2023). Despite this progress, a gap remains in understanding consumer preferences and their implications for strategic communication within Malaysia's unique context. Sandhiya et al. (2020) and Si & Hichang (2014) emphasize media's crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions of product attributes. This study addresses this gap by analyzing 2024 registration data through a communication lens, focusing on color preferences, brand performance, and vehicle type distribution. The research objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze Malaysian EV market preferences using big data, focusing on color choices, vehicle types, and brand performance across social media and registration data.
2. To explore the potential implications of social media trends on EV market dynamics in Malaysia from existing literature and market data.
3. To formulate evidence-based, segment-specific communication strategies for the Malaysian EV market, optimizing messaging across media channels.

Based on the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), this research examines color preferences, vehicle types, and brand performance as key factors influencing EV adoption in Malaysia. The study employs the SEMMA methodology to investigate the dynamics of the Malaysian EV market through a quantitative design. The dataset comprises 6,298 EV registrations from January to April 2024, extracted from a comprehensive database of 4,108,190 car licensing public data from the Department of Transport Malaysia (JPJ).

SPSS was utilized for statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, trend analysis, and cluster analysis.The SEMMA (Sample, Explore, Modify, Model, Assess) methodology guided the analytical process. It involved sampling the Malaysian EV dataset, conducting descriptive analyses and visual exploration of key variables, aggregating data and modifying trend variables, modeling consumer segments using K-means clustering, and assessing viable strategies for Malaysia's EV market development based on the findings.

The results of Malaysian EV market data from January to April 2024 revealed significant trends in consumer preferences and market dynamics. White and grey dominated color choices, comprising 67.49% of EV registrations. Vehicle type preferences showed a strong inclination towards sedans/hatchbacks (motokar) and SUVs (jip), accounting for 99.4% of registrations, with motokar leading at 69.6%. EV registrations fluctuated significantly, peaking in March (2,260 units) before declining in April (1,609 units). BYD and Tesla led the market with volatile registration numbers, while brands like BMW, Chery, and SMART showed more modest performance. Cluster analysis identified three distinct market segments: mainstream (79.5%), premium (14.7%), and niche (5.8%). ANOVA results confirmed manufacturer (F = 4182.025) and color (F = 3210.174) as primary differentiating factors, with vehicle type (F = 463.823) also significant.

The result of consumer preferences in color choices is consistent with social media trends, with neutral-colored EVs attracting 58% more engagement on Instagram and Twitter compared to vibrant colors (Wang et al., 2022). This prevalence of neutral colors in both registrations and social media discussions supports Aslam's (2006) findings on the psychology of color in marketing, associating neutral tones with sophistication and reliability. While these insights suggest that EV brands should prioritize showcasing neutral-colored vehicles in their social media campaigns, a growing interest in vibrant colors among younger demographics on platforms like TikTok (Li et al., 2023) indicates brands targeting younger, more image-conscious consumers might benefit from featuring bold colors in their media strategies, potentially creating content and increasing brand visibility.

The discrepancy between online engagement favoring SUVs and actual purchases leaning towards sedans highlights the need for platform-specific communication strategies. Zhang (2022) found that emotional appeals on visually-oriented platforms like Instagram generated 37% higher engagement for luxury vehicles, while rational appeals on text-based platforms like Twitter increased purchase intent for economy cars by 28%. These findings inform tailored approaches: visually striking SUV content on Instagram and Pinterest to boost engagement, and emphasis on sedan practicality on Facebook and Twitter to align with market preferences. Moreover, each market segment demonstrated unique responses to communication strategies. The mainstream segment showed high responsiveness to messaging emphasizing practicality and environmental benefits on Facebook and Twitter (Lee et al., 2022). The premium segment engaged most with innovation-focused content on Instagram (Kim & Park, 2023), while the niche segment responded best to personalized, narrative-based communication on TikTok (Tan et al., 2024). These insights underscore the importance of multi-channel, segment-specific strategies in promoting EV adoption across Malaysia's diverse market, according to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and narrative processing theory (Escalas, 2004) in consumer behavior.

This study employs SEMMA methodology to investigate Malaysia's EV market dynamics, aligning with Integrated Marketing Communications to highlight factors shaping adoption patterns. Findings reveal significant trends in consumer preferences, emphasizing the need for tailored messaging across distinct market segments. Neutral colors and compact vehicles dominate consumer choices, while brand positioning significantly impacts adoption rates. The research stresses the importance of culturally nuanced communication strategies: For mainstream segments, leveraging Facebook and Twitter with content emphasizing practicality proves effective, while Instagram campaigns highlighting innovation resonate with premium segments. Emerging brands benefit from narrative-based approaches on platforms like TikTok. These findings contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application in EV marketing. However, the study's four-month timeframe limits its ability to capture long-term trends. Future research should explore longitudinal data, incorporate qualitative methods, and investigate cross-cultural comparisons of communication effectiveness.

Keywords: Electric Vehicles, Consumer Preferences, Social Media Engagement, Strategic Communication, Malaysian Market

PGRC-302

Leveraging Big Data Analytics To Assess The Influence Of Online Consumer Sentiment On Chery Omoda 5 Sales In Malaysia

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Abstract

With the advancement of big data technology, the influence of online opinions on consumer behavior has become more significant. This study explores the impact of negative online opinions on the sales of Omoda 5 cars in the Malaysian market through big data analysis. By utilizing data mining, sentiment analysis, and market trend analysis, this paper reveals how negative opinions affect potential buyers' decisions and proposes corresponding strategies to help car manufacturers mitigate the impact of negative opinions.

Introduction

The Chery Omoda 5, an SUV celebrated for its advanced features and competitive pricing, has recently been at the center of significant scrutiny in Malaysia's dynamic automotive market. A pivotal event was the recall of 600 units in April 2024 due to potential axle issues, as reported by Paultan.org (Paul Tan's Automotive News, 2024). This recall and the ensuing negative coverage on various online platforms have highlighted the critical role of public sentiment in influencing consumer behavior. Utilizing big data techniques, this study aims to analyze the sales performance of the Chery Omoda 5 in Malaysia, correlating it with the frequency and intensity of negative reports. By systematically collecting and examining sales data alongside negative online mentions, the research seeks to elucidate the impact of adverse public sentiment on vehicle sales. The findings will offer valuable insights into how negative online opinions can detrimentally affect market performance, providing strategic guidance for automotive marketing and reputation management in Malaysia's competitive automotive industry.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the impact of negative online opinions on the sales of the Chery Omoda 5 in Malaysia: This includes understanding the extent to which negative public sentiment influences consumer purchasing decisions.
2. To analyze the temporal relationship between the frequency of negative online mentions and fluctuations in sales figures: The study seeks to determine whether spikes in negative sentiment correlate with significant drops in sales, thereby providing insights into the timing and severity of such impacts.
3. To propose actionable strategies for automotive manufacturers to mitigate the negative impact of adverse online opinions on sales: Based on the findings, the research will offer recommendations for improving brand reputation and maintaining market performance amidst negative online sentiment.

Methodology

This study employs a structured big data analytics process to examine the impact of negative online sentiment on Chery Omoda 5 sales in Malaysia. The data for this study was obtained from the January-June 2024 car licensing public data from the Department of Transport Malaysia (JPJ), which is about two hundred and fifty thousand entries, and these data were processed and analyzed using big data methods. The methodology is divided into six key phases:

Problem Understanding
The first phase involved defining the core problem: understanding how negative online sentiment affects Omoda 5 sales. Stakeholders collaborated to establish research objectives and specific questions.

Data Understanding
Data from social media, news platforms, forums, and sales records (January to June 2024) were collected and explored to identify patterns and trends relevant to consumer behavior.

Data Preparation
Data cleaning and transformation were performed to create a unified dataset, ready for analysis. This included handling missing data, normalizing formats, and applying feature engineering to enhance the dataset's predictive power.

Modeling
Machine learning models were applied to identify relationships between negative sentiment and sales performance. Various algorithms, including regression and classification, were tested and refined to maximize predictive accuracy.

Evaluation
The models were evaluated using metrics like accuracy and correlation coefficients to ensure they effectively addressed the research questions. Iterative feedback loops helped refine the models for better reliability.

Deployment
Insights from the models were implemented in strategic recommendations to mitigate the impact of negative sentiment on sales. The models were also integrated into monitoring systems for continuous tracking of public sentiment.
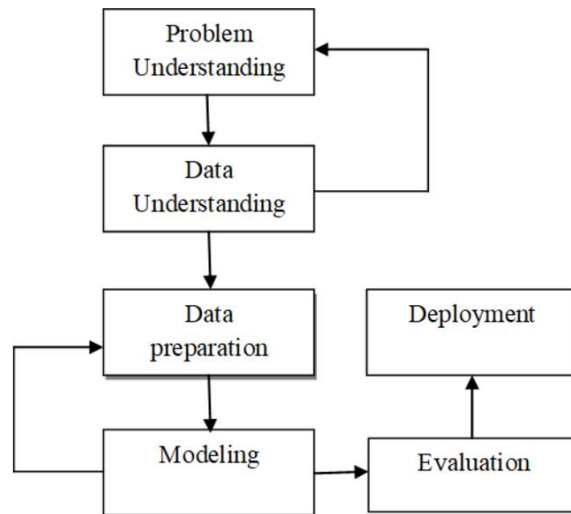
Figure 1. Research Methodology

Result

Distribution of Chery Omoda 5 Vehicles Among Chery Models (2024)
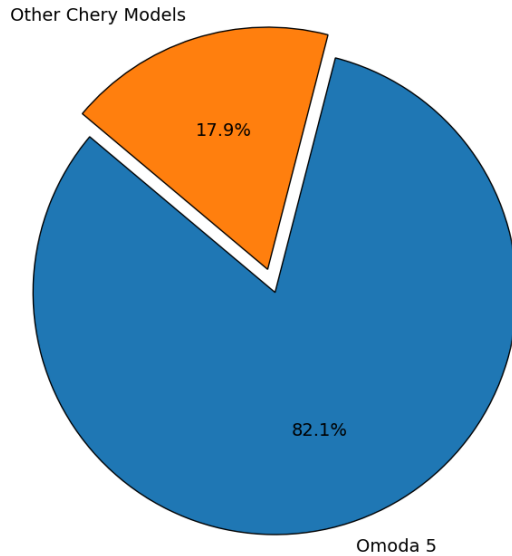
Figure 2. Distribution of Chery Omoda 5 Vehicles Among Chery Models

Figure 2 illustrates that in 2024, the Chery Omoda 5 dominates the brand's lineup, accounting for 82.1% of all Chery vehicles, while other models make up only 17.9% of the total distribution.
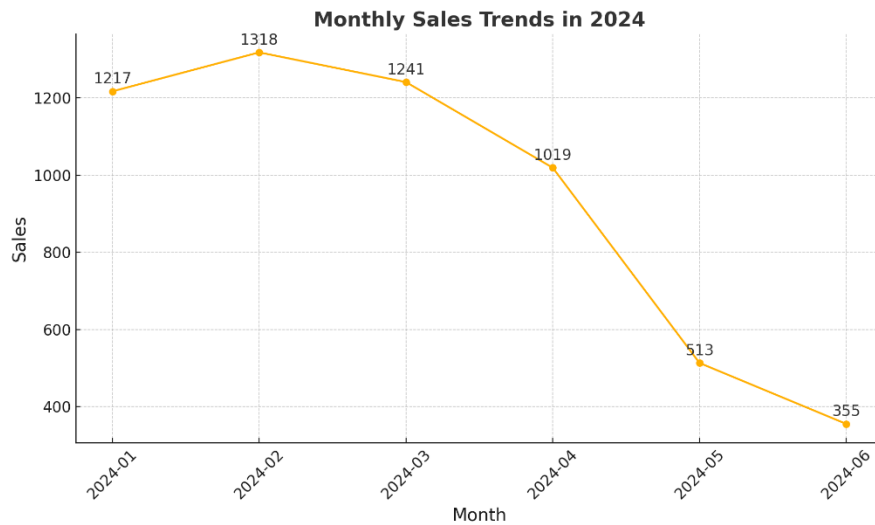

Figure 4. Monthly sales Trends in 2024

Figure 4 shows the monthly sales trends in 2024, with sales starting at 1,217 units in January, peaking at 1,318 units in February, and then steadily declining to 355 units by June.
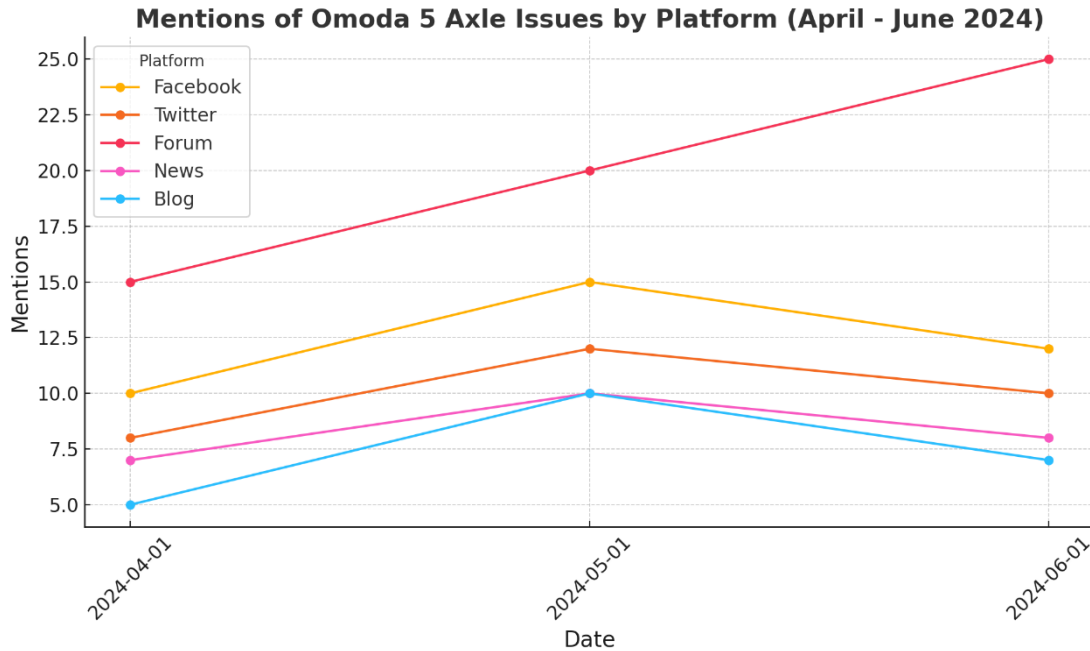
Figure 5. Omoda 5 axle issue exhibited a fluctuating trend

From April to June, discussions regarding the Omoda 5 axle issue exhibited a fluctuating trend across various social media and news platforms. On Facebook, mentions were notably higher in April and May, peaking at 18 on May 1 and 12 on April 25. Twitter experienced increased activity in May and June, with mentions peaking at 28 on May 30 and 25 on June 30. Forum discussions were generally minimal, with a peak of 15 on May 10. News platforms showed concentrated coverage in May and June, reaching peaks of 35 mentions on May 15 and 30 on June 15. Blog mentions remained relatively low, with the highest being 12 on May 20. Overall, the highest level of discourse occurred in May, especially on news platforms and Twitter, indicating a peak in public attention during this period. The consistently high engagement on Facebook and Twitter underscores the critical role of social media in the dissemination of information.
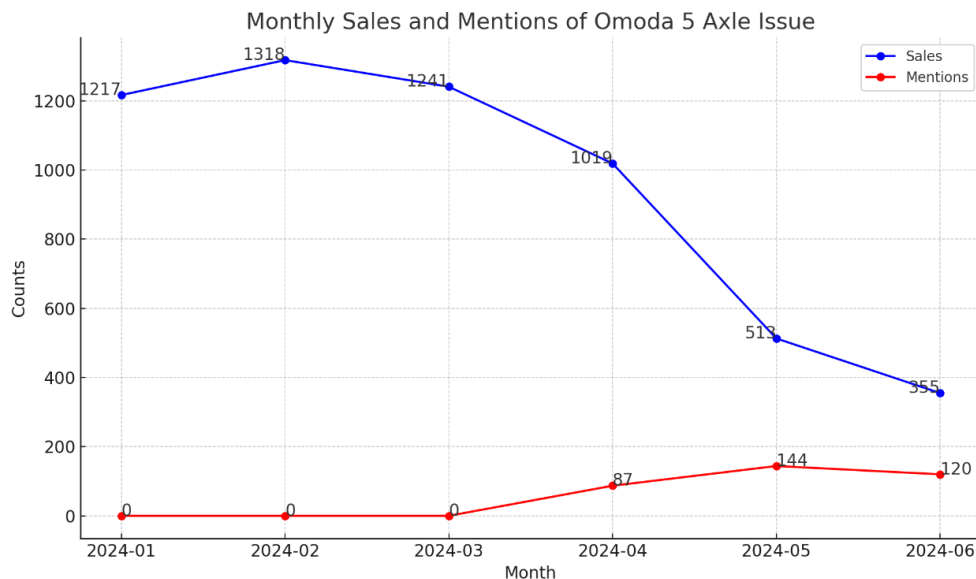
Based on the analysis, the correlation coefficient between sales and the frequency of negative news mentions is -0.924. This indicates a significant negative correlation, suggesting that as the frequency of negative news mentions increases, sales typically decrease. The data and graphical representation suggest that the increase in negative news mentions adversely affects Omoda 5 sales. The frequency of negative news mentions peaked in May, coinciding with a substantial decline in sales during May and June.

Conclusion

This research provides concrete evidence of the financial impact of online sentiment on automotive sales, illustrating a strong link between negative reviews and sales decline, consistent with Chevalier and Mayzlin's (2006) research on word-of-mouth effects on online sales. The Omoda 5 case vividly demonstrates how negative public opinion can swiftly influence consumer decisions, leading to significant sales drops. Our findings underscore the critical role of online reputation management in the digital era and highlight the importance of integrated marketing communications (IMC) in crisis management, supporting Batra and Keller's (2016) assertions. The study also emphasizes the need for effective online dialogue management and rapid responses to negative sentiment to protect brand equity and market share, as suggested by Kumar et al. (2016). Economically, the observed sales decline aligns with Luo et al.'s (2013) work on social media metrics as indicators of firm equity value, with the Omoda 5 sales decrease reflecting the impact of negative public opinion on company revenue and potential market value implications. This research contributes to the growing literature at the intersection of digital communication, marketing, and economics, offering insights into the complex interplay between online public opinion, consumer behavior, and market outcomes, and advocating for a multidisciplinary approach to brand reputation management in our increasingly interconnected digital landscape.

Implications

For communication professionals, our findings emphasize the need for rapid response and strategic communication during crises. The quick spread of negative opinions across platforms necessitates a comprehensive real-time monitoring and response system, with communication strategies tailored to the nuances of different social media platforms, recognizing each platform's unique role in shaping public opinion. Marketers should integrate online reputation management into their overall strategy, as the strong correlation between negative reviews and sales decline underscores the need for proactive measures to maintain a positive online presence. Batra and Keller's (2016) integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategies should be employed to ensure consistent messaging across all channels during crises. For business leaders and economists, this study highlights the growing importance of digital reputation as an intangible asset. As Gu and Ye (2014) suggest, online reputation significantly influences consumer decision-making and, consequently, a company's financial performance, making investments in digital reputation management strategic economic decisions. Future research could explore the differential impacts of various negative information types and assess the effectiveness of corporate response strategies, providing more nuanced guidance for digital-age brand management. Extending the study to multiple brands and transnational markets could enhance the generalizability of the findings. Lastly, automotive industry policymakers should consider these findings when developing online review and consumer protection regulations, as the significant impact of online sentiment on sales underscores the need for guidelines that ensure fair and transparent online review systems while protecting both consumers and businesses.

Keywords: Big Data, Online Opinions, Negative Reviews, Omoda 5, Car Sales, Consumer Behavior

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PGRC-303

How Do Challenges Impact Youth Engagement With Batik Industries On Social Media?

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Abstract

Batik originated from Southeast Asian countries in special reference to Malaysia and Indonesia with elaborate work done and has great historic value. However, it is currently facing a serious challenge of not being embraced by the youths especially at the social media realms such as Instagram, TikTok and such other apps. These social media platforms are popular and serve to reach out to the youth but there are several barriers that limit Batik to be relevant to the youth. This research seeks to explore the key question: How do challenges impact youth engagement with Batik industries on social media? This study reveals the factors that contribute to the reduction of Batik appeal among the youths on-line by analysing the cultural, socio-economic and strategic constraints.

One of the primary challenges is the interpretation of Batik as a traditional or formal clothing item that does not appeal to modern generation's fashion in their day-to-day lives. The youth of today thinks of Batik as something worn by the older generation and especially during traditional events and thus see it as clothing worn during such occasions. This perception is especially unsuitable in social media in which trend-following interests predominate the young generation's online presence. Youth prefer T-shirts and trousers which are not grand in design as the majority of such designs are closer to what is currently trending around the world and it is easier for them to integrate it into their day to day attire. While the Batik designs are elaborate and, therefore, expensive, their appearance will not suit the current lifestyle that young people emulated. As such, the contents created by Batik are most of the time not able to draw the attention of the youths as they perceive it as irrelevant with the fashion that they feel is close to them. [1][2]

Another key challenge is the socio-economics factors that prevent the agnostic of the youth in participating with Batik on the social media platforms. There is a digital divide among the youth many of whom belong to rural or low income families and organizations and do not possess or have access to such items as smartphone or even steady and adequate internet connection. This digital divide greatly hinders the ability of a large percentage of the youth to interact with Batik content on the social media platforms due to unavailability resources. However, when these tools are present, most of the youthful population has poor digital skills to operate such platforms such as Instagram or TikTok. Lack of proper skills to incite or even interact with Batik styling is another challenge that they face. This digital divide makes the existing difficulties for The Batik industry even worse since a part of the youth stays away from the online appreciation of the Batik culture.[3][4]

These content strategies that are employed at the moment are also largely responsible for the missing interaction in the youth demographic. While methods used for promotion mainly emphasize on the cultural and historical importance of Batik, it does not appeal much to the youths, who want something more lively and fashionable, something that relates to the fashion trends of today's society. The promotional content within use within the Batik industry mainly focuses on the past and the cultural aspect of the dress code, which to worse, it keeps on pushing young people away since they do not find Batik relevant in their daily use. This chasm between conventional promotional techniques and youthful individuals' expectations makes the process very challenging. If there is no new and creative work that provides fresh insight to Batik's

capability as a modern fashion accessory, the younger demographic continues to remain unimpressed.

As a result of the above challenges, the Batik industry requires to re-strategies on how to introduce Batik to the youthful generation on social media platforms. As helpful as it is to maintain the cultural and historical meaning of Batik, it has to appeal to young people of today by identifying it as something they wear in their daily lives or to and fro from school, work, etc. It is also possible to develop batik as a fashionable garment that can be easily integrated into the young people's wardrobes. Thus, by demonstrating how Batik can fit into modern clothing, the Batik industry can start the process of eradicating perception barriers that exclude the youth thus far. Furthermore, the Batik industry should consider generating content that is motion and trendy with fashion conscious Youth to make Batik more relevant and attractive on the social media. [5]

Another factor that needs to be addressed is the socio-economic factors that result to youths not involving themselves with Batik. Measures should be taken not only to increase the availability of the modern technological equipment and develop the computer skills especially among less fortunate youth. In this way, the Batik industry can grow and spread in order to educate a larger generation of youth, which includes being connected to smartphones, the internet, and digital literacy programs. These steps are important in order that Batik does not just relegated to 'museum pieces' and would continue to be a dynamic industry that is integral to the Southeast Asia cultural heritage.[6]

In conclusion, Batik has following challenges in terms of its continue and compete the young generation and social marketing platforms. Batik is also viewed by the youth as a traditional ceremonial attire worn in the past alongside other socio-economic factors, and ineffective content marketing strategies that have all worked towards side-lining this art. To overcome these challenges, new promotion strategies has to be developed that will make Batik more attractive and appealing to today's youth. To dress Batik, the industry needs to portray Batik as a product that is suitable for all occasions as a fashion wear and to encourage the generation of youths who are limited by the digital divide to continue embracing Batik for future generations. Through a combination of innovative content strategies and efforts to improve digital access and literacy, Batik can continue to be appreciated as both a cultural symbol and a contemporary fashion choice, securing its place in the modern world.[7][8]

Keywords: Batik, youth engagement, social media, cultural heritage, digital literacy

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PGRC-304

Examining the Effects of Social and Physical Presence on TikTok Livestream Retail Shopping

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Abstract

This scoping review sought to provide clarity and redefine the concepts of social and physical presence within the context of online livestreaming environments.social presence—where human-to-human interaction is paramount.Physical presence refers to the technical elements and nonhuman-to-human interactions, which play a significant role in shopping. Focusing solely on one type of presence while neglecting the other may lead to incomplete or less informed insights about user behavior and consumption decisions. Despite this, most previous studies have examined either physical or social presence in isolation, and few have systematically considered the combined impact of both in explaining their influence on consumer decision-making.This review addresses this gap by analyzing how factors of physical and social presence influence the consumer decision-making process in TikTok live-stream retail purchases. A synthesis of 60 studies conducted between 2019 and 2023 was performed using Arksey and O'Malley's five-step framework for scoping reviews. Evidence was gathered and reorganized to better understand the attributes of both types of presence and their effects on user behavior. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework for scoping reviews, along with guidelines from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), were used to guide the methodology.The findings reveal that out of the 60 studies reviewed, 36 were focused on social presence while 24 explored physical presence. Social presence in the context of livestreaming tends to involve interaction from both the user's and the anchor's perspectives. These interactions foster an environment that encourages users to make consumption decisions. On the other hand, physical presence in online environments includes key dimensions such as the product, technology, and the livestreaming scene itself. These elements contribute to users making consumption decisions through a mechanism of perceived control, where they assess and interpret the tangible and intangible attributes of the livestream.The results clarify the complex interplay between social and physical presence in livestreaming commerce and how these factors drive user behavior and decision-making in retail settings like TikTok live streams. The review underscores the importance of considering both types of presence in future research to yield a more comprehensive understanding of how livestreaming impacts purchase decisions. Furthermore, the integration of social and physical presence in new media livestreaming environments offers valuable insights into designing more engaging and persuasive online retail experiences. This integration will help researchers and practitioners develop more nuanced strategies to influence consumer behavior in livestream settings, facilitating informed purchasing decisions and enhancing the overall shopping experience.

Keywords: Social Presence, Physical Presence, Livestreaming, Consumer Decision-Making, TikTok

PGRC-305

Investigating the influence of educational short video content recommendation on Douyin platform towards the learning persistence of private college students in Shandong Province, China

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Abstract

Short video platforms have become a powerful digital tool in today's changing education environment. Additionally, educational short video content have proven to be effective in student's engagement in an adaptive learning environment independently. Within this landscape, recommendation system emerged as indispensable tools, aiding users in discovering knowledge with their academic interests. As such, the rapid development of AI technology has transformed the nature and culture of learning, affecting the students learning habits. Despite the advantages brought by technology, short video content recommendation on Douyin posed challenges to the student's wheel-spinning learning habits, particularly affecting the learning persistence due to cognitive loads or quality of video.

The objective of this research is to investigate the influence of educational short video content recommendation on Douyin platform towards the learning persistence of private college students in Shandong Province. Likewise. the strategies adopted in constructing a well-structured educational short video or known as microlearning is significant in optimizing student's engagement, and information retention.

Data collection is a critical phase in the research process and the strategies employed can significantly influence the quality and relevance of the findings. To gain insights on the influence of educational short video content recommendation on Douyin platform towards the learning persistence of private college students, a quantitative research approach will be utilized in this stud to ensure comprehensive and accurate insights.structured surveys will be employed to to capture a wide range of user behaviours, based on user interactions, content preferences, and the influence of algorithmic recommendations in affecting their learning persistence.

This study hopes to guide the institution in planning a sustainable development and practical implementation of learning platform with the creation of original and innovative high-quality works for the future learning environment. Additionally, it is hoped that the findings will contribute to the awareness among the private college students to adopt the useful strategies for algorithm recommendation and how to avoid the challenges of subject alienation through the behaviors of users when using Douyin educational short videos content recommendation. Likewise, this research is hoped to be of great guiding significance to new discoveries in future research pertaining to educational short video impact on student's learning persistence in the changing educational landscape.

Keywords: content recommendation; learning persistence; Douyin platform

PGRC-306

Digital Counter-Narratives: Comparing the Use of TikTok by Filipino and Indian Content Creators to Challenge Colourist Ideologies

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Abstract

Colourism, the discrimination based on skin tone remains a societal challenge globally, particularly in the Philippines and India where light skin is often regarded as symbol of beauty, success and higher status. This deeply ingrained bias is rooted from the complex histories of colonialism and racial hierarchies where the Eurocentric ideals where valourised over indigenous physical attributes. It has since perpetuated a harmful standard of beauty through various social, cultural and economic structures. While there has been an extensive scholarly attention on colourism and its detrimental impact, the role of digital platforms such as Tiktok and its content creators on the issue remains underexplored. TikTok, with its massive audience reach and easily shareable content, provides a much-needed space for discourse on the issue of skin tone bias. Being a top choice of social media platform in Philippines and even a banned social media application in India, TikTok has become a venue where Filipino and Indian content creators, have started to challenge the traditional beauty standard of preferring fairer skin. Through the platform's unique affordances, these content creators are pushing back against the usual colourist norms and are promoting a more inclusive representation and appreciation of skin tone diversity.

This research examines how selected Filipino and Indians content creators on TikTok challenge colourist beliefs particularly in countries of the Philippines and India where skin-whitening industry is a big market. In the Philippines, colourism stems from its long history of Spanish and American colonialism while in India, the caste system along with British colonial influence, play significant roles in perpetuation of these discriminating standards. By utilising Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA), this study further investigates the interplay between technology, culture and power dynamics in the context of digital activism against skin bigotry. Furthermore, by looking into how these content creators utilise TikTok in challenging the issue, this study reveals the complex ways in which digital platforms are used as a means for resistance and reinforcement of social structures.

The qualitative study gathered videos generated from the keywords "colourism in the Philippines," and "colourism in India." These keywords were chosen to explicitly identify content that directly discusses the issue of colourism among these identified countries. From these searches, 60 TikTok videos were collected for analysis.

The textual analysis of the videos involved comparison of recurring themes, narrative strategies, and the use platform-specific affordances. The results indicate how the content creators are strategically leveraging TikTok's features to reinforce their message and reach wider audience. For example, hashtags are used to classify content and increase its visibility within the platform's algorithm. The creators also use the collaborative features which helps foster a sense of community supporting their advocacy for skin tone diversity. Content creators also strategically use sarcastic humour to highlight the absurdity of the colourist attitudes. Others use satire to mock the societal expectations on beauty standards, turning discriminating stereotypes into humourous narratives aimed to entertain and educate their audience. Storytelling is also another recurring narrative strategy as the creators share their personal experiences of colourism. As the content creators frame their experience in a relatable and authentic manner, the story becomes more accessible and understandable to the audience. This is evident in the comment section of these content where other users who have had similar experience also share their stories, thus creating

a sense of shared understanding and collective resistance. Beyond humour and personal narratives, these TikTok content creators also incorporate educational content into their videos. For example, through the discussion of historical and social context of colourism in the Philippines, the Filipino content creators are able to explain how colonialism and globalisation have impacted contemporary beauty standards.

TikTok's platform affordances, such as hashtags and collaborative features, were also critical in conveying the messages of the content creators. For example, hashtags such as #ProudMorena, #ColourismInIndia and #DarkIsBeautiful have provided easier access to their content making it discoverable to a wider audience. Beyond categorization, these hashtags also served as a call to action for other creators and the global viewers who may be passionate on challenging the issue.

The findings of this research have important implications to the fields of media and communication studies, specifically in its investigation of the intersection between technology, culture and power dynamics. Through the lens of CTDA, this study positions TikTok as not merely a passive platform, but it also plays a powerful role in the discourse of skin tone discrimination. Algorithmic biases and its platform affordances can significantly amplify or suppress certain narratives. Thus, TikTok has not only provided a space for entertainment but also served as a place for marginalised voices and colours challenging dominant narratives. It also has implications for media literacy, advocacy campaigns and platform policies. Through understanding how the platform is being utilised to challenge colourism, various media literacy initiatives can serve as educational tools to critically evaluate online content – if it promotes explicit or subtle forms of bias. Advocacy campaigns can also be created to leverage the platform's reach and engagement, particularly towards the younger users, to promote positive representations of skin tone diversity and combat discriminatory practices. Furthermore, platform policies can be developed to encourage and support content creators actively engaging in a more inclusive and diverse online community, ensuring that their content is not unfairly suppressed by algorithms or community guidelines. Additionally, the promotion of the brown skin tone is a powerful act of resistance to challenge the pervasive belief that lighter skin is superior. This affirmation contributes to a broader cultural movement that aims to dismantle skin tone discrimination and promote a more inclusive understanding of beauty.

In conclusion, this research demonstrates the power of digital platforms such as TikTok and the critical role of content creators in challenging colourist beliefs among Filipino and Indians. By leveraging the platform's unique features and through the use of various narrative strategies, these content creators are raising awareness on the harmful effects of skin tone discrimination and the importance of skin tone diversity. Their content does not only disrupt the dominant beliefs but also empowers others to embrace their natural skin tones. This research contributes to the field through its in-depth understanding of the interplay between technology, culture, and power dynamics, particularly in contexts where colourism is deeply rooted.

Keywords: Colourism; TikTok; Content Creators; Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis; Digital Activism

Sociology & Political Science, Psychology

PGRC-401

When Nostalgia Meets Phubbing: Reimagining Tourism In The Age Of Digital Disconnection

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Abstract

In the age of smartphones and constant connectivity, phubbing, the act of ignoring someone in favor of a mobile device, has emerged as a significant social phenomenon. This behavior, characterized by an increasing reliance on digital interactions at the expense of real-world engagement, has profound implications for interpersonal relationships, social dynamics, and mental well-being. At the same time, nostalgia-driven tourism is gaining popularity, where individuals seek to reconnect with the past by visiting places and engaging in experiences that evoke fond memories of simpler, pre-digital times. These two trends, seemingly at odds with one another, present an intriguing area of study that explores the intersection between modern digital behaviors and the longing for the past. This extended abstract aims to develop a conceptual framework that connects phubbing behavior with nostalgia-driven tourism, providing insights into how these seemingly contradictory forces can influence consumer behavior in the tourism industry.

The increasing prevalence of phubbing has led to growing concerns about its impact on personal relationships and social interactions. As people become more engrossed in their digital devices, there is a noticeable decline in face-to-face communication, leading to feelings of neglect and disconnection among those being phubbed. This behavior is not just confined to casual social settings but extends to significant life moments, where the intrusion of technology disrupts the quality of experiences. On the other hand, nostalgia-driven tourism emerges as a response to the digital fatigue brought about by constant connectivity. It represents a desire to escape the distractions of the modern world and reconnect with experiences that evoke a sense of comfort, authenticity, and emotional resonance, be it revisiting a childhood home, exploring a historical landmark, or engaging in traditional cultural practices. These nostalgic experiences offer a sense of grounding, reminding individuals of a time when life was less cluttered by technology and more focused on real-world connections.

The objective of this study is to explore how phubbing behavior, despite its negative connotations, may paradoxically fuel the demand for nostalgia-driven tourism. This exploration seeks to understand the psychological underpinnings that drive individuals to seek out nostalgic experiences as a counterbalance to their phubbing behavior. The study posits that as individuals become more aware of the detrimental effects of phubbing on their relationships and overall well-being, they may be increasingly drawn to nostalgia-driven tourism as a means of reclaiming the lost sense of connection and simplicity. To achieve this, the study employs a systematic literature review combined with the development of a conceptual framework using the TCCM (theory, context, characteristics, and methods) approach. This method allows for a comprehensive examination of existing research on phubbing and nostalgia-driven tourism, identifying gaps in the literature and providing a structured framework for understanding the relationship between these two phenomena.

The systematic literature review will focus on scholarly articles, industry reports, and case studies that explore the psychological and social effects of phubbing, as well as the motivations behind nostalgia-driven tourism. Through this review, the study will identify key theories that explain why individuals engage in phubbing and how nostalgia serves as a coping mechanism for the negative effects of digital over-engagement. Theories such as attachment theory, which explores

how digital devices can serve as both a source of comfort and a barrier to real-world connections, will be examined in relation to nostalgia-driven tourism. Additionally, the study will explore the role of context in shaping these behaviors, such as how cultural and generational differences influence the propensity to engage in phubbing and the desire for nostalgic experiences. The characteristics of both phubbing behavior and nostalgia-driven tourism will be analyzed, including the demographic profiles of those most likely to engage in these activities and the specific types of experiences that are most sought after in nostalgic tourism. The methods section will outline how the TCCM approach will be applied to synthesize the findings from the literature review and develop a conceptual framework that links phubbing behavior with nostalgia-driven tourism.

The research gap identified in this study is the lack of a comprehensive framework that connects the psychological effects of phubbing with the motivations behind nostalgia-driven tourism. While existing literature has explored these phenomena separately, there is a need for an integrated approach that examines how they influence each other. For instance, how does the realization of the negative impact of phubbing on personal relationships drive individuals to seek out nostalgic experiences? How do tourism brands leverage this connection to create marketing strategies that resonate with consumers' desires to disconnect from technology and reconnect with the past? The study aims to fill this gap by providing a conceptual framework that not only explains the relationship between these two behaviors but also offers practical implications for the tourism industry.

The conceptual framework developed in this study will be grounded in the TCCM approach, which allows for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between theory, context, characteristics, and methods. The framework will propose that phubbing behavior, driven by the need for digital connectivity and instant gratification, leads to a growing sense of disconnection and dissatisfaction with real-world interactions. This disconnection, in turn, creates a psychological need for experiences that offer a sense of authenticity, emotional fulfillment, and a break from the digital overload. Nostalgia-driven tourism fulfills this need by providing opportunities for individuals to revisit the past, whether through cultural heritage, traditional practices, or natural settings that evoke memories of a simpler time. The framework will also suggest that tourism brands can capitalize on this connection by creating experiences that specifically target consumers who are seeking to escape the negative effects of phubbing and reconnect with the past. Real-life analogies, such as the popularity of rural retreats that offer a digital detox or the resurgence of interest in heritage tourism, will be used to illustrate how this framework can be applied in practice.

In conclusion, this study aims to develop a conceptual framework that connects phubbing behavior with nostalgia-driven tourism, providing insights into how these seemingly contradictory trends can influence consumer behavior in the tourism industry. By employing a systematic literature review and the TCCM approach, the study will explore the psychological motivations behind these behaviors and offer practical implications for tourism brands. As the digital age continues to reshape social interactions and consumer preferences, understanding the relationship between phubbing and nostalgia-driven tourism will be crucial for developing strategies that resonate with consumers' desire to disconnect from technology and reconnect with the past. This study not only fills a critical gap in the literature but also offers valuable insights for practitioners looking to tap into the growing demand for nostalgia-driven tourism.

Keywords: Phubbing Behavior; Nostalgic Marketing; TCCM Framework; Tourism Branding; Digital Detox; Customer Experience

PGRC-402

Exploring Attachment Styles And Motives Behind Hookup Culture Among University Students In The Petaling District

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Abstract

This research was conducted to explore attachment styles and the motives behind hookup culture among university students in the Petaling District. With the usage of social media and dating apps becoming more prevalent, this has prompted a rise in hookup culture, particularly among young adults in universities. The attachment theory, established by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, demonstrates that an individual's attachment style plays a crucial role in shaping their approach towards individual relationships. Hence, by exploring the attachment styles of individuals through their experiences, the attachment theory provides insights to the potential motivations and appeal of indulging in hookup culture among university students as opposed to committing to intimate relationships.

While previous research has largely focused on determining which specific attachment styles were more associated with hookup culture, this study suggests that this stance may inadvertently neglect the other attachments and instead focuses on exploring all attachment styles simultaneously. Furthermore, there is minimal research on understanding the motives that drive an individual to participate in casual sex. The relation between attachment styles and motives hence plays a critical role in identifying how psychological factors and social influences can play a role in shaping their behaviours. The objectives of this paper are threefold: to identify the attachment styles of university students, to explore the motives behind their engagement in hookup culture and to determine the influence of these attachment styles on their motives.

This study aims to fill gaps in the Malaysian context whereby hookup culture is not openly researched, especially in terms of attachment styles. Through exploring hookup culture locally, awareness can also be spread on the potential risks of indulging in hookup sex, such as contracting sexually transmitted diseases. University students have also been focused on as these behaviours may lead to potential developmental issues during their emerging adulthood.

In this paper, a qualitative approach was utilised to explore the personal experiences of 6 students who engaged in hookup culture, which has been previously reported to be an ideal sample for research on sexual behaviour. A set of semi-structured questions were used to conduct interviews with participants between the age of 21 to 33 who were presently enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses in universities across the Petaling District. This approach differs from previous research that explored the topic using online surveys. By focusing on providing participants with the freedom to express their motives and experiences, a better sense of understanding can be established along with the flexibility to probe deeper.

To ensure a relevant sample for this study, a purposive sampling method was used to select participants with the criteria of having engaged in hookups within the last five years. The Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) by Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) was used to assess the attachment styles of the individuals prior to the interview. The interview protocol was developed through a meta-analysis of previous protocols from similar studies. A thematic analysis was also done with the interviews to identify themes and patterns among the attachment styles of the participants as well as trends relating to their motives. Additionally, the Cognitive Behavioural Therapy approach was also used to identify any potential cognitive distortions that were present among the participants.

Contrary to what has often been reported, hookup culture was found to be desired across all attachment styles, which included secure, dismissive avoidant, anxious avoidant and fearful. Similarities

and differences could be seen across attachment styles when they shared what they felt was important in relationships as well as their needs from a partner. When identifying themes, there was a universal reporting of bad family and past romantic relationships influencing their perceptions of commitment and love. However, it was the effects of these negative experiences that differed. One such example is from anxious avoidant participants who reported experiencing anxiety and fear in their households which had led to them developing anxiety towards their romantic partners. The secure attachment participant on the other hand also had issues in his household but chose to confront them, which led to him seeing positive change.

Another critical finding in relation to motives was hooking up due to a desire for companionship without obligations of relationships. Due to their beliefs surrounding relationships, participants believed that hookups would provide them with a sense of companionship without commitment. However, certain attachment styles were also found to have contradicted these beliefs. An example of this was through the anxious participants who shared that it was good to not need to commit to their hookup partner but then contradicted these statements by saying they desired their hookup partners to check in on them and meet them away from a hookup. This example showcased the presence of potential cognitive distortions such as emotional reasoning and control fallacies where they misperceived the emotional safety of casual sex as a substitute for emotional intimacy without realising they were desiring traits of a romantic relationship.

Some other findings that shed light on the research objectives include the importance placed on communication with hookup partners and in relationships, as all attachment styles highlighted that it was something they placed importance on. However, descriptions of communication differed across attachment styles, such as fearful participants highlighting the communication should be balanced whereby the partner is independent. This also highlighted the trait of this attachment style with worrying about being too attached. This differed from anxious attachment participants who described communication as a form of reassurance, which was a way of satisfying their attachment.

This study has several implications benefitting academic research and application in the counselling field. It adds to the growing body of literature on attachment theory, particularly in the context of a non-Western society, in relation to approaching sexual behaviour and motives. The findings also challenge assumptions previously made in a Western-centric approach on hookup culture by having more relevance to cultural and familial influences present in Malaysian society, such as the normalisation of authoritative paternal figures, which was mentioned by some participants, and talking about sex being seen as taboo. Through the use of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counsellors working with university students may gain some insights to their emotional or relationship struggles through their attachment styles. The presence of cognitive distortions in relation to hooking up and relationships also indicates forms of coping with underlying issues which can be addressed in counselling sessions with clearer interventions.

In conclusion, the study highlights several ways attachment styles can influence the motives of students for engaging in hookup culture. The findings suggest that this choice is not driven solely by a desire for sex but may also relate to the emotional experiences faced in the past which reiterates their attachment styles. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how psychological factors can affect an individual's sexual behaviours. A recommendation for future research could be to have a balanced number of participants across both genders to explore if responses differ across genders. The inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community and additional cultures in Malaysia could also be included for a more diversified sample though it may be a struggle finding participants who are open to speaking about their experiences due to the topic being considered taboo.

Keywords: Attachment Styles, Hookup Culture, Sex, Relationships, Motives, University

This will result in a total of 10 groups that will be compared using a two-way ANOVA. Additionally, there will be two continuous moderating variables, namely self-efficacy and STEM identification. A moderator is a variable that influences the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent and dependent variable (Memon et al., 2019). Finally, the dependent variable will be stereotype threat vulnerability, measured through a composite score of several validated scales.

The quantitative phase of this research will employ a survey design utilizing established instruments to measure the key variables. The qualitative phase will follow, using semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the lived experiences of STEM students navigating gender stereotypes. This sequential approach allows the qualitative data to help explain and contextualize the quantitative findings.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications. Theoretically, it aims to extend the literature on stereotype threat by examining it within a non-western, Malaysian context and by distinguishing between different STEM fields. Practically, the insights gained may inform educators, policymakers, and institutions in developing targeted interventions to reduce stereotype threat and promote greater gender equity in STEM participation.

Keywords: stereotype threat, gender, STEM, self-efficacy, STEM identification

These delineations are designated by the MOHE (2022). The dependent variable will be stereotype threat vulnerability, measured by the shortened Stereotype Vulnerability Scale (SVS-4), a 4-item self-report questionnaire by Woodcock et al. (2012) based off the 8-item SVS by Spencer (1994). The moderating variable of self-efficacy, which refers to belief in one's abilities to successfully perform a task (Bandura, 1997), will be measured by the self-efficacy scale of the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (Pintrich et al., 1993). Lastly, the moderating variable of STEM identification, which refers to the manner in which success in STEM is tied to one's self-identity, will be measured via the 4-item identity subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

The quantitative portion of the research aims to gather a sample size of 370, consisting of Malaysians currently attending a STEM program in a Malaysian private university. The research will utilize a purposive snowball sampling design collecting data on gender, STEM program, stereotype threat vulnerability, self-efficacy, and STEM identification through a survey distributed through Google Forms. Data will be analyzed via PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4, 2023), where assessments of the measurement and structural model will be generated. Prior to proceeding with the qualitative portion of the research, 'high' and 'low' stereotype vulnerability scores will be calculated through the use of Z scores. In this case, a Z score of one or higher will indicate a 'high' score as they are one standard deviation above the mean while a Z score of -1 or lower will indicate a 'low' score as they are one standard deviation below the mean (Andrade, 2021). These categorizations are necessary as the qualitative aspect of the research will utilize nested sampling. This is a design in explanatory sequential research where the sample used for qualitative data collection comprises of participants from the quantitative portion, which are used to form subgroups (Tanner, 2023). It is an attempt to integrate the data, increasing validity and ensuring that both the quantitative and qualitative data are referring to the same empirical phenomenon (Tanner, 2023). With nested sampling, it is important to decide what variables will be used to establish the subgroups (Tanner, 2023). For this study, interview participants will be recruited based on their gender, STEM program, and measure of stereotype threat vulnerability. While it is impossible to determine how many subgroups there will be prior to quantitative data analysis, a rough idea can be conceptualized (Tanner, 2023). Based on the previously mentioned variables, one subgroup may be 'female, health and welfare student, high stereotype threat vulnerability'. Following this structure, additional subgroups will be created for each gender, each of the five STEM programs, and level of stereotype threat vulnerability. This would result in 20 subgroups. Researchers suggest aiming for at least one participant in each subgroup (Tanner, 2023). Therefore, this study will aim to recruit 20 participants. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed via thematic analysis. The implications of this research may be helpful in informing policymakers and universities in implementing targeted interventions to create a more effective learning environment and attracting more prospective students to STEM.

Keywords: stereotype threat, gender, STEM, mixed-methods

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PGRC-404

The Deconstruction of The Value of Human Lives: A Case Study of Human Trafficking in Myanmar

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Abstract

Myanmar's military regime, also known as the junta, is notorious for committing numerous human rights atrocities against its citizens, specifically ethnic minorities, due to the racial strife and conflict between the major ethnic group, the Burmans and the ethnic minorities. Among such violations is human trafficking, a criminal offence that dehumanises people and views them as mere objects to be sold for high profits. This modern form of slavery affects all layers of society, regardless of age and gender. However, unlike the images which come to mind when discussing slavery in the past, advanced and innovative technology and communication lines have morphed this criminal activity into a more elaborate, sophisticated, and thriving enterprise that can earn the traffickers billions. Internal trafficking occurs within a country's borders, while external trafficking involves moving the victims to different countries or even regions and continents. The most prominent forms of human trafficking are forced labour and sex trafficking, which incorporates prostitution and forced marriage or bride trafficking. Myanmar has registered a steep rise in both types of trafficking cases and continues to record a high number annually until today.

The objective of this research is to analyse the rampant growth of trafficking in persons for labour and sexual purposes in Myanmar. This study examines the correlation between political, economic, and social factors and human trafficking, examining the details that allowed such a heinous crime to fester and spread unabatedly in this Southeast Asian nation. It also investigates the role of foreign actors, both governments and conglomerates, which engage in profitable business arrangements with the military regime, without considering how the junta delivered its promises. In addition, this paper also uncovers the facts surrounding the use of ethnic minority females as commodities in the sex industry or to overcome the shortage of brides in countries such as China. In doing so, it sheds light on the push and pull factors that are essential for the existence of sex trafficking in a country led by an authoritarian government.

This study employs qualitative research, focusing mainly on textual and content analysis. Data, statistics, and crucial facts are gathered from books, journal articles, documents, reports, conference proceedings, workshop publications, and websites of relevant organisations from international platforms and those related to minority ethnic groups. By meticulously and systematically exploring these diverse sources, the researcher can view the subject matter from different angles, simultaneously providing a microscopic view of the various factors in the political and non-political spheres that contribute to the rise in human trafficking cases. Sifting through these arrays of texts provides the study with even the most minute detail that is vital to further enhance the scope and depth of the topic.

The results of this research would show how Myanmar's political scenario, especially from the 1990s, furnished a conducive environment for the rapid increase in trafficking statistics. As the main aim of the junta was to enrich themselves through any possible means, illicit activities mushroomed throughout the country, in tandem with legitimate business opportunities. Shedding its former image, cultivated by policies driven by xenophobic sentiments and a deep mistrust towards foreigners, the regime focused on developing its economic sectors by forging lucrative partnerships with countries and multinational corporations worldwide. Engaging in such activities in multiple areas and domains such as mining, oil and gas, logging and tourism had to be sustained with an ample supply of labour. The high demand for workers led to a rise in forced

labour as the junta compelled civilians from minority ethnic groups to work under inhumane conditions to complete the necessary tasks within the stipulated time, which is always a very short period. Their goal was to maximise profits and minimise costs, disregarding the value of human life.

Further, this study would reveal that the trafficking of women and girls as sex workers and brides to neighbouring countries has risen at an alarming rate. The push and pull factors such as the rise of sex tourism, the demand for Myanmar women in Thailand brothels as they are perceived to be clean and pure, unemployment and the emergence of economically strategic towns such as Shwe Kokko, have led to an increase in the recruitment of ethnic minority women through deceptive means to work as sex workers. Most of them are unaware of their destination and are under the impression that they are to be employed in reputable sectors. On the other hand, China's one-child policy has resulted in a gender imbalance, where men outnumber women. Myanmar women of ethnic minority descent are sought as brides as they have similar features to Chinese women. However, once again, most of these women are duped and sold as brides to families who have sons of marriageable age. Those who are informed that they will be marrying Chinese men cannot fathom the lives that they will be living. Instead, these women assume that they would have a better quality of life compared to their living conditions in Myanmar.

To summarise, this research provides ample evidence of the many domestic factors that have led to the increase in trafficking cases. Besides the brutal military regime that has an iron-clad grip on the country and its people and rejects the principles of rights and dignity, international businesses and countries are at fault as well. Placing importance on profits over human rights, these foreign actors have initiated economic relations with a regime that ignores the well-being of its citizens. Their callous attitude and unethical actions have had long-lasting negative implications for the people of Myanmar. By prioritising wealth over the basic rights of an individual, these companies and nations are also guilty of promoting forced labour. Frequenting brothels and buying women for sex and marriage have traumatized the victims and destroyed many families, in addition to spreading infectious diseases. Finally, in providing support through diplomatic and economic channels, these international actors have also contributed to the longevity of a regime that prides itself on violence to subjugate its citizens, inadvertently playing a role in the trafficking of Myanmar civilians, for both labour and sexual purposes.

Keywords: Myanmar; Junta; International Actors; Human Trafficking; Forced Labour; Sex Trafficking

PGRC-405

Relevance of Marxist Philosophy in the Saraiki Belt: A Call for a Transformative Revolution

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Abstract

The present study aims to examine the relevance of Marxist philosophy in effectively tackling the socio-economic and political issues encountered by the Saraiki Belt region in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. Qualitative insights reveal that significant socioeconomic inequalities and a lack of organized political coalitions distinguish the region, necessitating a revolutionary approach to governance.

Marxist ideology places paramount importance on class conflict, social movements, and labour concerns. It offers a critical analysis of the bourgeoisie's prioritisation of their own interests over that of the working class. This paradigm is especially applicable in the Saraiki Belt, where the privileged ruling class sustains socio-economic disparities.

Quantitative data supports these findings that Southern Punjab exhibits low per capita income, a high unemployment rate, and pervasive poverty, notwithstanding its agricultural productivity. Primary commodities include cotton, sugarcane, and wheat; nevertheless, economic development continues to be uneven. Moreover, the region faces challenges like low literacy rates and social radicalism.

The analysis highlights a cyclical pattern where inadequate political parties representation , as several parties vie for power and influence. Continued deliberations are taking place on the creation of a separate province to tackle regional disparities, potentially resulting in more targeted governance and economic efforts.

The article proposes a revolutionary transformation akin to the Left Democratic Front's efforts in Kerala, India. By prioritizing social welfare, cooperative movements, and grassroots involvement, Southern Punjab can foster a development paradigm that improves the overall welfare of its residents.

Key recommendations include the framework of Marxist philosophy, which presents a feasible approach to tackle the socio-economic and political issues in the Saraiki Belt. An all-encompassing revolution is necessary to narrow the divide between the privileged ruling class and the agricultural working class, finally promoting a fairer society.

PGRC-406

Student Awareness on Philippine Folk Dances towards the Sustainability of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract

Folk dance is a significant aspect of sociocultural aspects, representing the history, customs, traditions, and beliefs of people. It is often linked to specific events or celebrations, such as harvest festivals or religious ceremonies, and helps communities express themselves and share their cultural heritage. Folk dances also serve as a means of passing down cultural knowledge, as many are learned orally and passed down from generation to generation. Studying and preserving folk dances can have significant educational and social benefits, revealing a society's values, beliefs, and social structure, as well as promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

However, there is a lack of awareness of the decline of traditional knowledge due to globalization and industrialization (Javina, 2021; Poralan et al., 2014). Younger generations are often more interested in popular culture, leading to a loss of understanding and appreciation for folk dances' historical and cultural relevance. Government support for folk dances is limited, and the shifting values and beliefs of different cultures may also impact their sustainability. Migration and displacement from rural areas to cities may result in the extinction of folk dances.

Cultural heritage, including intangible cultural heritage (ICH), is crucial in preserving quality cultural diversity in the face of increasing globalization. The National Cultural Heritage Act (NCCA) in the Philippines protects both tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including folk dances. This study focuses on the perceived value of Philippine folk dances, focusing on their cultural practices and social impact.

The research utilized a correlational research design. Through this research design, student awareness focused on Philippine folk dances in terms of background and context, dance properties, place of origin, classification, and dance culture, and their perceived value of Philippine folk dances in terms of cultural and social aspects, are measured.

Moreover, respondents to the study are students of a state university in one of the provinces in the Philippines. One of the reasons why college students were chosen was because of the continuation of the foundation they learned in elementary and high school. Simple random sampling was the sampling method used to identify the respondents to the study. There are a total of 310 respondents gathered through the use of online surveys for a duration of 3 weeks.

The study reveals that majority of the students are unaware of dance positions and classifications, suggesting educators should incorporate these dances into their curricula. The study emphasizes the importance of engagement with folk dances, spontaneous dancing, and addressing cultural and social values through activities and events.

The instrument used in the study consisted of three sections mixing the researcher-made statements and adapted research statements. First section focuses on the profile of respondents in terms of age, sex, year level and religion. Second section covers the student awareness of Philippine folk dances in terms of background/ context, dance costume, places of origin, classification, and dance culture. This is researcher-made statements developed from a number of books authored and produced by Cultural Center of the Philippines Dance Society. Finally, the third section focuses on the perceived value of Philippine Folk Dances in terms of cultural and

social aspects adapted from the research of Stocker and Deogracias (2021) entitled Cultural Heritage Value of the Philippine Folk Dances in the Modern Tourism Industry.

To assess the content validity of the instrument, the developed instrument has undergone the evaluation of experts in the field of arts and dances. They included Director for a non-profit organization expert in nurturing culture and arts in Southern Tagalog, Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) Head Teacher, English language critic and a statistician. After this, the pilot test of the survey commenced with 30 respondents for the reliability test. Item analysis was done on section 2 of the instrument. And majority of the item obtained high reliability based on the obtained Cronbach alpha value of .723.

As for the results, majority of the respondents are female with the frequency of 198 (63.7%) with the age range of 18-24 years old with the frequency equivalent to 289 (92%). The study reveals that students are moderately aware of Philippine Folk Dances, with a high level of familiarity with dance positions, classifications, and etiquette. However, there are gaps in their knowledge, particularly in dance classification and positions. The findings align with previous studies, suggesting that educational institutions should increase student engagement with folk dances through extracurricular activities and collaborations with cultural organizations. The study emphasizes the cultural heritage values of Philippine Folk Dances. Moreover, the study reveals that Filipino folk dances hold significant cultural and social value. The cultural aspect, which revolves around diversity, tradition, stories, and knowledge of Filipino ancestors, is highly appreciated by students. Folk dances showcase the Philippines' traditions and cultural features, reflecting values and traditions crucial for cultural identity. However, the social aspect, which focuses on the social impact of the dances on society, is less prioritized. They also believe that folk dances create a sense of pride in Filipino culture, reflecting history and values. However, awareness of folk dances decreases among college students and adults unless they participate in dance clubs, suggesting the importance of active engagement in these activities.

The correlational analysis of students' awareness and perceived value of Philippine folk dances reveals a significant relationship between cultural and social aspects. Awareness of folk dances fosters a sense of community and belonging, while its perceived cultural value is weaker. This suggests that deeper appreciation, engagement, or emotional connection is needed for students to understand the value of folk dances. In other cultures, parents significantly impact their children's cultural engagement, creating a cycle of engagement that persists into adulthood. In addition, the social value of folk dances is weaker, suggesting that deeper engagement in performance, community events, or cultural celebrations is more influential. Folk dances serve as a medium for students to connect with their community's history and traditions, and intergenerational engagement allows them to learn from elders, enhancing their understanding of cultural values.

The results implies that the obtained 60% average awareness of dance classifications, presents opportunities for educators to incorporate the less familiar dances into their curricula. Engaging with folk dances is crucial for deeper understanding and appreciation. Educational institutions can develop activities and events that encourage spontaneous dancing, such as inviting elder dancers to share stories or community immersions. The study suggests that education should move beyond awareness-based lectures and focus on activities, events, and curricula to foster deeper appreciation for Philippine folk dances.

Keywords: folk dances, sustainability, intangible cultural heritage, tourism, awareness

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Southeast Asia and Vietnam in Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract

The Asia Anew Initiative, launched by Türkiye in 2019, marks a pivotal moment in its foreign policy, aiming to broaden its diplomatic and economic horizons beyond traditional alliances in Europe and the Middle East, and toward Asia, particularly Southeast Asia. This initiative reflects Türkiye's ambitions to enhance its political, economic, and cultural engagements with Asia, emphasizing a recalibration of foreign relations with emerging powers in the region. Among the countries of Southeast Asia, Vietnam stands out as a vital partner due to its robust economic growth, strategic geopolitical location, and increasing regional influence.

This research aims to explore the challenges and opportunities presented by Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative, with a particular focus on its diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations with Vietnam. The selection of Vietnam as the focal point of this study stems from its dynamic economic development and its growing importance as a key player in regional politics. As one of the fastest-growing economies in Southeast Asia, Vietnam provides a compelling case study through which to understand the broader scope of Türkiye's efforts in Asia under the Asia Anew Initiative. By focusing on the Vietnam case, the research intends to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of Türkiye's strategic objectives in the region and the obstacles it may encounter.

The study addresses the following primary research question: What are the key challenges and opportunities for Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative in strengthening its diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties with Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam? This question is explored through an analysis of various secondary research questions, including the specific initiatives undertaken by Türkiye in Vietnam under the Asia Anew Initiative, the perceptions of Vietnamese political and economic elites towards Türkiye's engagement, and the mutual benefits that both countries can derive from deepening bilateral relations. Additionally, the research seeks to identify potential areas of cooperation between Türkiye and Vietnam and propose strategies for overcoming obstacles within the framework of this initiative.

To address these research questions, the study employs a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis. Qualitative data is gathered through semi-structured interviews with policymakers, business leaders, and academics both in Türkiye and Vietnam. This allows for a deeper understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of key stakeholders toward Türkiye's presence and activities in Vietnam. The qualitative aspect also includes media content analysis and a discourse analysis of official policy documents from both Türkiye and Vietnam. Quantitative data, on the other hand, is drawn from an analysis of trade volumes, investment flows, and tourism statistics between the two countries. This provides an empirical foundation upon which the success and impact of Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative in Vietnam can be measured.

The research is structured around several key objectives. First, it seeks to map out the diplomatic, economic, and cultural engagements of Türkiye in Vietnam under the Asia Anew Initiative. This includes an analysis of the various forms of soft power that Türkiye has employed, such as educational exchanges, cultural diplomacy, and trade agreements. Second, the study aims to understand how Vietnamese elites perceive Türkiye's foreign policy shift toward Asia and its specific efforts in Vietnam. This is important for identifying potential areas of obstacles or support

within the Vietnamese government and business communities. Finally, the research aims to propose practical recommendations for enhancing Türkiye's diplomatic and economic presence in Southeast Asia, particularly in Vietnam, and to offer insights into how Türkiye can leverage its strengths to overcome the challenges it faces in the region.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to contribute to both the academic literature on Türkiye's foreign policy and the practical field of international relations, particularly with regard to Southeast Asia. The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers and diplomats in Türkiye who are tasked with implementing the Asia Anew Initiative, as well as for scholars who are interested in the evolving geopolitical dynamics of the region. Furthermore, the study's focus on Vietnam, a country that has received relatively little attention in the context of Türkiye's foreign policy, fills an important gap in the existing literature and offers new perspectives on Türkiye's engagement with Asia.

In conclusion, Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative represents a bold attempt to redefine its role in the international system by deepening its ties with Asian countries, including Vietnam. However, the success of this initiative depends on Türkiye's ability to navigate the complex political and economic landscapes of Southeast Asia, and to address the challenges that arise in its efforts to strengthen bilateral relations. This research, by examining the case of Vietnam, provides an in-depth analysis of both the opportunities and obstacles that Türkiye faces in the region, and offers recommendations for how these challenges can be addressed to ensure the long-term success of the Asia Anew Initiative.

Keywords: Türkiye, Asia Anew Initiative, Vietnam, Southeast Asia