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# PROCEEDINGS OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

# 2023

# Proceeding of Postgraduate Research Colloquium (PGRC) 2023

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Seyyed Mostafa Rasoolimanesh

## **Proceeding of the Postgraduate Research Colloquium (PGRC) 2023**

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# **Hospitality, Tourism & Events**

**PGRC-001**

**A Mix Machine Learning Algorithm for Predicting the Tourist Arrivals in Malaysia**

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**Abstract**

International tourist movement has overgrown in recent decades, and travelers are considered a significant source of income to the tourism economy. When tourists visit place, they spend considerable money on their enjoyment, travel, and hotel accommodations. In this research, tourist data from 2022 to 2023 have been extracted and extended with depth analysis of different dimensions to identify valuable features. This paper analyzes the properties of differential autoregressive moving average models and Long Short-Term Memory and introduces international tourist arrivals in Malaysia forecasting model based on these two approaches. Our study focuses on obtaining data series of international tourist arrivals in Malaysia influencing factors within a specified time frame, and subsequently inputting the obtained data series into both the LSTM and ARIMA models. This paper used the differential evolutionary algorithm to optimize the weight coefficients of the ARIMA-LSTM model and combined the optimal weight coefficients in a linear weighted combination to obtain the prediction results of the ARIMA-LSTM model. The results indicate that the prediction accuracy of the ARIMA- LSTM residual optimization combination model was higher than other combination models, as determined by comparing with other prediction models. Our model accurately predicted tourist arrivals in Malaysia with higher accuracy.

**Keyword:** Tourists; forecasting; machine learning; ARIMA-LSTM

**Background**

The tourism industry plays a significant role in economic development, with Malaysia focusing on building the best possible policies for international travelers. Tourism is playing a significant role in contributing to multi-dimensional economic growth (Usama Al-Mulali & Al-hajj, 2020). Multiple business sector economies across the Malaysia rely on tourism to create employment opportunities, improve infrastructure, and foster cultural inter-change between visitors and residents. Tourism can reap more benefits through a multi-stakeholder engagement approach(Nor et al., 2022). Tourists rely on local transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment, and very importantly, visitors may want to buy new things which are not available in their local places. Such transactions contribute to mobilization of the local economy. Malaysia needs to rationalize its tourism development after covid-19, when accurate forecasting of international tourist arrivals becomes very important(Hwandee & Phumchusri, 2020).

A tourism forecasting system helps administration in planning and arranging essential things for tourists. With rapid infrastructure, economy, and politics changes, forecasting systems help to get things done on prior deadlines(Praprom & Laipaporn, 2021). Government organization and associated stakeholders which are involved in tourism planning required highly accurate forecasting system. With the help of forecasting system, they can adopt the required changes in much better and faster way. When there is no availability of highly accurate forecasting systems. These organization face difficulties (Praprom & Laipaporn, 2021). In simple words, the meaning is, to minimize the possibility of the decision failing to attain the coveted goals. Hence an accurate prediction is very essential to the government.

## Objectives

1. Define a machine learning models for predicting international tourist arrivals in 2023.
2. Define a machine learning prediction model, the most suitable prediction model for the Malaysian region is selected.

## Methodology

This research proposes tourist forecasting systems. To predict international tourist arrivals, the methods adopted are data collection from globally trusted sources, followed by data analysis, data processing, and the creation of a machine learning model. The machine learning techniques include ARIMA-LSTM.

**Data Collection and Analysis:** This research draws on historical data to tackle the forecasting challenges and develop the predictive model. A substantial amount of data gathered by the government or other public entities is made available. These datasets are referred to as public data since they do not require specific authorization to use them. This dataset is derived from data published by Tourism Malaysia.

**Data Preprocessing:** The significance of preprocessing data must be comprehended first before moving on to developing forecasting system. It has the potential to make or ruin forecasting. Since Malaysia is gradually opening to tourist arrivals from 2022, the data processing was chosen to use data from May 2022 onwards for the predictive analysis.

**Machine Learning Models:** Machine learning technique has inspired due to the wide variety of applications in multiple domains. Machine learning has proven to perform better on complicated data and tasks, and this is a reason for draining it for adopting into the forecasting systems.

Five machine learning models (ARIMA, ARIMA-BP, BP, LSTM, ARIMA-LSTM) are used to predict

**Verification of experimental results:** The Tourist arrivals in Malaysia. The models are used to predict the Tourist arrivals in Malaysia (China, worldwide, and Korea). The results of the five models are compared and the root mean square error (RMSE), mean absolute error (MAE) and mean absolute percentage error (MAPE) is calculated using the error values generated by the five models in the data forecasting process to quantitatively verify the forecasting effect of the models. Based on the comparison of the ARIMA-LSTM model with other forecasting models MSE, RMSE and MAE values, by comparing the values of MSE, RMSE and MAE, the prediction model with the highest prediction accuracy is selected.

## Result

According to the statistical results of the indicators for the evaluation of the prediction effect in Table 1, the LSTM model and ARIMA model has lower prediction accuracy than the LSTM-ARIMA model for the three regions, indicating that the combined prediction model has improved the prediction accuracy compared to the single prediction model. The ARIMA-BP model has lower prediction accuracy than the LSTM-ARIMA model, indicating that the ARIMA-LSTM model has higher accuracy among the different combined models.

**Table 1.** Statistical results of model prediction effectiveness evaluation indicators

AERA	EVAL.	ARIMA	BP	ARIMA-BP	LSTM	ARIMA-LSTM
China	RMSE	2.461	2.7349	2.5119	1.284	1.246
	MAE	2.271	2.5235	1.5763	0.785	0.807
	MAPE	0.047	0.0518	0.0047	0.003	0.002
Worldwide	RMSE	10.22	11.356	9.3544	7.256	7.106
	MAE	7.833	8.7032	8.4319	5.607	5.558
	MAPE	0.149	0.1659	0.063	0.013	0.003
Korea	RMSE	1.664	1.8489	1.3174	1.214	1.113
	MAE	1.212	1.3462	1.1196	1.024	0.737
	MAPE	0.039	0.0432	0.0037	0.012	0.002

Based on the use of ARIMA-LSTM hybrid model to predict the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia, it can be known that there has been a steady growth in the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia since May 2023 and it is expected that it can reach the size of 21,418,094 for the whole year of 2023.

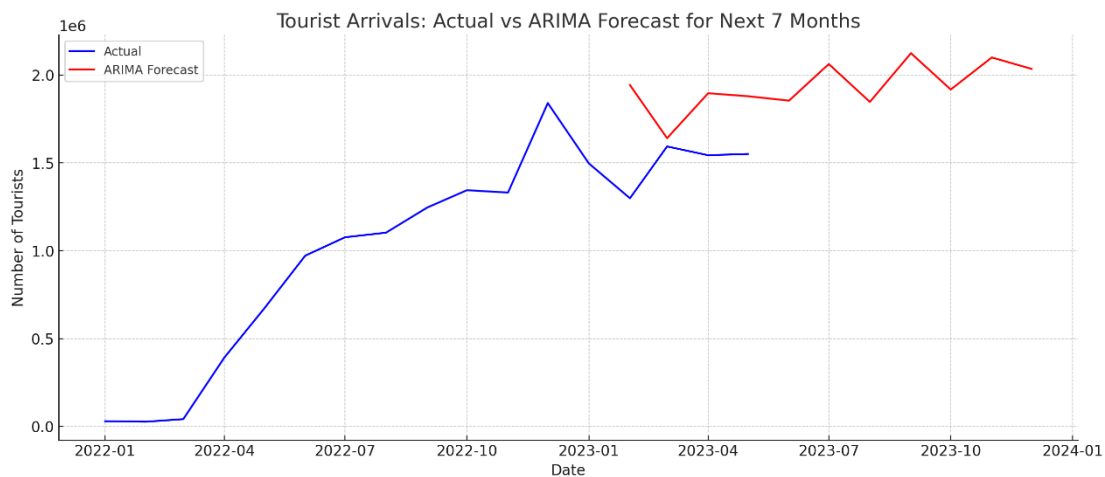


Figure 1. Visitor arrivals from Malaysia

**Conclusion**

Digitalization has made the whole world a village, it remains important to have collective forecasting of data that represents the whole globe. The UN WTO, and the WorldTravel and Tourism Council (WTTC) are working continuously improving the global tourism facilities by analyzing the de-mind and increasing number of arrivals. This study used machine learning methods to predict the number of inbound tourists in Malaysia in 2023 and the results showed that the ARIMA-LSTM model had the highest prediction accuracy.

**Implications**

Accurately predicting the number of tourist arrivals in Malaysia has several potential meanings and impacts, firstly, economic impacts: tourism is one of the main sources of income in Malaysia. Forecasting a high number of tourists could mean higher tourism revenue, which would have a positive impact on the country's GDP. Secondly, job market impact: increased tourist arrivals may lead to more job opportunities, especially in the tourism,



hotel and restaurant sectors, and the government can plan for future employment programs. Third, infrastructure and public service impacts: large numbers of tourists may put pressure on transportation, accommodation, public health and safety services. The predicted high visitor numbers may require additional infrastructure investment and improvements. Finally, environmental impacts: large numbers of tourists may put pressure on the environment, especially in ecotourism destinations and beaches. This may require additional environmental protection measures.

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**PGRC-002**

**Opportunity and Ability Influencing Indigenous Community Participation In Sustainable Ecotourism Development at Royal Belum State Park, Malaysia**

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This study was aimed at ascertaining the antecedents to the indigenous community's participation of sustainable ecotourism development at Royal Belum State Park (RBSP), Malaysia which is known as one of the seven wonders of ecotourism sites in the Malaysian ecotourism sector. The indigenous community's support is imperative in ensuring the success of sustainable ecotourism development. The Motivation, Ability, and Opportunity (MOA) Model driven by Weber's Theory of Substantive and Formal Rationality (WTSFR, 1978) is applied for the purpose of this study. A quantitative approach was chosen, and a deductive approach was employed in this study whereby established theories were relied on in the development of hypotheses. A close-ended survey questionnaire has been utilised to collect the required data for this study. A total of 113 responses have been collected from the indigenous community members based on the sample size determination by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The researcher has employed stratified random sampling method since the respondents were from the two main Orang Asli (indigenous community) settlements or villages which are Kampung Sungai Tiang and Kampung Sungai Kejar in Royal Belum State Park. The 'Tok Batin' (Village Head) of both the villages were subjected to in-depth interviews to obtain insights on the issues and challenges faced by the community members. Scholars prefer to use probability sampling design as the sample representing the population is of paramount importance in the ultimate objective of a broader or more extensive generalisability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Hence, a cross-sectional face to face questionnaire survey strategy has been adopted for this study which is typical for explanatory research. It is evident that the findings of this study has significant theoretical and practical implications on indigenous community participation in attaining sustainable ecotourism development, particularly for an ecotourism destination such as RBSP.

In recent years, the destruction to the ecosystem increases as the number of tourists travelling in mass tourism increases. This has led to the emergence of the notion of sustainability in the tourism industry. The ultimate objective of sustainable tourism is to seek a balance in the ecosystem. Nevertheless, sustainable tourism is not confined to the ecosystem. It is based on the three pillars of sustainable tourism which are the environment, economic, and sociocultural perspectives. In view of sustainable tourism and compared to mass tourism, Environmentally Friendly Alternative Tourism (EFAT) forms of tourism is gradually becoming popular with the different types of tourists (Göker & Karakoç, 2020). Ecotourism is one of the key avenues in genuine enjoyment of tourism activities by tourists and simultaneously, enable them to be aware and recognise the importance of preserving the environment (Clarke, 2020). Hence, ecotourism is effective in mitigating the issue of the rise in environmental destruction (Göker & Karakoç, 2020).

The entire community will be aware, view and appreciate the innate, creative cultural values of local communities via the accessibility provided by ecotourism activities (Taghulhi et al., 2019; Rahayu et al., 2020). Ecotourism development has a pivotal role in creating sustainable tourism (Sihombing & Suwu, 2023). Preservation of the environment, upholding cultural values, and community participation are the basis of ecotourism (Harimurti & Dwijendra, 2022). Ecotourism is a form of tourism with the ultimate objective of having minimum adverse effects on both the natural environment and local culture. Creation of jobs, elevation in the level of income and protecting the environment are via ecotourism. Hence, it is vital that appropriate actions are taken to enhance the ability to compete in an increasingly competitive environment for it to eventually grow into sustainable ecotourism (Arfan, 2022; Titisari et al., 2022).

The Royal Belum State Park which also known as 'Belum Reserve Forest' was degazetted as State Park by Enakmen Perbadanan Taman Negeri Perak in 2007. In 2012, it was recognised as a National Heritage Site by the Government of Malaysia. The Royal Belum State Park borders the Halabala National Park, Thailand to the north, thus making the area of about 300,000 ha of a potential trans frontier park and the Peninsular Malaysian state of Kelantan on the east. In addition, this state park is only accessible by boat via the public jetty at Pulau Banding (Banding Island) which is situated at the southern part of the State Park (UNESCO, 2022).

Previous studies by Adjewodah and Beier (2004), Romero-Brito et al. (2016), Ramón-Hidalgo et al. (2018) and Eshun and Tichaawa (2019) highlighted several issues that have caused the deterioration of ecotourism sites which include sidelining the local community and ignoring the local community's wisdom and familiarity with the natural environment of the ecotourism site. Other studies on ecotourism view local community's involvement or engagement as being influential in the attainment of sustainability objective via niche markets (Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Akama et al., 2011; Becken et al., 2014; Eshun & Tonto, 2014; Harilal & Tichaawa, 2018). This has led to the need for an essential investigation on the relationship between the local community's involvement or engagement in ecotourism and sustainability of ecotourism (Kanlayanasukho, 2014; Yang & Nair, 2014; Rogerson, 2015; Harilal et al., 2019). Therefore, this research would serve to address the need of the paper on indigenous community participation in sustainable ecotourism development.

Lim et al. (2006) concluded in their paper that just a handful of ingenious community members are employed in the tourism industry with the majority of them holding low paying and unskilled positions such as hard labour or manual labour positions in hotels, waiters in restaurants and various other positions. Hence, there has been minimum participation by indigenous communities in Malaysian tourism activities. Indigenous communities could make a positive contribution to tourism development if they were to have more active roles. Their vast amount of knowledge of the rainforests and ecology or the natural environment as well as their comprehension of innate capitals in the jungle can be imparted to both domestic and foreign tourists (Mansor et al., 2019). At present, there is limited knowledge on the participation level of the indigenous communities (Orang Asli) in Malaysian tourism development (Simpong et al., 2016). Majority of the scholars have conducted studies on indigenous communities in developed nations such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand especially from 1980s (Ruhanen et al., 2015). Therefore, this paper will have a unique contribution as one of the few studies that will focus on the pivotal role of

indigenous community in a developing nation such as Malaysia specifically on the indigenous community's participation level in sustainable ecotourism development in Royal Belum State Park.

In general, the findings of this study aims to elucidate the effects of opportunity and ability on the indigenous community's participation in sustainable ecotourism development in Royal Belum State Park which will ultimately elevate the level of income of the indigenous community from an economic perspective. Undertaking this research would also address the gap in industry practice. The high likelihood of the revelation of new antecedents which can influence the participation level of the indigenous community in sustainable ecotourism development at Royal Belum State Park will greatly enhance the current literature on sustainable ecotourism.

Keywords: MOA model, indigenous community participation, ecotourism, sustainable tourism.

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**PGRC – 003**

**An impact Study of destination brand equity on behaviour intention for adventure tourism at Dandeli, the mediating role of Instagram**

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**Abstract**

Adventure tourism has immense popularity in recent years, with destinations like Dandeli, India, emerging as hotspots for thrill-seekers. The advent of social media platforms like Instagram has revolutionized the way travellers engage with and perceive destinations. This study aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the impact of destination brand equity on tourists' behavioural intentions for adventure tourism in Dandeli, with a specific focus on the mediating role played by Instagram.

A sample of 255 adventure tourists in Dandeli participated in the survey, encompassing destination brand equity, Instagram engagement, and behavioural intentions. Qualitative data, gleaned from in-depth interviews with tourists, provided deeper insights into their experiences. Quantitative data analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), while thematic content analysis was employed for qualitative data.

The study uncovered a significant positive link between destination brand equity and tourists' behavioural intentions for adventure tourism in Dandeli. Instagram emerged as a key mediator, shaping tourists' perceptions and intentions. With views of Dandeli's brand equity were more likely to engage with the destination on Instagram, subsequently enhancing their intent to participate in adventure tourism activities. These findings underscore the roles of destination branding and social media, offering valuable guidance for sustainable tourism promotion in Dandeli.

Keywords: Adventure tourism, Destination brand equity, Instagram, Behavioural intentions, Mediating role

**PGRC – 004**

**An Analytical Study of Tourists Attitude and Lifestyle on Destination Perception and Visit Intention for Art of Living Bangalore**

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Wellness tourism is a prominent 21st-century trend, catering to individuals seeking wellness and leisure. This study investigates wellness tourists to analyse their consumer behaviour, identify wellness-related needs, explore influencing factors, and assess their impact on wellness tourism choices. Specifically, it examines how tourists' attitudes, lifestyle preferences, destination perceptions, and visit intentions interrelate within the context of the Art of Living Bangalore.

The research employs a comprehensive methodology, starting with an extensive Literature Review, synthesizing theories in tourism, attitudes, lifestyle, destination perception, and visit intention. To ensure measurement scale validity, a reliability test is conducted. Hypotheses are then formulated based on the literature and rigorously tested through methods like Hypothesis Formulation and Testing. Data from a diverse tourist sample undergoes Factor Analysis to reveal underlying dimensions influencing attitudes and perceptions. Finally, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) constructs a comprehensive model illustrating relationships between tourists' attitudes, destination perception, and visit intention.

The study findings enriches wellness tourism research by addressing well-being and leisure needs in a rapidly developing economic context. It captures the essence of wellness tourism, filling gaps in current theory and enhancing the theory of planned behaviour.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, yoga tourism ,spiritual tourism, Niche tourism.



**PGRC – 005**

**An Analytical Study to Measure the Impact of Smart Tourism Technology on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioural Intention for Bangalore as Smart Tourism Destination**

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**Abstract:**

This study examines the influence of the various attributes of smart tourism technologies (STTs) on tourists' intentions to revisit locations and engage in word-of-mouth (WOM) activities regarding emerging and smart tourist destination Bangalore. Smart tourism technology has the potential to improve customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in the tourism industry. However, there is limited research on the impact of smart tourism technology on these two factors. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting an analytical study to measure the impact of smart tourism technology on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention for Bangalore as a smart tourism destination.

The survey will ask questions about the tourists' use of smart tourism technology, their satisfaction with their trip, and their behavioral intention to visit Bangalore again. The data will be analyzed using statistical methods, including linear regression, reliability test, hypothesis formulation testing, factor analysis, and structural equation modeling .

Informativeness, accessibility, and interactivity, positively contribute to tourists' memorable experiences (ME). Furthermore, ME, satisfaction, and the willingness to engage in WOM recommendations are identified as predictors of tourists' intention to revisit rural destinations. The study also reveals that user competence serves as a mediator between the attributes of STTs (informativeness, accessibility, and interactivity) and the tourists.

**PGRC – 006**

**Environmental Impact of Tourism in the Province of Benguet, Philippines: Basis for a Proposed Sustainability Plan**

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**Abstract**

Tourism plays a significant role to the different tourist destinations of the world. It has a positive and negative impact as to Economic, Environmental and Socio-Cultural. Environmental Impact is one of the primarily concerned when a certain tourist destination developed. Rural Tourism has been one of the top tourist destinations after uplifting the travel banned nationwide in the Philippines. One of the provinces which were visited most was the Province of Benguet. With this, the researcher aimed to assess the environmental impact of tourism in the Province of Benguet, Philippines as a basis for a proposing a sustainability plan. The researchers used quantitative research design using descriptive research to gather relevant information about the study. Based on the findings, it found out that the Environmental Positive Impact of Tourism in the Province of Benguet were helping to improve the area's appearance, preserve the historic buildings, preserve the monuments, prevent ecological decline, and protect natural environments. While on the other hand, the Environmental Negative Impact of Tourism in the Province of Benguet was encountered solid waste pollution, noise pollution, air pollution, visual pollution, water pollution, loss of open space, loss of agricultural lands in tourism development, destruction of fauna, loss of natural landscape and destruction of flora. Therefore, the researchers concluded that there were positive and negative environmental impacts of tourism in the Province of Benguet. Moreover, it is recommended the implementation of the Proposed Sustainability Plan of this research to take control the negative environmental impact of Tourism.

Keywords: Tourism, Environmental Impact, Sustainability Plan

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**PGRC – 008**

**An Explorative Study on the Influence of Multiple Levels of Resilience on Entrepreneurial Success of Hotel Startup Founders in Chinese Independent Hotel Businesses in Shenzhen, China**

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Extend Abstract

Entrepreneurs have transformed industries and markets globally and nationally, introducing innovative products, organizations, and technologies that address customer needs and catalyze transformative changes in societies and economies. Founders, motivated by their passion, hard work, and intelligence, take advantage of opportunities and create substantial effects. In recent years, the scientific literature has drawn attention to the emergence of startups that focus on creating value through the use of technology or innovations in products and services and have very high growth potential, startups leverage emerging technologies and introduce disruptive innovations to traditional products and services, in order to explore new business possibilities and revolutionize conventional business models. Shenzhen, a once-small fishing village in southern China, has gained global acclaim for its rapid economic transformation into a technological and innovation hub. Particularly, the independent hotel sector has thrived, offering unique experiences to travellers and fostering entrepreneurial opportunities in response to the city's growing number of visitors.

Resilience, as a construct, becomes particularly relevant in such a dynamic and challenging environment. At its core, resilience refers to the ability to adapt, bounce back from setbacks, and thrive in the face of adversity. In the context of hotel startups, resilience operates on multiple levels, encompassing the personal characteristics and coping strategies of founders, the adaptive capacity of their organizations, and the external factors that shape their operational landscapes.

Given the intricate nature of resilience in the context of hotel startups in Shenzhen, it becomes imperative to explore how these multiple levels of resilience influence entrepreneurial success. The entrepreneurial journey within this sector is replete with uncertainties, demanding adaptability and tenacity from founders. It is within this backdrop that this study delves into the multifaceted aspects of resilience, seeking to unravel how they interact and collectively contribute to or impede the success of hotel startup founders in Shenzhen's independent hotel sector.

Central to this study is the exploration of resilience across different levels of analysis. The research identifies and delves into the personal resilience attributes displayed by hotel startup founders, unveiling characteristics such as adaptability, determination, emotional intelligence, and coping strategies. Furthermore, the study explores the organizational resilience dimensions, investigating how strategic decision-making processes, resource allocation mechanisms, and team dynamics contribute to startups' capacity to manage challenges and capitalize on opportunities effectively. Additionally, the study extends its scope to encompass the environmental resilience factors, examining how the broader

economic shifts, regulatory landscape, and competitive milieu in Shenzhen interact with and shape the entrepreneurial journeys of hotel startup founders.

This study aims to investigate the intricate interplay of these resilience levels and their influences on entrepreneurial success within the uncertainty-laden context of Shenzhen's independent hotel sector. Through semi-structured open-ended interviews with startup founders, this exploration unveils the unique challenges and opportunities that founders of hotel startups encounter as they strive for entrepreneurial success. Utilizing methods such as in-depth interviews, content analysis, and participant observations, the study captures the diverse experiences and strategies that founders employ to navigate the multifaceted landscape of Shenzhen's independent hotel sector. The themes explored include individual resilience traits, organizational adaptability, and the role of the local community in supporting and collaborating with hotel startups, which is crucial for enhancing the sustainability and growth of entrepreneurial ventures.

To examine the influence of resilience on entrepreneurial success in this context, this study employs a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research methodologies are particularly suited to capture the depth, complexity, and richness of the experiences and perspectives of hotel startup founders. These qualitative methods enable a holistic exploration of personal, organizational, and environmental resilience factors. By engaging directly with founders and immersing in their contexts, this research

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seeks to uncover not only the challenges they face but also the strategies and adaptations they employ to navigate the dynamic landscape of the independent hotel sector in Shenzhen.

The potential results of this study offer valuable insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers, academics, and industry practitioners in the hotel startup sector. They can equip entrepreneurs with a deeper understanding of resilience at multiple levels, enabling them to better prepare for challenges and enhance the resilience of both the founders themselves and their organizations. This knowledge can inform organizational strategies, promoting a resilient culture and improving decision-making, crisis management, and employee well-being. Policymakers can use these insights to craft supportive policies for the independent hotel sector, fostering innovation and collaboration. Academics can advance the theoretical foundations of resilience in entrepreneurship, potentially leading to new research models and interdisciplinary studies. Ultimately, these results have the potential to positively impact the entire entrepreneurial ecosystem, promoting sustainable growth and innovation in the hotel startup landscape.

In conclusion, this study advances our understanding of the multifaceted relationship between multiple dimensions of resilience and entrepreneurial success, within the distinctive context of independent hotel startups in Shenzhen. Through the exclusive utilization of qualitative methodologies, the research not only captures the depth and complexity of resilience dynamics but also offers insights valuable to policymakers, industry stakeholders, and aspiring entrepreneurs navigating the multifarious challenges of the hospitality sector. Through rich narratives and contextual exploration, this research contributes to the development of a comprehensive framework that nurtures resilient entrepreneurial endeavours and fosters sustainable growth within the hotel startup landscape. As the implications of this research extend to broader entrepreneurial contexts, it holds the potential

to inspire strategies and approaches that harness the power of resilience for the betterment of entrepreneurial ventures across diverse industries and settings.

The implications of this study hold significant promise: they include the development of targeted resilience-building programs for hotel startup entrepreneurs, the formulation of policies fostering an enabling environment for startups, the establishment of industry best practices to enhance resilience, and the potential for broader economic development in Shenzhen and similar regions. Furthermore, these insights have global relevance, serving as a reference point for entrepreneurs and policymakers worldwide, offering principles of resilience adaptable to diverse entrepreneurial contexts, and contributing to the advancement of entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable growth. Collectively, these implications signify a comprehensive approach to fostering entrepreneurial success and economic vitality, not only in Shenzhen but also on a global scale.

Keywords: Startup founders; Entrepreneurial Success; Multiple Level of Resilience; Entrepreneurial Ecosystem; Independent Hotel; Entrepreneurship

**PGRC – 009**

**The Effects of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Recommendation  
Intention: Chinese vs. International Customer**

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**Abstract**

Research on service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty has always been a hot topic in the hotel industry. Customer satisfaction is a resource for sales and profits in the hotel business, but the conclusions of the relevant studies have not been unanimously recognized. According to the existing literature, the current research is roughly divided into two directions. The first direction is that there is a symmetric relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, and a symmetric relationship means that mentioning a certain amount of service quality will lead to an equal amount of The first direction is service quality, there is a symmetric relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The second direction is service quality, and there is an asymmetric relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. An asymmetric relationship means that raising a certain amount of service quality does not necessarily lead to an increase in an equal amount of satisfaction and willingness to recommend. It has been proved that there is an asymmetric relationship between them, but what kind of asymmetric relationship exists between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty has to be further explored and verified. There are many measurements for hotel service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction, and recommendation intention belongs to loyalty, which is easier to measure and show and is also a performance appraisal content often used by many hotel management groups.

It is difficult for researchers to collect a large sample of hotel customer satisfaction and recommendation intention. Existing studies often use cross-sectional questionnaire data or use online platforms (Trip Advisor, Booking.com) customer feedback content to carry out the analysis, but to protect the customer's personal information, all the public online media do not publish customer demographic data, resulting in our inability to determine the structure of our sample source accurately, so this study uses 5,000 questionnaires collected in China's five-star M Hotel (2016-2020) five years, a total of 4,624 valid questionnaires were collected. However, to protect customers' personal information, all public online platforms do not publish customers' demographic data, making it impossible to determine the structure of our sample source accurately. Therefore, in this study, we used the customer satisfaction questionnaire data of five-star M hotels in China (2016-2020) for five years to conduct the study, with a total of 5,000 questionnaires and 4,624 valid questionnaires, which included 2,234 Chinese domestic customers and 2,390 international customers.

Currently, there are not many empirical studies on the asymmetric relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction, and it isn't easy to achieve the expected results of the asymmetric relationship research by previous research methods. Therefore, this study uses a combination of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), Multi-group analysis (MGA), and a fuzzy qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) methods to try to

validate further the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and recommendation intention and to investigate whether there is any difference in the influence of service quality on customer satisfaction and recommendation intention, starting from different cultural backgrounds, comparing domestic customers and foreign customers. The results of the MGA study show that the front desk quality has the most significant impact on customer satisfaction and recommendation intention compared with the infrastructure quality and room quality dimensions, and the effect on domestic customers is greater than that of international customers. In addition, the impact on recommendation intention was more significant than the satisfaction effect.

According to the results of the fuzzy qualitative comparative analysis, it is proved that there is also a difference in the formulation solution between domestic and international customers. Domestic customers are more sensitive to the quality of reception services. For domestic customers, even when the quality of the infrastructure and the rooms are low, high front desk service quality can lead to high satisfaction and high recommendation intention. However, for international customers, high satisfaction and high recommendation intention can only occur if high-level front desk service quality and infrastructure quality or high-level front desk service quality and high room quality are met. We found that front desk service quality includes check-in, check-out, and staff service, which are staff service-oriented sessions and can be interpreted as the contact sessions between staff and domestic guests have the greatest impact on increasing customer satisfaction and recommendation intention. This is consistent with previous findings that an in-depth understanding of local culture can increase customer satisfaction and recommendation intentions, that domestic customers have a deeper understanding of Chinese culture than international customers, and that staff communicate more smoothly with domestic customers in their own language.

The results of this study further demonstrate an asymmetric relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and recommendation intention, and this asymmetric relationship is not fixed but usually varies according to customers' cultural background. The results of the study enrich the theory of satisfaction and recommendation intention and also provide hotel managers with certain reference suggestions. The hotel can provide differentiated or personalized services according to the cultural background of the customer. For domestic customers, hotels can pay more attention to the contact between employees and customers. For international customers, hotels can consider improving the language communication ability of employees, creating more opportunities for employees to contact customers, allowing employees to establish a more friendly customer relationship with international customers, and improving the professional knowledge and service skills of employees to enable international customers to have a more in-depth understanding of the local culture and to promote the improvement of customer satisfaction and recommendation intentions.

There are still some limitations in this study. In the future, the research sample can be expanded to include different countries, cities, and hotels, and more hotel service quality dimensions can be added to make the study more rich and complete.



Keywords: service quality; customer satisfaction; recommendation intention; partial least squares– structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM); fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA);

**PGRC – 010**

**Bouncing Back: A Hybrid Approach for the Operational Recovery of Leisure and Recreation Sector In Region Iv – A, Philippines**

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**ABSTRACT**

COVID19 pandemic has been a big setback to all business sectors in the tourism industry specifically the Leisure and Recreation sector. It ruptured its overall business operations affecting their survival. This study analyzes the possible ways for the sector to recover its halted business operations not in a traditional way but on a hybrid manner.

From the data gathered, the study provided a conceptual framework patterned from the Tourism Recovery Response Plan (TRRP) of the Philippine Department of Tourism combined with the business operations variables and financial performances of selected leisure and recreation businesses in Region IV-A to formulate the intended plan. The study used a mixed method approach from a combination of quantitative research method through online survey from the leisure and recreation services business owners in the region to understand their perception on optimizing and collaborating for operational recovery and a qualitative research method for selected stakeholders of the sector for additional data specified in the research problem specifically on their challenges and their forecast for the sector. To make the study reach wider participants, the research used a random sampling technique to gather as many respondents as possible. All in all, this research was able to gather 58 survey participants and 3 stakeholders for the interview.

Result of the study where majority of the respondents are at the age of 35 – 44 years old mostly female with Bachelor's Degree and 6 – 10 years of managerial experience. Also majority of the tourism business enterprises are in a corporation business structure operating from 4 – 7 years with an initial capital of Php 15,000,001 – Php 100,000,000 and their sources of fund for day-to-day operations is through their profits. Also, more than half of the respondents employs 100 – 199 people and offers most of these enterprises offers food and beverage and accommodation to their customers were based on their assessment, they get 100 – 500 visitors per month for the past three years (2019 – 2021). Respondent's perception on Optimization in terms of Social Protection and Livelihood, Entrepreneurial Survival, Product Development and Marketing, Infrastructure and Investments and Readiness of LGUs and Destinations gathered positive responses same as Collaboration in terms of Operations, Human Resource, Marketing, Information and Technology and External Policies. However, financially, based on the gathered financial statements of the respondents, the enterprises had a mixed result on their performances but when pandemic started majority of them suffered losses is quite expected given the circumstances. Also there are significant differences on Readiness of LGUs, Social Protection and Livelihood, Human Resource and mostly on Information and Technology. Adding the inputs from the interviews of the stakeholders, these significant differences are the main focus on the intended Hybrid Approach Plan for Operational Recovery.

PGRC – 012

**Academic Anxiety and Learning Engagement Among Hospitality Students: the Mediating Effect of Academic Buoyancy**

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**Abstract**

Background: Learning engagement refers to the effort that is continuously spent by students towards their learning process in order to achieve their desired learning goals (Coates, 2006). Learning engagement is the most important concern of educators because this will directly affect student academic performance. According to the American Psychological Association (2015), anxiety is characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes such as increased blood pressure. It can be detrimental to the extent that it leads to maladaptive behaviors that interfere with daily life such as avoidance, excessive fear and unhappiness (Duchesne, Vitaro, Larose, & Tremblay, 2008). In the current study, we examined academic anxiety, which refers to feeling nervous and worrying in the academic context (Martin, 2007), and matters in students' learning engagement. However, few studies have specifically examined how academic anxiety affect hospitality students' learning engagement. To understand this gap, this study further explores the cognitive process in which academic buoyancy governs how academic anxiety affects learning engagement. Academic buoyancy refers to 'everyday academic resilience', or a student's capacity to positively cope with academic setbacks and challenges (e.g. an unexpectedly poor grade, difficult schoolwork, assessment pressures) that typically occur during school life (Martin & Marsh, 2006, 2008, 2009).

**Objective:** Therefore, this study focuses on students' academic anxiety and learning engagement, and analyzes the mediating effect of academic buoyancy on the relationship between academic anxiety and university students' learning engagement.

**Methodology:** Participants were hospitality students in a university in mainland China. The questionnaires were distributed and collected online. A total of 240 hospitality students voluntarily participated in this study. After disregarding 24 invalid questionnaires, 214 questionnaires were included in the analyses. Instruments are the well-established scales that attested to be valid and reliable in previous literature. The seven-point Likert scale were used to record the responses. Since the scales are all written in English, this study will apply the commonly used back-translation procedure to ensure that the translation from English to Chinese is more accurate. The relations between studying variables were probed. PLS-SEM (Partial least squares - structural equation modeling) analysis was performed to examine the mediating role of academic buoyancy on the relationship between academic anxiety and learning engagement. The reliability and validity of the measurement model were tested using composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE). Confirmative Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to determine whether the measurement model fit the data. The measurement model was tested first, followed by the path model. After the validation of the

measurement model, a path model was used to analyze the interrelationship among the three latent variables using SEM.

**Results:** Tackling collinearity issues is the preliminary step in the structural model assessment. The significance of the hypothesized relationships was analyzed by applying the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples. The direct and positive effect of academic anxiety on learning engagement ( $\beta=0.067$ ,  $p>0.05$ ) did not reach the required significance level. With respect to mediation, Zhao et al's (2010) approach where the presence of a mediation effect is proven by the significance of the indirect effect ( $a*b$ ) was employed, regardless of whether the signs of the indirect and direct effects are the same (complimentary) or in the opposite (competitive) direction. The indirect effect of academic anxiety on learning engagement through academic buoyancy ( $\beta=-0.111$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) was significant and did not straddle zero between the Boot LLCI (-0.171) and Boot ULCI (-0.049), suggesting that academic buoyancy acted as a full mediator for the relationship between academic anxiety and learning engagement given that the direct association was not significant.

**Conclusion:** The primary goal of the present study was to explore the extent to which academic buoyancy mediates the relation between academic anxiety and university students learning engagement. Aligning with prior work demonstrating academic buoyancy as a mediator between academic anxiety and academic engagement outcomes (Martin & Marsh, 2006), the present study showed that academic buoyancy played a significant mediating role between academic anxiety and learning engagement. This finding advances knowledge of academic buoyancy, in particular, novel predictor and outcome associated with the construct. If students experience low levels of academic anxiety, this is positively associated with their sense that they are able to respond to academic challenges (e.g. Martin et al., 2010, 2013). In turn, a heightened sense of buoyancy is associated with learning engagement. The results highlight the important role of academic buoyancy in the link between academic anxiety and learning engagement. An interesting finding regarding academic anxiety was that in the simple regression model before buoyancy was included as a predictor, it was non-significantly associated with the learning engagement. One possible explanation would be related to Hebb's (1995) Inverted-U model. That is, when anxiety is too high, this is detrimental for performance-and, as we argue, learning engagement-given that it utilizes important cognitive resources and takes attention away from relevant cues (e.g. Fox, 2010). When academic buoyancy is included in the model, it appears that academic anxiety becomes adjusted to an optimal level. More precisely, when students are experiencing anxiety, but feel they can effectively navigate academic challenges, then anxiety is more likely to have a beneficial impact on learning engagement - perhaps the heightened awareness or investment from anxiety helps students engage in learning at appropriate times. In other words, academic buoyancy appears to partial out the detrimental aspect of anxiety that is associated with adversity. This study provided researchers with a holistic picture of students' academic anxiety and learning engagement through academic buoyancy.

**Implications:** This study adopted the social cognitive perspective to explore the pathway through which academic anxiety promotes learning engagement, thus contributing to the literature on anxiety and learning engagement. Findings from this study help in rethinking the role of academic buoyancy among hospitality students, finding more effective interventions for promoting hospitality students' learning engagement, developing buoyancy-related counselling methods for hospitality students, and extending the knowledge of academic

anxiety's role in the academic process, and in particular, how its association with learning engagement is benefited by academic buoyancy.

Keywords: learning engagement; academic buoyancy; acad

**PGRC – 013**

**Visitor Satisfaction, Expenditure, and Behavior Intentions in National Park Tourism:  
Bridging Research Gaps**

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**Background**

Tourist expenditure and satisfaction with destinations are vital tourism research domains, and some studies are concerning their relationship (Perles-Ribes, 2020; Disegna, 2016 ). While a significant number of tourism literature unanimously endorse that satisfaction leads to several favourable behavioural intentions, only a few researchers have been engaged in the relationship among tourist expenditure, experience, satisfaction, and behaviour intention, and the findings are often debatable (D'Urso et al., 2020). Besides, the relationship between satisfaction and expenditure is controversial; some articles argue that it is positive (Cárdenas-García, 2015), and some papers justify that it is negative (Perles-Ribes, 2020). Furthermore, lots of literature discusses expenditure, satisfaction, and revisit intention (Eren, 2019; Wicker et al., 2012); however, a few studies reveal the relationship between spending and revisit intention (Larsen & Wolff, 2019). Similarly, the relationship between expenditure and intention to recommend was explored by a few articles (Chulaphan & Barahona, 2021), and most studies discuss them separately (Matzler et al., 2019; Song et al., 2010). Meanwhile, studies which have included the concept of the visitor experience and empirically examined the visitor experience interrelated to satisfaction and behavioural intention (Lee et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Gohary et al., 2020b) are limited.

**Objective**

This study addresses the relationship between satisfaction and spending, explores the uncharted connection between expenditure and behavioral intention, and bridges the knowledge gaps surrounding the interplay between experience, satisfaction, and behavioural intention. It aims to contribute to the ongoing debate regarding expenditure and satisfaction, fill gaps in our understanding of the relationships between experience, satisfaction, and behavioural intention, and enhance the existing literature on expenditure, revisit intentions and recommendations within the national park context.

**Methodology**

The survey questionnaire was utilised to collect data at one of the 5A scenic area honour - Dragon Palace National Park, Guizhou province, China. In total, 454 visitors were surveyed utilising convenient sampling from August to December 2022, and 412 valid data were utilised for data analysis. Partial least square structure equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is employed in the current article to establish the relationship among expenditure, experience, satisfaction, and the level of behaviour intentions in tourist destinations. The model's validity and goodness of fit were estimated before testing the model's structure (Purwanto & Sudargini, 2021), and bootstrapping was carried out to assess the significance of the factor loadings and path coefficients.

**Findings**

The descriptive statistics conducted by SPSS 26.0 reveal that each respondent spent an average of 1824.70 yuan. Dragon Palace National Park respondents reported a satisfaction level of 3.9660 in 2022. Meanwhile, the revisit intention and intention to recommend were

3.7443 and 3.877, respectively, implying visitors tended to recommend and revisit. The results of the t-statistics and P values of the structural model estimated by PLS-SEM verify the correlations between the latent variables using a two-tailed bootstrapping with 5000 samples at a significance level of 5%. As the t-statistics exceeded 1.96 (Wong, 2013), experience strongly impacted satisfaction ( $P < 0.05$ ), which, in turn, strongly correlated with intention to recommend ( $P < 0.05$ ) and intention to revisit ( $P < 0.05$ ). Experience and intention to revisit were not determinants of visitor spending ( $P > 0.05$ ), but satisfaction and intention to recommend were ( $p < 0.05$ ). More specifically, the correlation between expenditure and intention to recommend was positive, while the correlation between satisfaction and expenditure was negative.

### **Conclusion**

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between satisfaction and spending, yet consensus remains elusive. This article delves into the associations among expenditure, experience, satisfaction, intention to revisit, and intention to recommend within the context of Dragon Palace National Park, a renowned national park in Guizhou, China. Data was collected through a questionnaire, resulting in 412 valid responses gathered between August and December 2022. The findings reveal a weak and negative link between satisfaction and expenditure at the national park in 2022. Furthermore, a weak and positive relationship exists between intention to recommend and expenditure, indicating that a higher intention to recommend are associated with increased expenditure. However, there is no discernible correlation between expenditure, intention to revisit, and experience, suggesting that enhancing the visitor experience and intention to revisit do not necessarily lead to higher expenditures by national park visitors.

### **Implication**

Concerning the theoretical implication, this present study created nine spending categories for national parks: accommodations, food and beverage, camping fees, retail outlets, and entertainment; other national parks in China can be used to classify spending. Besides, the empirical examination verified the reliability and validity of the national park visitor behaviour pattern measurement model. The measurement model can be generalised to other national parks worldwide. As for the practical implication, we do not advise the national park manager to discontinue promotion activities to cultivate national park satisfaction due to the result of this study. As of 2022, most of the national park visitors are from Guizhou province and high levels of tourist satisfaction cause them to revisit regularly (Perles-Ribes et al., 2021) and further affect their expenditure negatively. However, this does not mean that a low level of satisfaction or a reduction in satisfaction levels does not reduce tourist spending. Hence, the continuance of fostering national park visitor satisfaction and holding festivals or producing more programs are conducive to enhancing the expenditure of national park visitors

### **Limitation**

Although this present study provides a clear direction for national park development based on visitor behaviour patterns, it has limitations. Firstly, the questionnaire is lengthy and requires some patience to fill in. Therefore, the questionnaire should be optimised. Secondly, even though this study was conducted after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, it still affected the number of national park visitors, the provinces that they were from, and their spending patterns as international, inter-province, and even intercity travel restrictions were still in place in China in 2022. In any case, the work carried out represents an advance in the existing

literature on the subject. It references national park managers and scholars in this domain for future work.

**Keywords:** Experience; Satisfaction; Intention to recommend; Intention to revisit; Expenditure; National Park;

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**PGRC – 014**

**Factors Influencing Infection Precautionary Behaviour in Hotels: A Comparative Study in Hebei, China**

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This study aims to reveal the impact of contactless services hotels provide on the infection risk of Chinese consumers. With the development of technology, the services provided by hotels are becoming increasingly intelligent and technology efficient, especially in China. The number of smart hotels, robot hotels, and unmanned hotels in China has grown rapidly in recent years (Hao et al., 2020). These hotels provide some or all services by non-human employees, which is also called contactless service (Hao, 2021). The enhancement of people's health awareness and individual awareness have become important driving factors for them to choose hotels that provide contactless services because they believe that such services can reduce their chances of being infected while providing more personalized service (Cheong & Law, 2023; Choi et al., 2020). Currently, contactless services are used by hotels as an effective marketing tool to highlight the personalization and safety of their products. However, no research could support that contactless service can reduce hotel consumers' and employee's risk of infection. According to the Behavioural Immune System (BIS) theory, consumers may not take necessary hygienic behaviours due to the belief that contactless services are safer. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a series of studies on this topic validate the views and protect the health of hotel stakeholders.

This research selectively integrates the Artificially Intelligent (AI) Device Use Acceptance (AIDUA) model and the Behavioural Immune System (BIS) theory. As a key factor in the AIDUA model and BIS theory, emotion provides a reasonable opportunity for theoretical integration, and based on this, a conceptual framework is constructed to describe the anti-infection behaviour of hotel consumers. This research will test the hypothesis of the relationship between the variables in this conceptual framework by issuing questionnaires to determine whether the relationship between the variables is statistically significant. The formal investigation will be conducted in Hebei Province, China, and will be distributed online and physically to the potential respondents. The respondents will be divided into those with experience in hotel non-contact services and those with no relevant experience in non-contact services hotels. This distinction helps to compare the differences in influencing factors of related behaviours of the two types of consumers during the same period when analyzing the research results. After screening, the collected data will be analyzed using a partial least square-structural equation model, and the two sets of data will be compared through a t-test.

It is expected that social influence, hedonic motivation, germ aversion, perceived infectability, perceived risk reduction performance, perceived reduction effort expectation, perceived infection risk and emotion will have a significant impact on the infection precautionary behaviour of hotel consumers in Hebei Province, China, after receiving contactless service.

This study constructs a conceptual model to explain hotel consumers' infection precautionary behaviour by combining the BIS theory from behavioural psychology and the AIDUA model from consumer behaviour. It has theoretical value for developing BIS theory and AIDUA

model development, and has contributed to the integration of the two fields. It also provides new research perspectives for scholars in the two fields. In addition, this study explains the main factors that influence the health behaviour of hotel consumers. This research result helps to increase the attention paid by hotel managers, consumers and academic researchers in the hotel field to consumers' health, and provides new hotel health and safety management ideas. The study points out that although contactless service has been implicitly regarded as an effective measure to help hotels face future health crises, the accuracy of this view is still worth exploring. Because person-to-person contact is only one of the many transmission routes for pathogens, many transmission routes cannot be blocked by reducing interpersonal contact. Individual infection precautionary behaviours still play an important role in self-protection. Over-promotion of the safety of contactless services will affect individuals' enthusiasm for taking such behaviours, ultimately leading to higher infection risks. Therefore, this study combined the research results to analyze how to effectively activate consumers' infection precautionary behaviour in hotels that adopt contactless services and put forward a series of practical suggestions. Finally, possible future research topics are conceived by proposing the limitations of this study.

Keywords: Contactless Service; Hotel Consumer; Consumer Behaviour; Consumer Health; AIDUA Model; Behavioural Immune System

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**PGRC – 015**

**Data Analytics in Hotel Customer Feedback and Multi-Sensory Experience**

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**ABSTRACT**

As a result of the rise of booking websites and social media, customers now share their satisfaction. To maintain the organization and potential customers engaged, feedback, comments, and concerns are publicized. The data is available, with the hospitality industry sending vast volumes of data to each site. The study analyzed data from online reviews acquired from TripAdvisor.ph. The use of secondary data generates the guests' reviews. Using sentiment analysis, text analytics, data mining to measure customer's affective evaluations, multi-sensory experience, and customer satisfaction. Hotel reviews made online from selected hotels from different hotel star categories in National Capital Region collected from TripAdvisor.com.ph; and analyzed using business intelligence techniques using Power BI Tools and business intelligence software, to determine the relationship. Findings showed that there is no significant relationship between customer feedback on multi-sensory experience and affective evaluation. While the review rate, positive affect, cognitive effort, and multi-sensory reflects are moderately related. Integration of data analytics using business intelligence tools can be considered to create an accurate customized program based on the results.

**KEYWORDS:** Sentiment Analysis; Text Analytics; Data Mining; Multi-Sensory Experience; Customer reviews.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Building online feedback spaces for our clients is a great method to pique their attention and drive sales in the long run (n.d). According to a study, big data is a good structure for future exploration in exploring a diverse range of sectors spanning from corporate development to data science (DeVecchio, 2018). The large data are the outcome of a great amount of data being reflected by varied and diversified parameters (Wu, 2015). This specific information is a popular concept that is constantly reshaping society and influencing corporations, organizations, and governmental agencies. The data generated by sensors or scientific investigations can be both from and from the outside world. They have access to information generated by, about, and from people and social networks. The Internet of Things, and the cloud technology, and the effective development of search engines all contribute to the shifting amount of data generated, which creates more chances for data centers to concentrate on the unprecedented degree, complexity, and broadness of data collection to comprehend real-world issues (Meyer, 2015). According to Dan Hill, the founder of consumer insight firm sensory logic, based on his book, he proposed a "sensory cognitive theory" focusing on the customer's sense, then feel or think and then act. These sensory elements will help customers better understand the products and services in a competitive setting. In a highly competitive market, adding more sensory components to customers' experiences can assist them choose products and services (Spence, 2016).

**II. METHODOLOGY**

This study used online customer reviews collected from TripAdvisor.ph, that analyzed the data. A specific keyword was used. With the use of business intelligence tools and big data analytics technologies including sentiment analysis, regression analysis, text analytics, and

data mining. The data mining methods is a valuable tool to find a meaningful structure of customer reviews from assigned ratings and comments of the hotel they stayed in for a period. Because of the COVID-19, services in the hotel

industry halted, and there are limited products and services. The movement shifted into an online setting where information and all the works are available on the Internet.

A service should be created to help the industry from the pandemic to reach out to the guests utilizing online services. Based on the result generated from the extracted data from the online reviews, to align the service and products that can be offered in the hotel from the accurate data generated, the output of this study will help the hotel management by applying the proposed service innovation theory. The following research questions were formed to acquire the accuracy from the objective. Based from the data generated (1) Hotel Rating (based from the customer reviews from the online travel website), (2) number of reviews from 2019-2022, (3) Reviews in terms of positive, negative affect, cognitive effort, (4) reviews generated through multi-sensory experience.

Studies on customers' knowledge of social context, thought, and emotion may be influenced by social factors (Rychalski, 2017). According to a different study, it may also have an impact on customers' knowledge, past attitudes, and personality attributes (Yu, 2017). In this study, mainly discussing the conceptual framework, the service innovation through sensory cognitive theory was used, the following variables under the theory are: for service innovation: (a) customer focus or customer sense, (b) process focus or customers feel, (c) continuous improvement or act, the variables under the service innovation through sensory cognitive theory, these variables gone through multi- sensory digital experience which covers the following variables: (a) positive affect review, (b) negative affect review, (c) cognitive affect review, and (d) augmented reality and/or virtual reality, these variables are be evident through the customers/ guests reviews from their hotel stay in NCR data contained and be the positive and negative feedback from the social media, the data collected via web crawling and undergone data or text pre-processing wherein the collected data (initial dataset) were filtered the final data set were gathered and undergone data or text analysis using business intelligence and analytics process software or an equivalent then undergo the econometric analysis to generate the result, after going through series of analytical process, The output is an improved service innovation model that allow business and academia to grasp the new method to collecting reliable data as a foundation for creating a new and better service.

### **III. RESULT**

The table describes the rating of each hotel based on Tripadvisor.com.ph guest reviews according to hotel star categorization. For the five-star hotel classification, City of Dreams - Nuwa leads the way with a 4.81 rating result from the extracted data, followed by Vivere Hotel with a 4.56 rating, Edsa Shangri-La with a 4.45 rating, and Manila Diamond Hotel with a 4.42 rating. With a rating of 4.63 from tripadvisor.com.ph, Belmont Hotel topped the list, followed by Ramada Manila Central with a rating of 4.52, Novotel with a rating of 4.51, Savoy Hotel with a rating of 4.48, Seda BGC with a rating of 4.47, and Joy Nostalg & Suites Manila with a rating of 4.42. Leading the three-star hotel classification with 4.82

Based on the study of (Kim & Hak-Seon, 2022) stated that reviews from online are a source of data to identify the main customers especially on making a good decision, with the online reviews and ranking, potential customers can now easily decide on which accommodation they would like to experience and booked. This can also mean on the part of the management to formulate another strategy, re-asses the facilitate of the

operation, and possible review the plans for the complaint management from the customer reviews using the big data analytics.

It also shows the feedback from online reviews based on affective evaluation, with the variables positive affect or positive reviews, cognitive affect or neutral reviews, and negative affect or negative reviews. Manila Diamond Hotel topped the list of five-star hotels with 128 positive reviews or 24.15%, while cognitive affect power BI tools had 357 positive reviews or 73.60% with no bad reviews. Four-star hotel category the following are the hotel category: First from Belmont Hotel with 141 or 23.94% positive reviews and 447 or 75.89% cognitive or neutral reviews, while there is no negative affect result. For the three-star hotel category the following hotels are: BSA Twin Towers with 75 or 24.59% positive affect result, and 227 or 74.43% cognitive affect, and 3 or 0.18% negative affect result, according to an article pertaining about the feedback of online customers truth and honest opinions, built a good reputation in a business. It was shown that online consumers are easily convinced when they are provided the useful reputation management mechanism when conducting an online feedback or review. (Nanaimo Daily News, 2019)

With the responses from internet reviews on the multi-sensory experience of touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste. To clearly underline the value from the extracted data and the data analytics techniques used to generate the results, the following numbers was be shown based on hotel and from the five multi-sensory values reflected, respectively: For the five-star hotel category: City of Dreams – NUWA with a word count of 53 or 39% on sight sensory, 59 or 43% on touch sensory, 13 or 10% on hear sensory, 9 or 7% on taste sensory, and 2 or 1% on smell sensory. Four-star hotels: Belmont Hotel with 341 or 36% sight sensory, 410 or 44% on touch sensory, 108 or 12% hear, 66 or 7% taste sensory, and 12 or 1% on smell sensory. According to a study conducted, specifically, the researchers seek the gap and study the use of internet of things and sensory marketing particularly, in expensive hotel accommodations, it strengthens their study when the findings presented that the senses sight, hearing, and smell had an impact on customer feelings, while the following senses on taste, and smell had an impact on the experiences of the guest affectively. While the senses smell and taste had brought an influence to the hotel guests eudaimonism. The greater effect on eudaimonism and behavioral intentions among women compared to men relied on the sense of smell. (Jean-Eric, Lick, & Taieb, 2021)

Star Classification	HOTEL	AVERAGE RATINGS	No of reviews	Customer Feedback based on Affective Evaluation			Multi-Sensory Experience				
				Positive Affect (no. of count)	Cognitive Effort (no. of count)	Negative Affect (no. of count)	Sight	Touch	Hear	Taste	Smell
Five Star	City of Dreams – Nuwa	4.81	72	19.44%	80.56%	0%	39%	43%	10%	7%	1%
	Vivere Hotel	4.56	41	24.39%	75.61%	0%	19%	65%	10%	6%	0%
	Edsa Shangri-La	4.45	178	16.85%	83.15%	0%	39%	37%	11%	9%	3%
	Manila Diamond Hotel	4.42	530	24.15%	73.6%	0%	38%	40%	12%	7%	2%
Four Star	Belmont Hotel	4.63	589	23.94%	75.89%	3%	36%	44%	12%	7%	1%
	Ramada Manila Central	4.52	149	20.13%	79.87%	0%	36%	49%	10%	4%	7%
	Novotel	4.51	176	10.23%	89.77%	0%	33%	42%	14%	8%	3%
	Savoy Hotel	4.48	73	15.07%	84.93%	0%	46%	35%	14%	5%	0%
	Seda BGC	4.47	19	26.32%	68.42%	3%	11%	53%	21%	11%	5%
	Joy Nostalgia & Suites Manila	4.42	104	12.5%	87.5%	0%	42%	40%	11%	6%	2%
Three Star	Jinjiang Inn – Makati	4.82	111	30.63%	69.37%	0%	48%	36%	8%	8%	1%
	Hotel Celeste – Makati	4.64	14	7.14%	80.56%	0%	51%	22%	22%	0%	4%
	Hotel 101	4.54	255	26.67%	72.94%	3%	38%	46%	9%	5%	9%
	BSA Twin Towers	4.25	305	24.59%	74.43%	18%	39%	46%	9%	4%	1%
	Oxford Suites Makati	1.88	17	100%	0%	0%	41%	38%	7%	0%	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>			2,646								

**IV. DISCUSSION**

The hotel rating that is also visible on the web is a summary of the ratings provided by the visitors who wrote the online review. The hotel over-all rating was based purely from the website which generated based on the rating given by the guests during their stay. The raw and cleaned data were used to calculate the number of reviews reflected in the result. There were 4,173 data extracted, while the resultant data amounted to 2,646 during data mining. Manila Diamond Hotel's data for the five-star hotel category has 530 raw or 12.70% and 530 cleaned data or 20.03%. Belmont Hotel leads the four-star hotel category with 1,184 or 29% raw data and 589 or 22.26% cleaned data. Jinjiang Inn - Makati received 333 or 8.06% raw data and 111 or 4.20% cleaned data in the three-star category.

Based on the word count, the following numbers were generated using data analytics approaches from positive affect, cognitive or neutral affect, and negative affect for feedback from internet reviews. According to the results in the five-star category, Manila Diamond Hotel has the highest positive affect word count (128 or 24.15%), 357 or 73.60% cognitive affect word count, and 0.00 or 0.00% negative affect word count.

The following results were obtained using data analytics tools and sentiment analysis: City of Dreams with 43% highest rate on touch sensory, Edsa Shangri-La with 39% sight sensory as the choice. For the four-star category, Belmont Hotel has 44% touch sensory, Savoy Hotel has 46% sight sensory, Seda BGC has 53% touch sensory, and Joy Nostalg has 42% sight sensory. For the three-star category, Azure Urban Resort and Residences received 38% from sight and touch sensory, Hotel Celeste received 51% sight sensory.

**V. CONCLUSIONS**

The hotel rating obtained by the researcher utilizing Microsoft analytic tools and power BI tools that were used to evaluate the ratings of the hotels mentioned and used in this study has been displayed. It denotes that hotels differ based on the amount or volume of reviews given by guests, reflecting the hotel star level. The big data available for acquiring information, particularly on social media platforms, provides the chance to expand the number of users and use comments and their experiences from the services offered to post. Ratings are important for both the hotel and the user or guest, since they might aid in suggesting a specific facility based on their experience (Ray et al., 2022). Using technology to predict the attitudes of guests by leveraging their feedback considerably adds to the formation of a personalized service for different types of guests. Hotel ratings are one of the factors that guests consider when deciding which hotel brands to stay at.

Remarkably the hotel rankings results obtained with the assistance of the appropriate data analytics tools effectively gathered a big data set with 2,646 extracted data and a four-year time frame. Unfortunately, data from 2020 to the present clearly shows a huge change because of the epidemic, with hotel accommodations being utilized as quarantine facilities. This has had a big influence on the service because it restricts their capacity to provide hotel meal service in addition to just room accommodation. According to one study (Wu et al, 2015), passengers tend to analyze hotel information from online travel companies, allowing consumers to create their preferences through selection and criteria from hotel ranking results. If no hotel ranking characteristics are represented, guests will have a difficult time locating their ideal hotel to stay given the time and effort required to analyze each hotel before making a final decision. A hotel ranking technique based on multidimensional hotel information that considers the interests of the travelers should be accessible, principally using the location, price, reviews, and rating.

The result of the big data collection generated the total number of reviews from the 4,173 data. Each hotel category differs from one another, primarily in the type of service provided by five-star hotels vs three-star hotels. The hotel employee's approach also plays a big part from the end of the guests and how they encouraged their guests to participate in placing a guest review, which strengthens the study (Xia, Hong-Youl, 2022) wherein the intent of the customer to write a review or feedback heavily relies on the trust and satisfaction of the customer experience. The management should then consider encouraging their guests to join and submit online feedback from online travel companies to obtain a higher rating on the website. It can be a useful technique in keeping the hotel's name as one of the top hotels in the minds of potential guests.

Measuring the positive, cognitive, and negative affect using the word count. Since customers used more favorable terms in their internet reviews, Oxford Suites in Makati is reflected in the positive words that were generated. The same is true of the neutral and negative words, which were used fairly and revealed whether customers were satisfied. According to consumer sentiment analysis, satisfied guests who "appreciate" a business are more likely to make larger purchases, stay longer, and recommend it to their friends, speeding up natural development (Magee, 2016). It has unequivocally demonstrated that AI is now capable of predicting the visitors' emotions from the words they employ utilizing a large amount of data. The positive, cognitive, and negative affect results clearly demonstrated that the generated data has a small number of negative reviews. Using a text mining method, turn disordered words into organized data or organized data that can be analyzed and evaluated further. Text analysis approaches, in theory, uncover the "why" core



because that extends beyond customer complaints, discover "hot button" consumer issues, and estimate customers' future wants (Turner, 2016). This can be used to develop further research on the aspect of having a large amount of data on the negative aspect of the guests' feedback, which can be a drive to improve service innovation in a particular hotel by focusing on the negative rather than the positive feedback.

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**PGRC – 016**

**Green Cruising Practices and Management Reputation Towards a Sustainable Cruise Services**

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**Extended Abstract**

Impact and awareness of sustainable practices have increased by a factor of ten within the world's leading industries. This issue generates scientists' and environmentalists' recurrent warnings to every person on the planet that our time on earth is running out. CLIA (Cruise Line International Association) has used these practices as a primary guideline for enforcing green and sustainable cruising at sea.

The Researchers employed a Quantitative study employing a Correlational research design to investigate the relationship between green cruise practices and the cruise management reputation rate of sustainable practices-related passenger satisfaction. The researchers used a correlational study because it can systematically determine the relationship between green practices and green cruise reputation and the satisfaction rate of cruise package passengers.

This study employed Purposive Sampling, the most efficient sampling technique, in which researchers rely on their own discretion to select participants for the study. Due to the apparent nature of the study's design and objectives, only a small number of individuals can serve as primary data sources. It will be utilized to determine which composition represents the most efficient green cruise practice. This research was conducted in three (3) eco-friendly cruise destinations, namely Asia, the Caribbean, and South America. Some of the world's earliest civilizations can be found at cruise destinations in Asia. Asia is a patchwork of cultures and histories, bustling villages, tranquil landscapes, and captivating temples and sanctuaries. Asia cruise destinations include the harbors of Singapore, Tokyo, Kobe, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, as well as a place with a diverse tourist population that purchases green cruise line packages. There are more lush landscapes and crystalline coastlines in cruise destinations in the Caribbean.

The principal cruise regions in the Caribbean are the western, eastern, and southern regions. Despite the fact that certain behaviors are shared by all three regions, each has a distinct personality.

To accomplish sustainable cruising, customer satisfaction has been determined based on the implementation of green practices and the management's reputation. The responses of 90 respondents from Asia, the Caribbean, and South America were analyzed using a 4-point Likert scale and survey questionnaires. How much green practices, cruise reputation, and passenger contentment contribute to achieving sustainable cruise services was determined by the survey questionnaire.

According to results, the majority of respondents concur that the implementation of green practices and the support of cruise ship management have led to more satisfied passengers.

The assessment of the three groups of passenger-respondents on Green Cruise practices and reputation were very highly practiced and have very good reputation as revealed in the grand means of 3.74, 3.62 and 3.67 respectively with verbal interpretation of strongly agreed. It further showed that 2 out of 2 variables were assessed as very good also. This result demonstrates that passengers support the implementation of sustainable practices on cruise ships, thereby increasing cruise management's revenue and encouraging them to implement more sustainable practices on a larger number of their ships. The support of the majority of passengers for environmentally friendly practices can raise awareness and encourage more cruise lines to adopt green practices. This factor can overall achieve sustainable cruising around the globe and also reach other hospitality and tourism industries.

**keywords:** Sustainable Cruising, Green Practices, Management Reputation

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**PGRC – 017**

**Cultural Connection and Destination Image: Investigating the Mediating Role of Culture Affinity on Traditions, Consumer Ethnocentrism and Destination Brand Image**

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**Background**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the significant role of Cultural Influence in shaping the image of tourist destinations within the competitive tourism industry. This research focuses particularly on the impact of cultural affinity on the formation of destination brand images, drawing attention to the influence of traditions, consumer ethnocentrism, and cultural affinity.

While extensive research has been conducted on tourist destinations in developed countries, there is a paucity of studies on those in developing countries. This study aims to address this research gap by examining the complex relationships between traditions, consumer ethnocentrism, cultural affinity, and destination image in the context of Swat, Pakistan, a lesser-explored tourist region.

The theoretical framework of this research is grounded in the social identity theory and the self-congruity theory, which suggest that individuals identify with certain social groups and form their own social identities. The central argument posits that consumer ethnocentrism and adherence to traditions play crucial roles in shaping tourists' cultural affinity, which in turn influences the perception and image of the destination. By exploring these relationships, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of how these factors collectively impact the destination brand image.

The results of this research possess both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, this study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the interconnections between traditions, consumer ethnocentrism, cultural affinity, and destination brand image. From a practical perspective, the research strives to offer guidance to destination marketers and policymakers through the provision of valuable insights. These insights may help in the formulation of effective strategies that are aligned with cultural preferences, enable customer segmentation, and promote the positive image of the destination.

**Methodology**

The methodology of this study employs a quantitative approach to investigate the intricate relationships between traditions, consumer ethnocentrism, cultural affinity, and destination brand image. Utilizing well-established measurement instruments, the research evaluates these constructs, including Culture Affinity, Tourist Ethnocentrism, Destination Image, and Tourist Tradition. To ensure the validity and reliability of the

measurement model, several statistical analyses were carried out, such as factor loadings, indicator multicollinearity assessment, and reliability and validity analysis. The discriminant validity was determined via the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach. The structural model was employed to examine the relationships between the constructs, with hypothesis testing confirming the expected connections. Additionally, mediation analysis was conducted to assess the mediating role of cultural affinity in the relationships between traditions and destination brand image, as well as between consumer ethnocentrism and destination brand image. This rigorous methodology provides a solid foundation for investigating the research questions and analysing the study's findings.

## Results

Several important findings and statistical analyses were presented in the data analysis and results section. Initially, the measurement model was evaluated using SmartPLS to assess the factor loadings of indicators, which represent latent constructs. The factor loadings were used to examine the strength of relationships between indicators and their associated constructs, with higher values indicating stronger relationships. The reliability and validity of these factor loadings were confirmed. The study examined indicator multi-collinearity to determine whether there were any high correlations among indicators within the measurement model. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to quantify the extent of multi-collinearity, and the results showed that the indicators had acceptable levels of collinearity.

To assess the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs, reliability and validity analyses were conducted. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were used to evaluate internal consistency, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) assessed convergent validity. The results showed that the constructs exhibited strong internal consistency and convergent validity.

The study also examined discriminant validity using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach. This approach compared correlations between indicators of different constructs (heterotrait) to correlations between indicators of the same construct (monotrait). The results indicated that the constructs were adequately discriminated.

The structural model was then assessed to determine the relationships between the constructs under study and their statistical significance. All hypotheses were tested, including the influence of tourist traditions and ethnocentrism on cultural affinity and the influence of cultural affinity on destination brand image. The results confirmed these hypotheses, showing significant positive relationships.

Furthermore, mediation analyses were conducted to explore the role of cultural affinity as a mediator between traditions, ethnocentrism, and destination brand image. The results indicated significant mediation effects, supporting the proposition that cultural affinity mediates the relationship between these variables.

The study employed a combination of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, AVE, HTMT, and Structural Equation Modelling analysis to examine the psychometric properties of the measurement model, including factorial validity, internal consistency, and construct validity.

The results of these analyses provided support for the validity and reliability of the measurement model, and highlighted the importance of cultural affinity as a mediator in the relationship between traditions, ethnocentrism, and destination brand image

## **Conclusion**

This study has provided valuable insights into the complex relationships between Ethnocentrism, Tradition, cultural Affinity, and their impact on destination image. The findings indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between Ethnocentrism and cultural Affinity, with individuals who exhibit higher levels of Ethnocentrism having stronger cultural Affinities, which shape their perceptions of destinations.

Furthermore, the study uncovered a positive relationship between Tradition and cultural Affinity, although this relationship has yielded mixed results in prior research. This suggests that the interplay between Tradition and cultural Affinity is complex and requires further investigation.

The research also confirms a positive relationship between cultural Affinity and destination image, with individuals having a stronger cultural Affinity for a destination more likely to perceive it more favorably. This finding emphasizes the importance of cultural Affinity in shaping destination image and highlights the potential for destination marketers to leverage this relationship to enhance their marketing strategies and appeal to specific target markets.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to our understanding of the influence of Ethnocentrism and Tradition on cultural Affinity, providing empirical evidence that enriches the existing literature on cultural psychology. The study also offers practical insights for destination marketers and tourism practitioners, emphasizing the importance of aligning marketing strategies with the cultural preferences and values of their target audiences to enhance destination image and attractiveness.

## **Implications**

The findings of this study carry significant implications for stakeholders in the tourism and destination marketing industries. It is recommended that destination marketers develop marketing strategies that cater to specific target markets and emphasize the local culture and heritage, as this can result in a positive association with the destination image. Cultural and heritage tourism destinations can leverage their cultural assets to attract visitors with strong cultural Affinities. Further research can be conducted into the moderating and mediating factors, and policymakers can use the insights to formulate policies that support the preservation of cultural heritage. Businesses in the tourism sector can benefit from incorporating this knowledge into their cross-cultural marketing efforts.

**PGRC – 018**

**The Effect of Gender Inequality: An Empirical Study on the Barriers to Female Hotel Employee's Job Satisfaction in Chongqing, China**

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**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of the influential factors that impact to female hotel employee's job satisfaction in Chongqing, China.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Quantitative research method

**Findings:** After the data analysis section, the key findings indicates that the communication is the most important factor impact the female's job satisfaction in hotel enterprises. The effect of such impact remains in moderate level. From the past literatures, management perception, physical factors, and network relationship plays important role in the proposed satisfaction model. However, our result shows their impacts are not significant. In the aspect of communication, the effective oral communication is concerned by the most respondent.

**Practical and theoretical implications:** This research has two meanings. One is theoretical. This research mainly summarizes the importance of previous female occupations in hotels, as well as the job satisfaction in women's career development in hotels and the unequal rights granted to the shortcomings existed in management. The second is the practical significance. This research is mainly to make the hotel industry pay more attention to women's careers in terms of job satisfaction, and at the same time, women should be given certain rights to increase the job satisfaction among the female employees.

**Originality: (contributions)** The expectation of this research is to be applied to the hotel industry through this research. Through this research, we can understand the current inequality of women's careers and empowerment in the hotel industry. In the future hotel industry, it can be valued and attract social attention, and it is hoped that the hotel industry can treat women equally.

**Keywords:** *Job Satisfaction, Female, Employment, Hotel, Communication*



**PGRC – 019**

**Impact of social media Word of Mouth on Chinese Consumers Intentions to Revisit Luxury Restaurants under the COVID-19**

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**Extended Abstract:**

Europe and the US have long been considered major luxury markets. However, since 2009, Asia, especially China, has emerged as a promising growth market for luxury goods (Gao et al., 2009; Langer, 2021). Rising living standards, coupled with booming tourism, are forcing hotels to innovate and increase customer satisfaction to expand their market share (Dabrowski et al., 2019; Rienda, Claver & Andreu, 2020; Romero & Tejada, 2019). The basic principles of business sustainability revolve around meeting the needs and desires of consumers (Makanyeza, Sivotwa, & Jaiyeoba, 2021). Effective market segmentation and understanding consumer needs are critical to driving repeat purchases. Despite the growing interest of Chinese consumers in luxury goods and services, research in this area has mainly focused on material goods rather than experiential luxury services (Peng & Chen, 2019).

**Research purpose:** In view of this, this study aims to explore the factors that influence the willingness of Chinese consumers to repurchase luxury hotels. By addressing the gap in Chinese consumers' understanding of experiential luxury consumption, this study aims to provide actionable insights for luxury hotels and restaurants in the region.

**Rise of luxury hotel industry:** The luxury hotel industry is booming, with high booking rates and significant economic contribution (Luna-Cortés et al., 2022). Although only a small number of travelers choose luxury hotels, they contribute greatly to tourism spending (Yang & Mattila, 2017; Chen & Peng, 2014). Paradoxically, research on luxury consumption in the hospitality industry lags behind broader research on luxury consumption (Yang & Mattila, 2017). Clearly, the hospitality domain lacks an effective framework to capture luxury value perceptions (Peng, Chen, and Hung, 2020; Yang and Mattila, 2016), thus requiring rigorous academic exploration.  
**Post-Pandemic Paradigm:** The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered dramatic changes in consumer perceptions and behaviors in luxury hotels and luxury restaurants. Safety, hygiene, health protection and flexible booking policies are top of mind for consumers. The impact of the pandemic has highlighted the need for luxury hotels to adapt to these changing preferences. Research dedicated to understanding post-pandemic consumer perceptions is critical to developing effective marketing strategies and operational guidelines that resonate with the transformed consumer landscape.

**Untapped territory:** While studies exist on online hotel purchase intentions, they are mainly focused on online travel agencies (OTAs) and hotel apps (Abdullah et al., 2017; Murphy et al., 2016; Kucukusta et al., 2015 years; Wang et al.), 2015). Current research mainly focuses on green hotel (e-WOM) and its marketing impact (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Leung et al., 2015; Choi et al., 2016). Despite the importance of social media in travel planning, especially in the Asian context (Dina & Sabou, 2012; Chung & Koo, 2015), research exploring its full potential as a marketing model is lacking. The rapid uptake of social media platforms like TikTok in hotel bookings offers an interesting avenue to explore. The cost-effectiveness and widespread user engagement of social media channels has changed the marketing landscape. However,

there is limited research on the impact of social media, especially TikTok, on Chinese consumers' hotel purchase intentions. This study aims to fill this gap by revealing the role of social media platforms in influencing consumers' hotel booking decisions

The COVID-19 pandemic has facilitated the integration of social media into everyday life. In the hospitality and tourism industry, the strategic use of social media is essential to building consumer trust and reputation. As the landscape shifts to adapt to the new normal, it becomes imperative to understand the interplay between social media, consumer choice of luxury restaurants, and the mediation of consumer sentiment. This research aims to shed light on these intricate relationships and provide insights to guide luxury restaurants in developing strategies for the evolving market.

The review of related literature highlights the scarcity of research on luxury service consumption, especially in the context of service industries like restaurants. Previous studies have focused on various aspects of luxury consumption, social media's impact on brand loyalty, and the role of eWOM in driving purchasing decisions. However, a comprehensive investigation of the influence of social media word of mouth on luxury dining choices under the new normal of the pandemic remains largely unexplored.

The study is grounded in the Mehrabian-Russell model, which focuses on the interplay between environmental stimuli, emotional responses, and consumer behavior. Chinese consumers' preference for experiential luxury products, like dining in luxury restaurants, has been on the rise.

The pandemic altered consumer behavior and raised concerns about health and safety in hospitality settings. As social media gained prominence in people's lives, its influence on consumer decisions became more pronounced. Against this backdrop, the research seeks to address several key questions: 1. What factors influence Chinese consumers' intentions to revisit luxury restaurants post-pandemic? 2. How does perceived value and emotion contribute to consumers' choice of luxury dining after the epidemic? 3. What are the differences in the impact of social media word of mouth on luxury dining choices before and after the pandemic? 4. Does social media word of mouth mediate the relationship between perceived luxury value/emotions and revisit intentions? Does perceived risk moderate this relationship after the pandemic? To answer these questions, the study utilizes quantitative methods, collecting data from Chinese tourists who have dined in luxury restaurants. A questionnaire is designed to capture demographic information and measure variables aligned with the extended Mehrabian-Russell model. The questionnaire employs a Likert 5-point scale to gauge respondents' agreement or disagreement. The collected data will be subjected to structural equation modeling (SEM) using Amos software. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted to ensure data validity and reliability. The study extends previous research by integrating the impact of social media word of mouth into the Mehrabian-Russell model. By analyzing the data using SEM, the research aims to provide insights into consumers' intentions to revisit luxury restaurants post-pandemic and the role of social media in shaping these intentions

In conclusion, this research seeks to bridge the gap in understanding how social media word of mouth affects Chinese consumers' intentions to revisit luxury restaurants post-COVID-19. By integrating social media into the Mehrabian-Russell model, the study aims to provide valuable insights for the hospitality industry. As social media continues to shape consumer

decisions, the findings may guide practitioners and policymakers in effectively restoring business and customer trust in the aftermath of the pandemic.

**PGRC – 020**

**The Mediating Effect of Risk Impacts between Hotel Characteristics and Effective Crisis Management of Hotel Operations in Phuket, Thailand**

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**Extended Abstract**

The tourism sector is a significant contributor to Thailand's economy. Apart from the capital city, Phuket emerges as the foremost strategic destination for tourists in Thailand, contributing substantially to the nation's gross domestic product. Nevertheless, given the susceptibility of the hospitality and tourism sectors to crises, the imperative of implementing effective crisis management becomes crucial. These strategies can enhance the resilience of these industries to various risks and ensure business continuity. Moreover, given its vital role in the nation's economy, governments often extend their support to strategic destinations, like Phuket, to strengthen competitiveness and correct economic deficiencies in significant tourist destinations. Despite the significance of the hospitality and tourism industry, this study has identified the research gaps found from three distinct perspectives. Within the industry, there is a lack of awareness and an appropriate understanding of the efficacy of crisis management within organisational contexts. Moreover, despite the crucial role of government support, there is a lack of emphasis on the effects of government support towards crisis management. From an academic point, there is low scholarly attention to advancing theoretical frameworks and methodologies in hospitality crisis research. Therefore, this study aims to identify the determinants of the effectiveness of crisis management in the hotel industry by integrating relevant theories and models. Five specific hotel characteristics were comprehensively examined for the influence on both risk impacts and the effectiveness of crisis management. Additionally, the research analysed the potential mediating roles of risk impacts and the moderating effects of government support in the model. Following the sequential exploratory research design, this study collected empirical data from both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative phase involved the gathering of data from 153 four- and five-star hotels located in Phuket, encompassing responses from 402 departmental managers, then was analysed through the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling technique. Subsequently, the qualitative phase included in-depth interviews conducted with fifteen top-level management personnel from four- and five-star hotels, then was thematically analysed. The findings indicate that two key factors, namely the location and experience in risk handling, have a significant influence on both risk impacts and the effectiveness of crisis management. Ownership structure, on the other hand, only influences the risk impacts. Notably, the operating period and star rating were found to have no significant influence. Also, it was determined that the risk impacts do not mediate the relationships, but rather, government support plays a moderating role in the effectiveness of crisis management. Then, the interviews were conducted in conjunction with the survey revealing significant themes that either aligned with or contradicted the survey. Consequently, this paper contributes to the field by conceptualising a framework for crisis

management in hospitality and tourism literature based on theories and models. Additionally, the study derived practical implications which are relevant for both the hotel industry and policymakers within the context of Phuket tourism.

**Keywords:** Hotel characteristics, mediation effect, risk impacts, the effectiveness of crisis management, government support

**PGRC – 021**

**To Examine the Effects of Motivational Factors on Experience, and Satisfaction  
among International Chinese Martial Arts Tourists**

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**Extended Abstract**

**Background:**

Chinese martial arts are a cultural phenomenon formed by the Chinese. It is a long-term life practice, a heritage of their traditional culture, and a beloved sport (Zhang, 2019). Chinese martial arts are one of the top 3 most familiar symbols of Chinese culture (Academy of Contemporary China and World Studies, 2018). Learning Chinese martial arts is considered an important way to understand Chinese culture. As an important intangible cultural heritage of China, Chinese martial arts tourism destinations attract a large number of travelers each year to practice Chinese martial arts and learn about Chinese culture (Raimondo et al., 2022; Wei, 2018). However, research on the martial arts tourism market is still in its infancy (Qiu, 2017; Wei et al., 2021). Currently, there is a lack of in-depth understanding of tourists' needs, which contributes to the inaccurate positioning of tourism products and the inability to create a lasting attraction for tourists, especially international travelers (Qiu, 2017; Wang, 2021).

**Objectives:**

In response to the aforementioned research gap, the goal of this study is to examine the effects of motivational factors on experience, and satisfaction among international tourists, and to construct a model of the decision-making behavior of Chinese martial arts tourists.

**Methodology:**

According to the critical realist research paradigm, this study adopted a quantitative methodology and used a questionnaire to collect the data. A self-administered questionnaire was developed from existing studies and divided into four sections, namely, demographic profiles, motivational factors, experience, and satisfaction. Motivational factors had 39 items from push and pull factors. Push factors included 8 items of competence-mastery, 5 items of knowledge, 4 items of escape, 3 items of novelty, 4 items of nostalgia, and 7 items of socialization. Pull factors included 4 items of events and activities and 4 items of martial arts image. The experience and satisfaction scale were separately 5 items and 3 items.

This study used purposive sampling to conduct an on-site survey. Given the widespread use of cell phones in Chinese society, this study primarily applied an electronic questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was generated on the Questionnaire Star website as a QR code, which can be scanned and filled in by travelers at the end of their tour. In addition, tourists who were not used to electronic questionnaires can fill out paper questionnaires. 180 samples were collected from February and May 2023 in famous destinations for martial arts tourism in China (Foshan, Guangdong Province, Chenjiagou, Henan Province, and Shaolin Temple, Henan Province). Data were analyzed SmartPLS 4.

## **Results :**

First, the data were tested for normality. Results of the normality test showed that all items conformed to normal distribution.

Second, this study analyzed the measurement model. According to the results of the PLS-SEM algorithm test, item knowledge3 was removed since its indicator reliability value was below 0.5 (Rasoolimanesh & Ali, 2018). The indicator reliability values of all items were more than 0.708, except items of socialization6 and socialization7, which had indicator reliabilities of 0.57 and 0.654, respectively. Therefore, the study needed to further examine consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Results showed that all values of Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's alpha, rho\_a, and rho\_c) were more than 0.7, which means that all constructs had good consistency reliability. All average variance extracted values (AVE) were more than 0.5. This indicates that all constructs had good convergent validity. All values of HTMT were less than 0.9. therefore all constructs had good discriminant validity. Since the results of Cronbach's alpha, rho\_c, rho\_a, AVE, and HTMT meet the threshold of consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, items of socialization6 and socialization7 were retained.

Results of the Structure Model showed that this study had a moderate model explanatory power since R2 values of experience and satisfaction were 0.591 and 0.706. Most values of PLS-SEM were less than the values of LM. Therefore, the model had high predictive power. The results of hypothesis testing showed that Hypotheses (H1a, H1b, H1c, H2b, H3a, H3b, H3f, H4a, H4b, H5) were supported, which means that push motivations (competence-mastery, knowledge, and escape), pull motivations (martial arts image), and martial arts experience had a significant and positive relationship with martial arts satisfaction. Push motivations (competence-mastery, knowledge, socialization) and pull motivation (events and activities, and martial arts image) had a significant and positive relationship with martial arts experience.

## **Conclusion :**

To better capture the motivations of Chinese martial arts tourists and improve the attractiveness of Chinese martial arts destinations, This study analyses the effects of international travelers' motivational factors on experience and satisfaction. Results show that push motivations (competence-mastery, knowledge, and escape), pull motivations (martial arts image), and experience are predictors of satisfaction. Push motivations (competence-mastery, knowledge, and socialization) and pull motivation (events and activities, and martial arts image) are predictors of experience.

## **Implications :**

The theoretical and practical implications of this study are mainly in the following respects. First, the study broadens the literature on the motivations of Chinese martial arts tourists to travel, which helps destinations pinpoint their customers and provide appropriate tourism products and services. Second, the study reveals that some motivational factors and experience are integral to satisfaction, which helps tourism providers adopt appropriate strategies to improve traveler satisfaction.

**Key:** Chinese martial arts; Martial arts tourism; Push and Pull theory; Experience; Satisfaction

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**PGRC – 023**

**Generation Z's Acceptance of Artificial Intelligence Devices In Chinese Hotels:  
Extending The AIDUA Model**

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The rapid development and widespread use of technology have greatly impacted businesses and industries, including the hotel industry. The hotel industry is often viewed as a frontrunner in embracing artificial intelligence (AI). Hotels serve as essential providers of necessities, including food and lodging, for tourists. Accommodation is a fundamental component of travelling, and hotels serve as a base for tourists' sightseeing and business activities. With the evolution of information and automation technologies, artificial intelligence and service robotics have increasingly entered frontline services and become a trend in the hotel industry. Hotel departments can use AI devices to assist consumers and support staff duties. The COVID-19 pandemic has hugely impacted the global tourism industry. As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, safety principles and reduced exposure have become standard requirements for service provision. Therefore, AI service devices are one of the most suitable alternatives for enforcing social distance rules and reducing contact with human personnel. In addition, the hotel industry is known for its labour-intensive and personalized services. However, the global decline in the working-age population in both quantity and proportion has led to a shift in the primary employment challenge from a lack of jobs to a poor quality of employment. The front-line service workers in the hotel industry face a wage level that lacks competitiveness compared to other service industries. This industry will encounter an increasingly severe labour shortage and higher labor costs in the future. As a result, some businesses may be compelled to utilize service robots to compensate for the lack of human resources. In China, the use of AI robotics in the hotel industry is becoming more widespread. It is at the forefront of the world's practical exploration, calling for studying relevant management theories.

Determining how customers and potential service providers accept and feel about their AI experiences and how comfortable they are sharing information or interacting with AI is crucial for the hotel sector. This is especially true for the young customer who is part of the so-called Generation Z, or Gen Z, who was raised in a digital environment and are more open-minded than their more experienced counterparts to changes, including AI. Generation Z encompasses individuals born between 1995 and 2010. Generation Z constitutes 32% of the world's population, In China, Gen Z accounts for 20% of the total population but already contributes 40% of the consumption market. There is not much empirical research on Gen Z and their use of AI technology in the hotel industry, despite recent studies showing that some members of this generation are still unsure about their attitudes regarding AI in their personal and professional lives. As a result, this empirical research seeks to determine how Gen Z will use AI devices in hotels. This research focuses on Generation Z's acceptance of artificially intelligent devices in the Chinese hotel industry. The study builds upon the AIDUA model, the research aim is to explain the acceptance of AI devices among Generation Z customers in the context of hotel services using an extended AIDUA model. This study proposed the following research objectives: 1. To identify the primary factors influencing the

Gen Z customer experience using artificially intelligent (AI) devices in the hotel industry 2. To analyze the relationship between the primary factors and secondary Appraisal (performance expectancy and Effort expectancy) to use artificially intelligent devices.3. To assess the relationship between the secondary appraisal and emotion.4.To analyze the moderating effect on the relationship between smartphone use and emotion.5.To analyze the relationship between emotion and willingness/objection to use AI devices offered by the hotel.

This study hypothesizes and validates the acceptance of AI devices by Generation Z based on the adoption of AI devices in the Chinese hotel industry to achieve the research objectives, a sample of Chinese university and high school students, representative of Generation Z, will be surveyed to analyze their attitudes towards AI devices in hotel environments. The authors will not use a qualitative methodology because the purpose of the study is to validate the connection between the identified independent and dependent variables in terms of the acceptability of AI devices in the hotel industry. The sample size for this analysis was determined using convenience sampling, and the structured questionnaire will be distributed via the Internet to Generation Z customers. The author will specifically request permission from hotel management to solicit participation from Gen Z in hotels that have adopted AI devices, resulting in a sample size of at least 350-400 respondents. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of Generation Z's acceptance and use of AI devices in the hotel industry, providing valuable insights for hotel companies and policymakers. By examining how Generation Z perceives the use of AI devices in the hotel industry, this study also answers the question of which characteristics of AI devices affect the hotel experience. This information will give some theoretical support for applying AI and robotic devices in the hospitality industry and give hospitality companies a basis for decision-making regarding the design, layout, and management of service functions of service robots in the future. In addition, the hotel industry should recognize that Generation Z is a significant segment of the market for the future of tourism and hospitality services. Researching how Generation Z perceives technology in the industry can offer insights into how hotel businesses can better utilize technology and equipment, customer relationships, and other elements that can enhance the experience and quality of their services.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, AI devices, Technology Acceptance, AIDUA Model, Chinese Hotel Industry.

**PGRC – 025**

**The Impact of Knowledge Management on Organizational Performance: An Airports Authority of India Perspective**

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This paper deals with various aspects relating to knowledge management and how it can be implemented in an organization that would enhance the performance of the employees and the organization as a whole. The focus lies on metrics used such as Knowledge Acquisition, Information Technology and Knowledge Organization for identifying the effectiveness on the organizational performance with respect to a central authority specializing in tourism, aviation and airport services. Knowledge can be transferred easily. However, the process is not as simple as it may seem. To have access to the Knowledge Management System requires skillset and a thorough understanding of the organization for which employees play a vital role. The factors that contribute towards employees working in a certain direction is what leads to ultimate success of an organization. The paper develops a keen understanding of how the steps and processes have led to a huge impact on the performance management ideas. The enablers and barriers to knowledge management, reasons why employees resist sharing knowledge or what hampers the transfer of knowledge within an organization is the biggest challenge that needs to be addressed. Henceforth, knowledge has to be stored and preserved for effective managerial decision making. An organization is prone to face multiple challenges with regard to the business environmental factors. All these issues need to be addressed with innovative practices that contribute towards long term sustainability in the corporate world.

The growing importance of overlooking the functions and operations of an organization to facilitate smooth handling of work and reduce duplication of efforts has led to the adoption of knowledge management tools to enable easy access of information amongst all the employees of an organization so that they can offer an enhanced service to the customers on a speedy basis, which in turn leads to the overall growth and development of an organization. Knowledge Management is the process of disseminating of information which is accessible by the employees of an organization. Knowledge acquisition involves complex cognitive processes: perception, learning, communication, association and reasoning. The term knowledge is also used to mean the confident understanding of a subject with the ability to use it for a specific purpose.

The Aviation Industry is continuously growing at a higher level internationally. Passenger aircrafts require airport, hence the activities of operations have increased over time to facilitate smooth traveling of passenger and to offer an elite customer experience. Progressive infrastructural development, services and amenities is what distinguishes airports from each other. Ever since the pandemic came to an end, people have started living normal lives as in the current year of 2023, and the travel for businesses, pilgrimage and leisure purpose is still quite popular. This has also led to the expansion of airport land area as more number of flight intakes seems to occur that require adequate spacing.

The main objectives pertaining to the study on the impact of knowledge management for effective organizational performance are to identify the problems relating to knowledge

management to analyze the key areas where knowledge is implemented for effective planning, decision making and controlling; to gather accuracy on confidentiality of information disseminated to the users; to understand the inclusiveness of technology in the field of human resources; to comprehend the factors that contributes towards effectiveness in organization's growth

Knowledge Management is identified globally as a more inclusive method to make particular information available to its users. In a global context, knowledge is the sharing of business environmental factors that directly or indirectly affect the operations of a business. Knowledge Management is one of the core concepts of Human Resources Management and can be applied at an international level too, considering various global sources and key contributing factors. Businesses are driven by success rates due to the learning from their surroundings. Likewise, organizations too, look for various platforms where the business solutions can be met. Any critical stage where the organization requires an external support is to be dealt with firmly. Storing of Knowledge with the help of Management System tools help in the conservation of information and ensures easy access to information by internal stakeholders for effective management, without having the need to depend on others, which has another added advantage to reduce inter-group conflicts and duplication of work. Mismanagement of knowledge can lead to biases and errors occurring frequently, and this can hamper productivity and lead to confusion amongst the users of knowledge based information. It is the work of the HR personnel to implement the organization's strategy that is to be followed thoroughly by all the employees of an organization. International HRM highly depends on acquisition of knowledge with the help of advanced technology. Technology acts as a helping hand for organizations to plan, organize, collect, gather, analyze and summarize the information that is available. This can be further processed and stored in the database for accessing the information on a regular basis.

The results of knowledge management can be assessed through Knowledge Identification that involves understanding the needs and requirements of an organization as to what type of knowledge is to be disseminated. Secondly, Knowledge Assets' Determination involves looking at the outside forces such as competitors, suppliers, products, technology, etc. Knowledge can be generated within the organization by the usage of the knowledge assets or by creating a situation that helps solve business problems. Knowledge Storage is where whatever information has been gathered through various sources, these are supposed to be preserved in the knowledge management system to help solve various business related issues. Organization's members have access to the system that consists of the knowledge based information that facilitates reduction of time, resources and efforts which otherwise creates a disturbance in the flow of command. This is known as Knowledge Distribution. Knowledge Utilization can be achieved The best possible means adopted by the top management to acquire the knowledge and utilize it in such a way that it stands beneficial for the members of the organization that can be further used for decision making process. Knowledge Management Feedback helps employees to share their valuable ideas, thoughts and opinions on how effectively has the knowledge been useful to the users of information. The impact it has levied on the organizational performance is what is indicated.

**Keywords:** Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge Organization, Knowledge Assets, Information Technology

**PGRC – 026**

**'Travel Domestically or Abroad?' Identifying the Impact of Cognitive Absorption on Tourists' Travel Intention: An Exploratory Study on Douyin**

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In today's world, the world economy has undergone tremendous changes due to the advancement of information and communication technology (Lan & Azadeh, 2021). The impacts of short-form travel videos (STVs) on destination marketing have been widely acknowledged in recent years (Zhu et al., 2023). Especially, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic led to severe damage to the international tourism industry, but it can also be a transformation opportunity (Hall et al., 2020; Sigala, 2020). As tourists' travel behaviors change, destination marketing and management face new challenges. Some destination marketers are increasingly using digital marketing methods to ensure that potential future visitors will remember and visit the destination when tourism recovers in the future (Sigala, 2020). For example, short-form video services led by Douyin (known as TikTok in the overseas version) have developed rapidly around the world (Du et al., 2022). It is influential enough to make an obscure destination famous overnight (Wengel et al., 2022). As such, destination-related short-form videos on Douyin are becoming increasingly vital in building the destination image, mediating tourist experiences, and affecting potential tourists' behavioral intentions (Du et al., 2022). Especially, during the pandemic, travel videos on Douyin have played a crucial role in influencing users' future destination choices as an alternative to physical travel (Zhu et al., 2022). Despite the substantial promotional value of Douyin for destination marketing, tourism research related to Douyin is still in its infancy stage (Zhu et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the perceptual accuracy and the perceptual serendipity of recommendations arise from the application design of Douyin facilitating users' deep involvement and optimal holistic experiences (Zhao & Wagner, 2022). This kind of deep involvement experience, also known as cognitive absorption, is thought to result in positive outcomes, including such as stress caused by the pandemic (Yang et al., 2021). Although the induced effects of cognitive absorption may play an important role in influencing users' subsequent travel behavior, for a long time, cognitive absorption research to date has mostly focused on its positive effects on individuals' belief formation and information technology usage intention (Yang et al., 2021). Little attention has been paid to discussing how users' interactions with tourism-related short-form videos could influence their travel psychology and behavioral intention.

To clarify the impact of cognitive absorption on potential tourists' travel intentions, related concepts can be defined in terms of the following points based on prior studies. Firstly, because travel behavior is inherently risky and unfamiliar, people tend to make decisions after evaluating travel risks (Luo & Lam, 2020). For example, Pandemic-related contents on social media during the outbreak are thought to alter travelers' perceptions of risk, attitudes, and behaviors (Bhati et al., 2022). Travelers who are planning to visit unknown locations are thought to experience anxiety (Lee & Oh, 2007). Especially during the pandemic, sanitation and other uncertainty about the destination may accentuate individuals' feelings of anxiety and concern about the bad consequences of the trip (Xu et al., 2022). Recent research

ascertained that deep involvement in virtual tours creates enjoyment, engagement, and satisfaction, which also reduces users' perceived stress and perceived risk towards the pandemic (Yang et al., 2021). In the state of cognitive absorption, individuals get more information about the destination and help generate a real and clear destination image (McLean & Barhorst, 2022).

In addition, previous studies have confirmed that media content can increase people's knowledge of the destination and familiarity with the destination; it can also escalate satisfaction with the destination-related media experiences, increase the desire to visit the place, as well as heighten people's travel intention (Koo et al., 2016). Meanwhile, the deeply involved immersive state while interacting with the destination-related media content can further promote users' enjoyment, engagement, and satisfaction (Yang et al., 2021). Similarly, entertainment also plays a vital role in predicting users' satisfaction with media experiences (Koo et al., 2016). In other words, in the state of cognitive absorption, heightened enjoyment is more likely to lead to positive attitudes toward the overall media experiences. Prior research suggests that customer's trust regarding the internet and e-commerce providers represents a prerequisite for completing online transactions (Cheung & Lee, 2000) but as Douyin enables many individuals to share information online, this study focuses solely on the effect of trusting the internet/Douyin that a customer holds, and advocates that normal people who trust internet will hold high intention to travel (Zhu et al., 2023).

In general, extant studies have attested to the effects of media experiences in shaping destination image and influencing the behavioral intentions of potential tourists (Gupta & Tomar, 2023). However, limited works have focused on the impact of holistic experiences during the interaction with destination-related short-form videos on potential tourists' emotional responses and post-COVID travel intentions. To bridge the above-mentioned research gaps, variables such as cognitive absorption, perceived risk, trust, and post-COVID travel intention are integrated into the same theoretical landscape. Furthermore, this study aims to elucidate how cognitive absorption affects tourists' perceived risk and post-pandemic travel intention in different travel settings (domestic versus international). This is significant as it not only embraces travel consumers' real-time travel psychology post the COVID-19 pandemic (Kim et al., 2022) but also attempts to interpret such psychology and subsequent behavioral intention by considering their social media experience during the pandemic. The proposed research framework specifically aims to answer the following two research questions.

RQ1: How does cognitive absorption interact with tourists' perceived risk and trust of the internet and further affect post-COVID travel intention?

RQ2: Can the association in RQ1 be different in the contexts of domestic and international travel settings?

To test the research model assumptions, a questionnaire will be developed to conduct a web survey and collect empirical data on the respondents who are already active users of the Douyin short-form video platform in the previous 12 months in Mainland China. Two sets of questionnaires will be prepared, with scenarios distinguishing between different contexts of domestic and international post-COVID travel intention. In terms of data analysis, descriptive analysis will be performed using SPSS software. Subsequently, the measurement model and structural models will be examined using partial least squares structural equation modeling

(PLS-SEM) with the PLS algorithm and boots-rapping (5000 sub-samples) techniques (Hair et al., 2016).

To sum up, this study tries to expand cognitive absorption research in the context of tourism to offer an angle for future studies to positively interpret tourists' travel intentions and to provide tourism practitioners with suggestions on the tourism industry's recovery in the post-COVID era.

**Keywords:** Cognitive absorption; Short-form travel videos (STVs); Perceived risk; Trust of the internet; Travel intention

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**PGRC – 028**

**Exploring the Local Government And Developers' Perceptions And Behavior Toward Sustainable Development Of Tourism Real Estate In Hainan Island, China**

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**BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

Tourism Real Estate (TRE) is the convergence of the tourism and real estate industries, mainly used in the Chinese context (Xue, 2018; Shi, 2020). As a result of these two industries converging, the sustainability of TRE is a focal theme in regional tourism development in China. Furthermore, different from the western developed countries of market-oriented land allocation systems (Alonso, 1964), the supply-side players dominate the development of TRE in the Chinese political and economic system. As the land allocation and natural resources is owned and controlled by the local government (Han et. al, 2020; Fan, et., al., 2020), and the developers are the market body to carry out the development, the local government and developers' perceptions and behavior can deeply determine whether the development of TRE is sustainable or not in China. Hainan, the only tropical island with the most national strategic positions regarding international tourism, is considered China's most advanced province of TRE development (Jin, 2019). However, the local government does not provide holistic plans, policies, or regulations to direct the development of TRE, which leads to problems such as over-development, destruction of natural resources, and environmental pollution by developers. The term TRE is infrequently encountered in Western literature, with most studies related to TRE concentrating on the timeshare industry (Shen, 2001; He, 2006; Cai, 2011; Jin, 2019), approached predominantly from a demand standpoint (Gregory & Weinland, 2016; Redditt, et al., 2022), and utilizing quantitative research methods. Moreover, a dearth of research delves into the perceptions and behavior of the local government and developers concerning the sustainable development of TRE (SDTRE). Furthermore, studies focusing specifically on TRE within Hainan island are rare.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study is exploratory in nature, the inductive approach is the best one because conclusions may be made from the observation of specific facts according to the study aim (Zikmund et al., 2012). Since almost no previous effort has been made to explore the particularities of TRE from the local government and developers' perceptions and behavior of TRE development in Hainan island. Therefore, this interpretive study collected data from in-depth interviews with open-ended questions that was asked to twelve developers and three local government personnel from Hainan island. A thematic analysis was used to further interpret the transcription from respondents' responses.

**FINDINGS/RESULTS**

The in-depth interview with fifteen respondents yielded seven main themes, seven of them have sub-themes (as shown in table 1) based on the research questions and research objectives.

Table 1: Summary of the themes

Research questions	Research objectives	Results
1. What are the local government and developers' perceptions towards TRE in Hainan island?	To explore the local government and developers' perceptions towards TRE in Hainan island.	<p>Theme 1: Product function-based perception</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.1: TRE as hotel products</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.2: TRE as hotel products</p> <p>Sub-theme 1.3: TRE as mixed-complex products</p> <p>Theme 2: Market-based perceptions</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.1: Market demand-based perceptions</p> <p>Sub-theme 2.2: Market supply-based perceptions</p> <p>Multiple perceptions towards TRE in Hainan island</p>

<p>2. What are influences that impact the local government and developers' behaviour during the development of TRE in Hainan island?</p>	<p>To investigate the influences that impact the local government and developers' behavior during the development of TRE in Hainan island.</p>	<p>Theme 3: National policies Sub-theme 3.1: Positive national tourism polices Sub-theme 3.2: Negative national real estate polices Theme 4: Land fiscal dependence Sub-theme 4.1: Regional development (local interest) Sub-Theme 4.2: Political promotion Sub-theme 4.3: rent-seeking</p>	<p>National tourism policies play the positive role while national real estate policies play the negative role in Hainan local governments' behavior towards TRE development.  Land fiscal dependence makes the local government encourage the fast development of TRE as residential products in Hainan island.</p>
		<p>Theme 5: Market demand (Opportunities for TRE development) Sub-Theme 5.1: Climate &amp; ecological environment Sub-theme 5.2: National strategic positions Theme 6: Short-term high profits Sub-Theme 6.1 Profit of land resources</p>	<p>Guided by the short-termism, developers' pursuit of land resource and sales-led profit in Hainan island.</p>

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Sub-Theme 6.2:  
Sales-led profit

<p>To examine the local government and developers' perceptions towards SDTRE in Hainan island.</p>	<p>Theme 7: Governance for sustainable development                  Sub-theme 7.1: economic sustainability                  Sub-theme 7.2: Social sustainability                  Sub-Theme 7.3: Environmental sustainability</p>	<p>The local government has a certain awareness of sustainable development, and perceive the SDTRE should be tourism industry-led converging the real estate industry.</p>
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What are the local government and developers' perceptions on SDTRE in Hainan island?

Developers lack of the awareness of sustainable development, and believe SDTRE relying on the local government's guide.

**CONCLUSIONS**

This study reveals that the local government and developers' primary perceptions towards TRE in Hainan island are that TRE results from the real estate industry-led converging tourism industry and TRE as residential products are the primary form. The local government's behavior is impacted by their pursuit of both public interest and self-interest during the development of TRE, so they tend to promote the fast development of TRE as residential products while restricting real estate development. In comparison, developers' behavior is mainly impacted by their short-termism. As a result, they concentrate on the opportunities to develop and sell real estate products that rely more heavily on tourism resources for profit. The local government perceived SDTRE from the perspectives of the sustainability of the environment, economy, and society. In contrast, developers primarily perceived it from the local government's long-term planning. It was found that local government governance along the lines of sustainable development is the key to achieving SDTRE in Hainan island in the Chinese political and economic context

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

The research on TRE and studies on SDTRE is still in early infancy (Shen, 2020). This study contributes to the limited body of knowledge on SDTRE in Hainan island, China, and demonstrated that the researcher has the ability to use the industrial convergence theory and the dimensions of sustainable development for understanding of TRE in the sustainable tourism development research field. The public choice theory and short-termism are utilized to comprehend the local government and developers' behavior towards TRE development in Hainan island in the Chinese political and economic context.

In practice, the results assist in defining SDTRE based on sustainable tourism development; it could serve as a guideline for TRE planning by both local and central government in the long term TRE development in Hainan island, and would also provide guidance for TRE developers to mold their behaviour in the process of TRE projects planning and development. Abiding by SDTRE, this could promote the sound progress on the living quality of the local communities.

**RECOMMENDATION FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future studies are recommended exploring the consumers' perception and behavior of TRE products from the demand side to provide a holistic picture for developing TRE in Hainan island. Meanwhile, the industrial convergence theory can also be used to interpret the

tourists' perceptions and behavior from the demand side with qualitative interpretative methodology.

Additionally, future research could use the qualitative interpretive methodology to explore the perceptions and behavior of local government and developers in other provinces of China. The public choice theory and short-termism may also be adapted to interpreting their behavior in other provinces in China.

Finally, the future researcher may further formalize the framework of government governance in SDTRE related to STD.

**Keywords:** tourism real estate; sustainable development; the local government; real estate developers; Hainan island

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**PGRC – 029**

**The Influence of Personalized Attraction Services Towards Guest Service Excellence**

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the study is to identify the level of influence of personalized attraction services towards service excellence and the factors to consider in aiming for a holistic customer experience. Quantitative descriptive method was used to get the data on personalized services level of influence. Online survey questionnaire was utilized to 156 students taking Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management. The results showed that providing loyalty programs such as points program, discounts and promos have the highest influence on service excellence alongside the mahuhay greeting with smile and eye contact. In addition, the research findings reveal that human personalized services are more influential than the accessibility, facilities, and environment indicator. Thus, it is crucial that attractions should provide more personalized human touch to its products and offering to achieve service excellence. The result of the study can be used as a guide when personalizing services to cater travelers needs and create holistic customer experience towards service excellence.

**Keywords:** service excellence; personalized service; attractions; level of influence

**Introduction**

The growth of tourism confirms that the sector is one of the most powerful engines of growth and development worldwide (UNWTO, 2019). Tourism industry is experiencing a period of continuous unprecedented transformation that results to a complex world of increased travelers and job opportunities. In a study conducted by Dhir and Sushil (2018), travelers needs are becoming complex and variable, businesses are increasingly challenged by this ambiguous market environment. Gouthier (2013) mentioned to face this scenario service excellence should not be compromised. Travelers like to feel to be treated well, needs and expectations should be met in any business interaction, when this happens it result to service excellence through loyalty and travelers returning over and over again to a provider. Service excellence based on the study of Johnson (2004) is about being easy to do business with. Excellent services comes into delivering the promise, providing a personal touch, going extra mile and dealing well with problems and queries. Horwitz and Neville (1996) assert that service excellence occurs when customers perceive that a service exceeds their previous expectations which creates customer delight. Thus, service excellence can become a critical success factor for destinations and firms. Personal approach toward a traveler, knowledge on their expectations and experiences as well as particular engagement with the customer, often trigger service excellence from customer delight (Klimkeit, Meng Tang & Thirummaran, 2021). Destinations and companies who goes beyond service excellence provide personalized services and exceptional consumer experience (Williams, 2006). Travelers continue to demand not only experiences but surprises including extraordinary and memorable experiences.

Personalization can create not only product or service but also a better experience for travelers (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). There is a need for tourism destinations and firms to create personalized services to surprise travelers and provide service excellence. According to Buhalis & Foerste (2015), personalization creates new opportunities for delivering

new levels of service that enhance travel experience physically and emotionally. Service personalization uses individuals own information to tailor the service and the transactional environment to improve the benefits accruing to travelers (Shen & Ball, 2012). In a study by Murthi & Sarkar (2003), service personalization includes two subprocesses: (1) learning customer preferences and (2) matching these preferences to specific or personalized offerings to accommodate learned preferences.

Personalization can help improve destinations performance and a potential source of service excellence (Vesonen, 2007). A traveler's positive experience brings repeat business and the co-creation of experience is critical to service suppliers and destination (Sternberg, 1997). Personalized services generate trust and eventually strengthen the relationship between a destination and a traveler (Roth et al., 2018). A survey by Deloitte (2015) highlights that the demand for personalized services and products will constantly increase as many providers try to satisfy their clients and customers. The survey shows that about 50% of customers are interested in purchasing a personalized product; and half of the respondents also expressed their willingness to wait longer for such a service or product. The study also reveals that most consumers are willing to pay more for personalized services.

Personalization has largely been assumed to affect satisfaction and loyalty (Rust et al., 2000), it has an impact on trust but studies on the influence of it to service excellence are lacking. Personalization studies mostly focus as well on Banking and IT related companies and firms, a few research has been done on destinations and tourism related establishments. The overall context stimulates the researcher to investigate on the influence of personalized attraction services among tourism students to service excellence. Thus, the study aims to identify what personalized services contribute to service excellence. Also, it aims to provide a deeper understanding of the level of influence of different forms of services such as on accessibility, facilities and environment and human services. Furthermore, to create strategies that will help attractions and staff to personalize their services towards achieving traveler delight and traveler service excellence.

The paper addresses the following research questions:

What are the demographic profile of the respondents?

What is the level of influence of attraction accessibility, facilities and environment personalized services and human personalized services to service excellence?

### **Methodology**

The research paper used quantitative descriptive research approach. The study was designed to identify the level of influence of personalized attraction services to tourism students towards service excellence. The paper involved two variables in which personalized attraction services are dependent variables and service excellence is an independent variable.

The respondents of the study are students who visited any type of tourism attraction domestically or internationally. The researcher used non-probability technique to select respondents particularly convenience and random sampling is used. The participants of the study are 156 students taking the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management program.

The researcher utilized online survey questionnaire with four parts as the main instrument in gathering the data needed. The online survey questionnaire is through google form entitled Influence of Personalized Attraction Services Towards Service Excellence Survey. The first part contains a cover letter that explains the rationale of the study and an individual consent form. In the second part, two demographic variables are collected namely age and sex. The third part is composed of statements of accessibility, facilities, and environment personalized services in an attraction. The last part focuses on human personalized services

statements where participants marked the level of influence using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 point. Point 1 represent no influence and point 2, 3 and 4 represents gradual ranking of positive answers (low influence, moderate influence, and high influence). The instrument statements are self-made by the researcher.

Date collection is done online, a google form sheet was send as an electronic link to an online survey for tourism students through instant messaging application that redirected the researchers survey questionnaire. Data collected from google form is exported into an excel file. Collected data on demographics are described and summarized using frequency and percentage distribution. Data collected on level of influence of personalized attraction services are calculated using mean and standard deviation.

**Results and Discussion**

The research was conducted to tourism students who visited any tourist attraction to measure the level of influence of personalized services to service excellence in terms of accessibility, facilities and environment and human services. The measurement was carried out using an online questionnaire data collection technique. Distribution and verbal interpretation of the results are based on the following: No Influence (1.00 – 1.74); Low Influence (1.75 – 2.49); Moderate Influence (2.50 – 3.24); and High Influence (3.25 – 4.00). The demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in Table 1.

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15 to 17 years old	0	0
18 to 20 years old	39	25
21 to 23 years old	113	72.40
23 years old and above	4	2.60
Total	156	100
Sex		
Male	27	17.30
Female	129	82.70
Total	156	100

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Profile

The sex distribution of the respondents is not equal, with 17.30% male respondents and 82.70% female respondents respectively. It indicates that respondents are dominated by female students rather than male. The results show, aged 18 to 25 years old covered the 25% of the respondents, while 21 to 23 years represented the majority (72.40%) of the respondents. Aged



23 years old and above signified 2.60% which is the least number of the sample population since no respondents from 15 to 17 years old age bracket.

Personalized Services	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation
Accessibility, Facilities and Environment		
The attraction offers passenger service vehicle to and from the area	3.5	-0.66
The attraction provides loyalty program	3.88	0.88
The attraction offers multiple channels to ask information such as live chat, emails, phone numbers	3.51	0.67
The attraction has customer data and history available including personal info and previous visits	3.34	0.62
The attraction information can easily get on social media and sites	3.79	0.43
The attraction presents various signages and instructions	3.67	0.53
Total Weighted Mean	3.61	

Human Services

The attraction staff use guest names and says po or opo	3.67	0.56
The attraction staff greets guest Mabuhay with smile and eye contact	3.82	0.46
The attraction staff gives smooth and fast transactions	3.76	0.46
The attraction staff provide recommendations and advice	3.73	0.5
The attraction staff presents customize options and choices	3.64	0.55

The attraction staff asks feedback	3.53	0.68
Total Weighted Mean	3.68	

Level of Influence

What is the level of influence of personalized attraction services in guest service excellence?	3.62	0.52
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Table 2. Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation of the Level of Influence of Personalized Attraction Services

Table 2 indicate the level of influence of personalized attraction services to service excellence in terms of accessibility, facilities and environment and human services. The table shows that all indicators have high influence to service excellence, providing loyalty program (3.88) has the most influence and attractions customer data and history on their personal information and previous visits (3.34) got the lowest influence to service excellence, both of the most and least influential indicator came from the accessibility, facilities and environment factor. Personalized offers tied to point redemption, discounts, loyalty program ensures loyalty and an enduring relationship with travelers and (Forbes, 2021). Destination and firms that have strong loyalty programs have a roster of customer data from which they can tailor approaches. The Zendesk Customer Experience Trends Report (2019) found that travelers have grown increasingly

comfortable with firms collecting personal data, but many are still contemplating with this concept and as long as the data is being used to improve customer experience. The share of customers who believe that companies should collect as little data as possible dropped from 29% in 2019 to just 12% in 2020. As per with the accessibility, facilities and environment, attraction information can be access easily on social media and sites has high influence of weighted mean of 3.79, it is followed by attractions presents various signages and instructions (3.67), offering multiple channels to ask information such as live chat, emails, and phone numbers (3.51) and second least influential (3.5) is the passenger service vehicle available in an attraction to and from its area.

As per human services factor, greeting guest in Mabuhay with smile and eye contact have the highest weighted mean of 3.82. It is followed by staff giving smooth and fast transactions (3.76) and providing recommendations and advice (3.73). Staff using guest names and says po and opo (3.67) and presenting customize options and choices have high influence (3.64) to service excellence. Attraction staff asking feedback to tourist has high influence with weighted mean of 3.53 but is the least considered in terms of human services. Mabuhay greeting is a simple act of gracefully laying the palm of the right hand over the center of the chest with simultaneously a slight head nod and an appropriate verbal greeting, a Filipino personalized service used by most tourism destination, attractions, and related establishment. Tsernov (2019), smile and eye contact are crucial result of firms with the right culture, an employee's smile may be the most significant part of a transaction. Around 73% of customers fall in love with a brand thanks to a friendly employee, meanwhile over 58% are willing to spend more money with companies that provide excellence service through personalization. Destination and firms whom travelers can easily reach out and provide human personalized services is the most personal personalization customers can get. The table uncovers attraction providing loyalty program and the information can be access easily on social media and sites including staff greeting in Mabuhay with smile and eye

contact as well as providing smooth and fast transactions are the major indicator to influence service excellence

Personalized Attraction Service	Total Weighted Mean	Influence
Accessibility, Facilities and Environment	3.61	2
Human Services	3.68	1
Grand Weighted Mean	3.65	

Table 3. Total Weighted Mean and Influence of Personalized Attraction Services

Table 3 reveals the influential factor to service excellence in the perspective of tourism students. Among the two factors, human services with weighted mean of 3.68 (high influence) is the most effective personalized service for attraction to achieve service excellence. Making it personal, knowing the customers and hiring and training employees and staff can deliver the one-on-one experience customers want (Forbes, 2019). Despite continuous innovations in personalization technology and automation, personalization industrial complex; the power of real human-to-human interactions is necessary to a customer relationship with a destination and firms. (Rodriguez, 2021). Research has found that 60% of customers would withdraw doing business with companies that provide unfriendly services. 46% of customers withdraw due to the perception of employees' limited knowledge on their issues whereas 50% of customers stop doing business with companies they don't trust. Also, one in three customers have said that they would never return to a brand they love just because of one bad service. Accessibility, facilities, and environment have high influence as well to service excellence, its weighted mean of 3.61 is not too far from human services. In dealing with service excellence, personalization of human services has more influence compare with accessibility, facilities, and environment.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

In this fast-growing experience economy, travelers look for affective memories, sensation and symbolism which combine to create a holistic and long-lasting personal experience. The need for tourism and hospitality and tourism firms to create innovative experience design is increasingly important. Personalization, the ability to tailor products to individual customer needs has an influence on the overall service excellence. Attractions should invest on handling customer data, information, and history to create a more personalized service. In this study, overall, attraction personalized services have high influence on service excellence. Loyalty programs such as point system, discount and promos is found to be the most influential toward service excellence. Attractions must correctly set a loyalty program to encourage and entice more traveler and customers, the programs should match the need. Human services are the major key factor contributing to the overall service excellence in which staff greeting of Mabuhay with smile and eye contact is a major contributor and asking feedback is a least contributor. Attraction staff should practice the

culture of asking feedback regardless of if it is a constructive criticism, positive or negative feedback. The travelers view can be used to enhance personalized services and the improvement of services in general.

Attractions should rethink of other personalized service in terms of accessing the area aside from the passenger service vehicle as this is not influential on the service excellence. Providing smooth and fast transactions, recommendations and advice and using guest names and saying po or opo should be continued as they play a crucial role in the overall customer experience towards service excellence. Considerations on human services must strengthen for an excellent service and attractions could focus on accessibility, facilities, and environment factor.

Overall, personalized services have high influence on the overall customer experience towards service excellence. The study indicates loyalty programs and mabuhay greetings are the most influential service in an attraction while customer data, information and history are the least influential. Therefore, to sustain service excellence there is a need for attractions to handling and use customer data, information, and history to create personalized services. It is concluded that attractions should carefully think their loyalty programs necessary to motivate travelers and achieve service excellence.

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**PGRC – 030**

**Positive and Negative Memorable Heritage Tourism Experiences: An Exploratory Study**

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The tourism industry is the forehead of the experience economy and tourists are becoming more experienced and looking for unforgettable experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Scholars highlight the influence of memory on tourists' destination royalty, satisfaction, well-being, and others (Kim et al., 2010; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Sthapit et al., 2020). Therefore, there is an increasing quantity of studies incorporating memory into tourism experiences. Sthapit and Coudounaris (2018) demonstrate that memorable tourism experiences (MTE) are more vital than standard tourism experiences, thus, MTE becomes a significant research topic. However, there are a few gaps in the present MTE studies. Firstly, most MTE studies focus on the positive MTE and ignore the negative MTE. Besides, there is a lack of studies combining positive and negative MTE, though tourists may have both positive and negative memories during the trip. It is highlighted that negative valence may lead to stronger memories (Kim, 2014). Secondly, present studies tend to duplicate the positive dimensions of Kim (2014) in different tourism contexts by using quantitative methods, while it is found that MTE under various tourism contexts should be distinguished due to their unique characteristics. Thirdly, though heritage tourism is one of the most competitive tourism sectors (UNESCO, 2014), there is limited MTE study in heritage tourism. It is accentuated that the sustainability of heritage tourism should be emphasized because of its vulnerability and non-replicability characteristics (Durán-Román et al., 2021; UNWTO, 2015), whilst MTE is key for the sustainability and competitiveness of destinations (Kim & Ritchie, 2014; Stone et al., 2018). Rasoolimanesh et al. (2021) suggest studying positive and negative MHTE together for a better understanding of MHTE and tourists' needs. Therefore, this study applies a qualitative method to explore memorable heritage tourism experiences (MHTE), including both positive and negative MHTE. Consequently, the study aims to (1) Explore the antecedents of positive memorable heritage tourism experiences; (2) Explore the antecedents of negative memorable heritage tourism experiences; (3) Explore the consequences of positive memorable heritage tourism experiences; (4) Explore the consequences of negative memorable heritage tourism experiences; (5) Provide marketing strategies to enhance memorable heritage tourism experiences.

The study applies a qualitative method via interviews to explore the antecedents and consequences of MHTE in Melaka World Heritage Sites, Malaysia, which was inscribed as a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 2008 and is one of the best-preserved and widely visited historic centres in Malaysia. Besides, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture of Malaysia (2020) attaches importance to deepening tourism experiences in creating add-on value for Malaysia tourism and transforming the Malaysia tourism industry. The targets of the study are domestic and international tourists who are

visiting Melaka World Heritage Sites from March to April 2023 for at least one overnight to have enough time to experience heritage sites in Melaka. In-depth face-to-face and

online interviews are conducted till theoretical saturation with 31 interviews when no new information occurs. There are three sections of the interview, including the introduction of the study and tourists' consent form for the interviews, demographic information and travel characteristics, and interview questions. Interview questions are adopted from previous studies (Kim, 2020; Zare, 2019) and revised based on the study context, like "Do you have memorable travel experiences in Melaka?" and "Why your tourism experiences in Melaka are unforgettable?". All interviews are transcribed into word texts and then analyzed in NVivo 12 software following the guidelines of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) with open coding, selective coding, and axial coding (Saunders et al., 2009).

Results of the interviews indicate that there are two main categories of influencing factors for MHTE, including destination attributes factors and tourists' psychological factors. For destination attributes, shopping, culinary attraction, and general tour attraction result in both positive and negative MHTE. Besides, cultural heritage leads to positive MHTE, while destination management, tourism supporting factors and infrastructures are mentioned when tourists recall their negative MHTE. When it comes to psychological factors, positive MHTE is affected by positive emotions, novelty, engagement, knowledge, nostalgia, expectation, and experience co-creation. Whilst, for the negative MHTE, the influencing factors are negative emotions, unexpected accidents, and expectation. Additionally, the study identifies the outcomes of MHTE, including behavior outcomes (like revisit intention, recommendation intention, and sustainable behavior), cognitive outcomes related to country image, and affective outcomes about tourists' eudaimonic well-being.

Being the first study exploring both positive and negative MTE in heritage tourism contexts, the results of the study provide insightful particle and theoretical contributions. More specifically, the study facilitates a more comprehensive understanding of MTE, especially in the context of heritage tourism and negative MTE that is ignored by previous studies. Besides, newly identified factors and outcomes provide a reference for future study of heritage tourism experiences, such as nostalgia and sustainable behaviors. Thirdly, the study uncovers heritage tourists' perceptions, experiences, and needs, which provide guidelines for enhancing the positive MHTE and avoid the long-term influences of negative MHTE. The results of the study also provide insights for destination marketing and management, which are significant to the competitiveness and sustainability of heritage tourism.

**Keywords:** Memorable Tourism Experiences; Tourism Experiences; Negative Experiences; Behavioral Intentions; Eudaimonic Well-being; Sustainable behavior

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**PGRC – 031**

**Influence of Push-Pull Factors on Gen Z Sea Beach Tourist Satisfaction, Return Intentions, Word of Mouth**

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The study's purpose is to examine how push and pull factors influence tourist satisfaction, return intention, and word of mouth, which mediate Generation Z's travel decisions. The preferences of the generation change over time with advancements in their surroundings, which include their tourism choices. Gen Z tourists are very much connected to the information tech, which have effect in their selection of tourist destinations and also their spread of words to attract more gen Z tourists to a certain destination. This study would examine gen Z travel preferences such as what things push them towards a destination and what pull them about a destination. This study would also examine the effect of word of mouth on gen Z to make them return. It is based on the push-pull motivational theory, which suggests that tourists' travel decisions can be influenced by both push factors (socio-psychological demands that inspire a tourist's decision to travel) and pull factors (features that attract tourists to a specific place). This study's objective is to understand the influence of push and pull on tourist satisfaction for choosing a tourist destination and its effect on generation Z tourists and their return intention to that destination, along with spreading word of mouth about that destination. Additionally, this study also explores the mediating effects of word of mouth between tourist satisfaction and return intentions and how those effects would bring generation Z tourists to the destination. For this research, a survey was conducted with 351 respondents of generation Z tourists, who were questioned using push factors, pull factors, tourist satisfaction, return intentions, and word of mouth in Kuakata sea beach tourism. Generation Z respondents were from different backgrounds such as some were university students, some were service holder, business man. The survey was conducted with a Likert scale with five points, to collect the responses from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of measurement instruments for five variables: push factor, pull factor, tourist satisfaction, return intentions, and word of mouth. This study used structural equation modeling to find correlations between variables and their effects on one another. This study's analysis was conducted using tools such as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS). This study found that both push and pull factors have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction among Generation Z sea beach tourists in Kuakata, Bangladesh. Tourist satisfaction, in turn, leads to increased return intentions and word of mouth recommendations among Generation Z tourists. This study also revealed the significant mediating effects of word of mouth on the relationship between tourist satisfaction and return intentions. The structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis confirmed the hypothesized paths and showed the significance of the relationships between the variables. The study's findings highlight the importance of managing tourist services and natural beauty to enhance satisfaction and increase return intentions among Generation Z sea beach tourists. These results suggest that respondents agreed that the push factor, pull factor, word of mouth, tourist satisfaction, and return intention have a positive influence. Proper management of tourist services and natural beauty in tourist areas are crucial for increasing tourist satisfaction and encouraging return intentions. Tailoring strategies to cater to the preferences and characteristics of Generation Z tourists is important for attracting and

retaining these tourists. As generation Z live in the digital era, their word of mouth could go beyond the country border and generate foreign tourists. This study may assist those who wanted to get a perspective on generation Z's travel opinions about what motivates them to travel more. Tourists can bring in more tourists, if they are satisfied. That is why this study could help in planning proper tourism with the push and pull factors that are affecting Kuakata as a tourist destination. Satisfied tourist comes back and spread the word about the destination.

**Keywords:** Push Factors, Pull Factors, Tourists' Satisfaction, Return Intentions, Word of Mouth.

**PGRC – 032**

**An Integrated Model of Ethnic Village Resident' Support for Sustainable Tourism Development**

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**Extended Abstract**

Since the milestone document "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was adopted, the tourism industry has been recognized as a significant driver for advancing sustainable development goals (Streimikiene et al., 2021). However, the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly shook the global tourism sector and provided opportunities for accelerating its transformation towards a more sustainable and inclusive development model. The United Nations calls for prioritizing sustainability as the primary focus for post-pandemic tourism industry adjustment, recovery, and development, aiming to create a resilient, sustainable, and inclusive tourism sector (UN, 2023).

In recent years, China has made significant progress in sustainable tourism development by continually updating and improving policies. Over the past decade, the tourism industry has become a major contributor to economic growth, cultural preservation, and sustainable development (Weaver et al., 2020). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the vulnerability of the unsustainable development model driven by tourism resource consumption and capital investment (Duro et al., 2021). As China gradually lifts travel restrictions starting in 2023, the tourism industry faces both opportunities and challenges. Consumer travel demands, behaviors, and attitudes have undergone significant changes in the past three years. To achieve sustainable development in the tourism industry, it must effectively adapt to these emerging changes, seek new sources of growth, enhance resilience, and move beyond the past.

Nevertheless, some regions, while striving for a comprehensive recovery of the tourism industry, have deviated from the path of sustainability, pursuing short-term growth (Liang et al., 2021). This dual pressure of transformation and recovery highlights structural contradictions within destination systems, resulting in imbalances in tourism development. These imbalances include the loss of traditional culture, ecological and environmental degradation, unequal distribution of benefits, and conflicts among stakeholders (Li et al., 2022). In economically underdeveloped areas with fragile ecological environments and closed social networks, ethnic enclaves are particularly vulnerable.

Therefore, in the process of upgrading and transforming the tourism industry, it is crucial to pay greater attention to the sustainable development of ethnic tourism destinations. The key to sustainable development in ethnic tourism lies in the positive attitudes of residents (Wang et al., 2022). Because the core appeal of ethnic tourism lies in the diversity of ethnic cultures, reflecting the customs and traditions of ethnic minorities, the tourism experience largely

depends on positive interactions between tourists and residents. Therefore, the participation and support of local residents are crucial for the sustainable development of ethnic villages.

Previous research has shown that the driving factors for resident support generally fall into two categories: economic rationality and non-economic factors (Wang et al., 2020). In reality, residents of tourism communities are rarely entirely rational or entirely emotional. However, there is a lack of a comprehensive model that explains how economic and non-economic factors promote resident support for the tourism industry (Stylidis et al., 2014). Previous studies have assessed the impact of tourism on residents' quality of life by examining how it affects residents' quality of life as a final outcome, overlooking potential mediating effects (Wang et al., 2022). Furthermore, community attachment, which describes the degree and manner in which residents participate in and integrate into the community, reflecting residents' sense of rootedness and belonging to the community, is the most stable emotional factor influencing resident support for tourism development (Eslami et al., 2019). However, previous research generally treats it as a precursor and rarely explores its moderating role (Dwyer et al., 2019).

This study is grounded in Social Exchange Theory, Bottom-Up Spillover Theory, and Community Attachment Theory. It integrates perceived tourism impacts (including perceived economic impacts, perceived socio-cultural impacts, and perceived environmental impacts), quality of life, and community attachment to predict and explain resident support for sustainable tourism development in ethnic villages, presenting nine research hypotheses.

Following an empirical research logic, this study employs deductive research methods and quantitative research. Data is collected through a questionnaire survey, and researchers plan to conduct field investigations in the Longji Terraces scenic area in Guilin, China, with participants being residents of ethnic villages. To test the proposed hypotheses, this study utilizes data analysis techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling, mediation, and moderation effect tests. The expected research outcomes will provide grassroots impetus for government agencies and scenic area management to formulate and implement sustainable tourism planning and projects. The study also intends to propose an integrated model to highlight the role of ethnic village residents in support to the sustainable tourism development. Thus, the study will motivate residents to provide more support for advancing sustainable tourism.

**Keywords:** Perceived impact; Quality of life; Community attachment; Ethnic tourism sustainable development

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**PGRC – 035**

**The Role of Online Influencers in Promoting Eco-friendly Travel Behaviour: The Intervening Effect of Awareness and the Moderating Role of Aspiration Towards Sustainability**

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**ABSTRACT**

Recent advancements in technology and the rapid explosion of speedy internet connectivity have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of social media (Abbasi et al., 2023). In the current online era, social media platforms are used more frequently as a result of technological outbreaks (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). Social media plays a significant role in tourism, especially in promoting green tourism (Hysa et al., 2022; Sarkar and George, 2018). Travellers are involved in various negative contributions while visiting the tourist destination, including plastic waste pollution and carbon emissions, which are some of the major contributors to global warming (Dube and Nhamo, 2021). Social media influencer endorsements have become crucial in promoting sustainability among travellers. SMI endorsement successfully raises eco-friendly awareness (Knupfer et al., 2023; Okuah et al., 2019). Social media platforms have played a crucial role in promoting sustainability in travel and tourism (Chatterjee and Dsilva, 2021). Additionally, social media influencers endorsement has become essential in spreading the information about sustainable travel to targeted individuals (Palazzo et al., 2021). Influencers raise awareness of sustainable tourism, especially among younger followers (Lindh and Johnstone, 2018). Social media influencers have become crucial in helping people make environmentally friendly travel decisions (Kapoor et al., 2022). According to earlier studies Sarkar and George (2018) and Hysa et al. (2022) stated that social media significantly contributes to the environmental awareness of sustainable tourists. However, the importance of SMIs in enhancing travellers eco-friendly awareness and eco-friendly travel behaviour has not been fully explored in the prior literature. As in tourism and hospitality, the environment and other attached spacious preservation are become an important concern. Thus the current study objective is to analyze SMIs' perceived influence effect on eco-friendly travel behaviour through eco-friendly awareness and the moderating influence of aspiration towards sustainability. Thus, the stimulus organism response (SOR) theory is applied in the current study as a foundation theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The SMIs' perceived influence works as a Stimulus; eco-friendly awareness works as an Organism; and eco-friendly travel behaviour as a Response.

The online questionnaire survey was applied for the collection of data. Scales were taken from previous studies and adopted the current study context, including the eco-friendly awareness questionnaire from Kusumawati and Utomo (2020), SMIs' perceived-influence questionnaire obtained from Crespo et al. (2015), the aspirations to practise sustainability questionnaire adopted from Pop et al. (2022). Finally, Holmes et al. (2021) study provided an eco-friendly travel behaviour questionnaire.

As for the recommendation of Faul et al. (2007), the research evaluated the least sample size needed to measure the PLS-SEM assessment using the G-power software system and

generated 80 least samples required to conduct the pilot study. In order to improve the accuracy of PLS-SEM analysis, we gathered more data based on this required lowest sample limit through purposive sampling and acquired 210 data from Chinese tourists and 16 responses were later disregarded due to inconsistencies in the answers (such as the same straight and zigzag answers).

The study confirmed that environmental awareness has directly and indirectly affects the relationship between SMLs' perceived influence and eco-friendly travel behaviour. Thus, the results proved that SMLs' perceived influence directly impacts eco-friendly awareness and eco-friendly travel behaviour. Results also confirmed the intervening effect of eco-friendly awareness in the relationship between SMLs' perceived influence and eco-friendly travel behaviour. Conversely, the aspiration to practise sustainability, on the other hand, has a negligible moderating impact between SMLs' perceived influence and eco-friendly travel behaviour.

The SOR model is the foundation of this study, which significantly advances research by developing the impact of SMLs' perceived influence on sustainable travel behaviour through the intervening effect of eco-friendly awareness. The current study findings also assist DMOs and SMLs in successfully applying sustainable tourism practises in tourism because it was found that SMLs' endorsement is a great way of persuasion and significantly impacts travellers' eco-friendly awareness and behaviour. If social media platforms are properly used to endorse eco-friendly practices, this greatly raises consumer awareness of sustainability and encourages environmentally friendly behaviour.

**Keywords:** Social media influence (SMLs), Eco-friendly, Awareness, Travel behaviour, Aspiration; Sustainability

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**PGRC – 038**

**Ecosystem Thinking Supporting Business Model Innovation Activities in a Living Lab Setting**

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**Keywords:** Business Model Innovation, Living Labs, Co-Creation, Research and Development

In the post-pandemic market, companies need to find new ways to creating competitive advantage. Within the Hospitality Field, major challenges have risen globally – lack of skilled employees, continuously growing expenses and ongoing turbulence together with changing customer expectations and needs shape the world and challenge companies to seek new ways of doing business. Ecosystem thinking and innovation ecosystems create new solutions and opportunities to co-creation as the focus is shifting from outperforming competition to performing stronger by collaboration. Innovations are not developed from within the confines of an organization. Instead, these evolve from the joint action of a network of actors ranging from suppliers and partners to customers and independent inventors. This is, a network-centric focus (Chesbrough 2006; Nambisan & Sawhney 2007). The ecosystem view is a perspective in the management of business and innovation networks activities. Typically, ecosystems emphasize collaboration in networks and co-evolution of collaboration in organizational fields (Aarikka-Stenroos & Ritala, 2017.)

This study examines Business Model Innovation and Ecosystem building practices in a “Limelight” Living Lab setting at Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Successful Living Lab model of Laurea provides a unique setting for innovation. It combines three tasks given to Universities of Applied Sciences: research and development (R&D), regional development, and pedagogy. The value of a University based Living Lab is the creation and sharing of new knowledge combined with academic education, and activities based on the theory of the Quadruple Helix of Innovation. Innovation systems generate a democracy of knowledge, whose creation is transdisciplinary, non-linear, hybrid, and shared (Afonso et al.2012). As companies are looking to deliver more valuable services and products to the market, seeking alternative sources of competitive advantage creates the need for undertaking major transformation in the innovation processes. Quadruple helix of innovation builds upon triple helix by adding the fourth group “users” to activities - in Living Labs all four important actor groups of the QH model are actively present: users, firms, public research organizations, and public authorities. (Arnkil et al.2010).

Living Labs are defined as public-private partnerships in which businesses, researchers, authorities, and citizens work together for the creation, approval, and testing of services and products, business ideas, and markets in a real-life contexts. (Bergvall-Kåreborn et al.2009). Working within Living Lab context in research, development, and innovation (R&D&I) projects is based on the collaboration of companies and the public sector together with end users and students. All stakeholders are necessary in the context of the envisioned problem or solution involved, regardless of the existing networks that might be embedded in the location or collaboration structures (Steen & van Bueren 2017.). Living Labs are user-centered open

innovation ecosystems integrating research and innovation research in real-life communities and settings. Laurea has been a member of the European Network of Living Labs (ENoLL) since its establishment in 2006 (Laurea 2023a.).

Limelight Event Living Lab brings together accommodation and event businesses, people looking to be employed to

the field, regional agents and students. Due to need for resilience and lack of skilled employees within the hospitality sector and owing to changing customer needs, the business services and processes need to be continuously developed and innovated. This Living Lab is financed by The Service Centre for Continuous Learning and Employment. The Service Centre promotes the competence development of working-age people and the availability of skilled labour (Laurea 2023b.). The novelty of this funded project is to build a program that creates needed skills for the working-age people and also makes it possible for them to later engage in BMI workshops. The project offers event management content courses and activities like training, workshops, work-based studies, and presentations. In this Living Lab event industry, event management experts, event workers and those changing careers are meeting over the same interesting topic.

Objective of this study is to create new knowledge and understanding on how Living Lab collaboration may benefit companies in the post-pandemic market with their Business Model Innovation incentives. A research gap has been recognized, Living Labs are widely researched and there is a lot of academic writings from the past years yet in Finland an empirical study of this nature has not been executed before. To start this study, we conducted a pre-insight phase in spring 2023 by sending out an online questionnaire in which we invited practitioners to share their views on "after COVID" BMI, focusing on skills valued in the employees as this is crucial for designing Living Lab workshops content and activities further. Findings share a common statement: in Hospitality Field employees need new knowledge and skills which support firm BMI incentives and ideas for the future implementation which may be shared in collaborative BMI actions.

In this study we will be focusing on two main research questions:

- 1) How Ecosystem Thinking may be used to accelerate post-pandemic Business Model Innovations in a Living Lab?
- 2) How Living Lab co-creation activities may be combined in a physical venue and in an online format?

In order to create a rich and comprehensive understanding, mixed methods will be used. Quantitative data is collected with a survey, qualitative data is collected in in-person workshops and in an online workshop by utilizing design thinking practices and service design tools.

Expected results of this study are aimed at two audiences. Firstly, we wish to add to ongoing academic discussion new light on modern Living Lab activities by sharing this case study. Secondly, we also aim at creating true managerial implications by shaping our research finding into a play book of best practices, which may be shared with Hospitality Field companies and used in the Limelight Event Living Lab.

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PGRC – 039

**An Integrated Model of Residents' Perceptions Towards Tourism Development in Ethnic Tourism Context**

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**Abstract**

Ethnic tourism that allows for intimate contact with ethnic minorities and active involvement with ethnic cultural practices (Harron & Weiler, 1992) has been acknowledged as a crucial building block to the tourism industry, which has captured increasing scholarly attention in recent decades. Residents living in ethnic tourist destinations usually have a dual role to play as both hospitable hosts and service providers to accommodate tourists' desires for exotic ethnic cultures and customs and concerned civic guards to protect the integrity of their distinctive cultures and vulnerable natural environment (Fan et al., 2021). In this sense, the residents' perceptions towards tourism development will fundamentally impact tourists' satisfaction and their following behavioural intentions, further determining sustainable tourism development and sustainability of tourist destinations (Liburd et al., 2012).

Given the predominant centralised system and top-down approach of ethnic tourism development in the developing world, ethnic tourism has been hailed as a panacea to addressing the widening inter-regional development gap and combating poverty for a better living for the unprivileged ethnic minorities residing in the peripheral areas (Yang & Wall, 2009). Unlike the residents in mass tourism contexts, residents in ethnic tourist sites are usually more susceptible to the penetration of tourism development due to their relatively marginalised sociopolitical status and backward economic conditions (Yang et al., 2008). Moreover, the muted ethnic residents with little say in decision-making and barren capital for tourism involvement are proven not necessarily to be the significant tourism beneficiaries as promised (Ishii, 2012). Regarding the indispensable stakeholder and tough social dilemma between tourism-induced benefits and potential cost, residents' perceived tourism impacts merit more academic attention and industry efforts gravitated towards the ethnic tourism contexts. Additionally, despite the residents' perceptions have been recognised as well-studied and predominantly quantitative (Sharpley, 2014), it remains absent of an integrated structural model examining the causal relationships between the possible influencing factors, residents' perceptions and potential consequences (Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2021), and even sporadic research shedding light on ethnic tourism context, which requires further contextual scrutinisation and comprehension to enrich the existing residents' perception discourse. Consequently, this study intends to advance an integrated model of residents' perceptions addressing both causes and effects of residents' perceptions to unroll a panoramic picture of residents' perceptions towards tourism development contextualised in ethnic tourism. To this end, drawn on the revised Social Exchange Theory and Weber's Theory of Formal and Substantive Rationality, twenty hypotheses were proposed indicating

the path relationships between eight influencing factors (i.e., place attachment, cultural identity, perceived authenticity, emotional solidarity, community involvement, economic gain, perceived conflicts, and perceived competition), residents' positive and negative perceptions, and two consequential constructs of support for tourism development and quality of life.

This research employed a quantitative research methodology to construct a comprehensive framework for comprehending how residents perceive tourism within the context of ethnic tourism. The research was conducted in two popular Dai ethnic villages within the Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, China. The measurement instruments of self-administered questionnaire surveys with 5-point Likert scales were adapted from the previous literature (Eusébio et al., 2018; Li et al., 2016; Md Noor et al., 2019; Rasoolimanesh, Jaafar, et al., 2017; Wang & Yotsumoto, 2019). A purposive sampling method was utilised to recruit 400 eligible respondents by distributing questionnaires online and physically between April and May 2023. The statistical analysis approach of partial least squares–structural equation modelling was implemented by running SMART - PLS software to analyse the prediction-oriented complex conceptual model.

This research put forward an integrated model of residents' perceptions towards tourism development in seldom systematically scrutinised ethnic tourism contexts in examination of the causal relationships between proposed antecedents, residents' positive and negative perceptions, and potential consequences. Based on the six rules of the revised Social Exchange Theory, influencing factors like cultural identity, emotional solidarity, and perceived authenticity, economic gain were proven to exert significant positive effects on residents' positive perceptions, as proposed. In contrast, place attachment, perceived conflicts, and perceived competition were significant positive predictors of residents' negative perceptions. Nonetheless, the confirmed positive indicators of positive perceptions of residents did not show significant negative impacts on residents' negative perceptions; likewise, the positive factors significantly influencing residents' negative perceptions were corroborated to impose no significant negative effects on residents' positive perceptions either. Noteworthy, neither positive perceptions nor negative perceptions of residents could be significantly expounded by community involvement perceived by residents. As for the relationships between residents' perceptions of positive and negative tourism impacts and consequences, only positive perceptions of residents demonstrated significant positive effects imposed on both their support for tourism development and quality of life, but no adverse effects of residents' negative perceptions significantly contributed to their supportive attitudes and perceived quality of life. Echoing the previous findings, the non-linear relationships denote that residents' negative perceptions are more complex and fuzzier to predict, requiring more comprehensive interpretations to crack upon (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2020). Considering local heavy financial reliance on tourism development and the late life cycle of tourism sites studied, despite the perceived tourism cost it triggered, most residents embraced overwhelmingly supportive attitudes towards ethnic tourism development. As for the tourism involvement touched upon the relatively sensitive topics concerning power control and decision-making, there was a diverging response, which may intervene in the significant efficacy in predicting how residents perceive tourism impacts.

This study contributes to an integrated conceptual model of residents' perceptions in an ethnic tourism setting, further pioneeringly examining the seldom quantitatively researched

influencing factors, like perceived authenticity, perceived conflicts, and perceived competition and unveiling the insufficiency of the explanatory power of residents' negative perceptions. As such, it is pertinent for future studies to delve into more comprehensive and contextual understandings of residents' complex perceptions against the backdrop of ethnic tourism. Additionally, managerial implications were presented to the decision-makers and tourism practitioners to shed more excellent light on the residents' socio-cultural demands when weighing tourism impacts, guarantee the tourism-induced benefit trickled down to residents, and lend ears to the ethnic groups on tourism planning, development, management, cultural preservation, and natural conservation with expectation to achieve sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Resident's Perceptions; Ethnic Tourism; Social Exchange Theory; Dai ethnic villages; China

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**PGRC – 043**

**Kaamatan Harvest Festival Challenges: A Narrative Review and Directions for Future Research**

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**Abstract**

The Kaamatan Harvest Festival is a significant cultural celebration observed by the Kadazandusun community in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. While the festival is generally well-received and cherished by the community, there have been a few notable issues and challenges associated. Therefore, this narrative review aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various challenges that the Kaamatan Harvest Festival encounters. This study's methodology typically involves a narrative and comprehensive examination of existing literature, documents, reports, news, and relevant sources related to the festival and its associated challenges. The Kaamatan Harvest Festival lies in its ability to present a comprehensive, insightful, and contextualized understanding of the festival's unique issues. By offering a fresh perspective on these challenges, the review can contribute to cultural preservation, community development, and the promotion of sustainable practices surrounding the festival. Implications, limitations, and conclusion are also discussed in this study.

**Keywords:** Kaamatan Festival; Challenges; Kadazandusun community; Cultural preservation; Sustainable practices



**PGRC – 046**

**Bridging the Gap Between Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals: A Bibliometric Investigation**

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Tourism plays a pivotal role in the global economy, contributing significantly to employment, cultural exchange, and economic growth. However, this rapid growth in tourism has also raised concerns about its impact on the environment, local communities, and social equity. In response, the concept of sustainable tourism has gained prominence as a means to balance the economic benefits of tourism with environmental and social responsibility. Furthermore, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have become a central framework for addressing global challenges, including those related to tourism. This paper conducts a comprehensive bibliometric investigation to explore the evolving research landscape at the intersection of tourism and the SDGs, aiming to identify key trends, knowledge gaps, and implications for sustainable tourism development.

The primary objectives of this study encompass examining the growth and trends in research related to tourism and the SDGs, identifying key themes and topics within the field of sustainable tourism development in the context of the SDGs, analyzing authorship patterns and collaboration networks among researchers in this domain, uncovering influential papers and authors contributing to the literature, and assessing knowledge gaps and implications for future research and practice.

This study employs a bibliometric approach to analyze a comprehensive dataset of academic publications related to tourism and the SDGs. The dataset, collected from Scopus database, spans from 2015 to 2023 in order to provide a historical perspective on research trends. Bibliometric indicators such as publication trends, authorship patterns, citation networks, and keyword co-occurrence are examined to gain insights into the research landscape.

The analysis reveals a substantial growth in research at the intersection of tourism and the SDGs over the past few years. This growth reflects the increasing recognition of the importance of aligning tourism practices with sustainability objectives (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2023). Notably, the number of publications in this field has shown an upward trajectory, demonstrating its expanding significance (El Archi et al., 2023).

Keyword co-occurrence analysis uncovers several prominent themes within the domain of sustainable tourism development and the SDGs. These include "ecotourism," "community-based tourism," "sustainable destination management," "sustainability indicators," and "tourist behavior." The co-occurrence of these keywords underscores the multifaceted nature of sustainable tourism, emphasizing environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

Authorship patterns indicate collaboration among researchers and institutions. Key authors and research groups actively contributing to the sustainable tourism development literature

are identified. This collaborative spirit suggests the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing the complex challenges associated with sustainable tourism. Citation analysis highlights influential papers and authors within the field, shedding light on seminal works that have significantly impacted research in sustainable tourism development and the SDGs. These references serve as valuable resources for researchers and practitioners seeking a foundation for their work.

Despite the growth in research, knowledge gaps persist in the field. There is a need for more comprehensive studies that assess the long-term impacts of sustainable tourism initiatives. Additionally, exploring the integration of emerging technologies and innovative business models within sustainable tourism is crucial. Bridging these gaps can further advance our understanding of how tourism can effectively contribute to the attainment of the SDGs.

This bibliometric investigation provides a comprehensive overview of the evolving research landscape at the intersection of tourism and the SDGs. The findings demonstrate the growing importance of sustainable tourism as a means to achieve the SDGs and highlight the multidisciplinary nature of this field. Key themes, collaboration networks, and knowledge gaps have been identified, offering valuable insights for both researchers and practitioners. As tourism continues to play a central role in the global economy, understanding and addressing its impact on sustainable development goals is paramount.

The implications of this study extend to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. It underscores the need for holistic approaches to sustainable tourism development that consider environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Additionally, the study provides guidance for future research directions, encouraging further exploration of innovative solutions and technologies to bridge the gap between tourism and the SDGs. Ultimately, these insights can contribute to more sustainable tourism practices that align with the global agenda for sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Sustainable development goals, Bibliometric analysis, Research trends, Collaboration networks, Knowledge gaps.

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**PGRC – 048**

**Community Resilience in Small and Medium Tourism-based (SMT) Sectors in Batu Ferringhi, Penang, Malaysia During the Covid Pandemic Period**

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It has been more than two years since the COVID-19 pandemic devastated the global tourism industry. The economic scars experienced by many countries around the world in the form of production losses, especially for countries dependent on tourism, are quite unprecedented (International Monetary Fund, 2021). According to data from the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2021) the share of the global travel and tourism sector in world output significantly decreased, with its share of global GDP halving from 10.5% in 2019 to 5.5% in 2020, resulting in the loss of 62 million jobs worldwide (WTTC, 2021). In addition, the ongoing pandemic has profoundly impacted individual risk perceptions regarding global travel and has led to a shift in tourists' perspectives on the travel and tourism industry. The global spread of COVID-19 constitutes a social disaster that has resulted in loss of life, strained healthcare systems, and disrupted the world's economic, social, and political systems.

Small and medium-sized tourism-based (SMT) sectors play a crucial role in the development of various economic sectors and job creation, particularly in developing countries. Moreover, in Penang, these SMTs are closely intertwined with and contribute significantly to the enhancement of the local tourism industry, ultimately elevating the standard of living for the area's residents. This sector accounts for approximately 90% of businesses and employs more than half of the workforce. However, SMTs are highly sensitive to both internal and external uncertainties. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the world encountered an unexpected and severe global crisis that resulted in social imbalances and economic challenges. While SMTs appear to exhibit greater resilience in the face of widespread, chronic crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses within this sector have grappled with social isolation, making it challenging to cope with stressful situations. Despite this, SMTs play an important role in providing a unique tourism experience at the destination, and their active presence is important for the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination.

This study aims to understand the resilience strategies towards crisis in small and medium tourism-based (SMT) sectors. The current pandemic has had a particularly detrimental effect on the tourism sector, with COVID-19 posing a significant health threat to the world. Many SMT operators have adopted resilience strategies that ultimately helped them survive. The dimensions of resilience were employed as an analytical framework to highlight the survival of small and medium tourism-based (SMT) sectors and to extract strategies for enhancing tourism destination resilience in the face of social disasters such as COVID-19 in Batu Ferringhi, Penang, Malaysia. This study employs a qualitative method, focusing on tourism businesses in Batu Ferringhi, Penang. It

involves conducting in-depth interviews with informants from non-governmental organizations, government officials, and SMT operators directly affected by the global outbreak of COVID-19. Primary data will be collected through these interviews, and thematic analysis will be used for data analysis. The study addresses aspects related to governance, economics, environment, and social resilience. It aims to provide insights for tourism policymakers in formulating strategies that address limitations and take a more comprehensive perspective. These strategies are intended to enhance the resilience of SMT

sectors, which play a dominant role in overall tourism resilience. The study's insights offer an improved understanding of SMT tourism resilience as a strategy for crisis and disaster management.

Thus, the development of resilient tourism businesses during a severe crisis is crucial, as they face a heightened risk due to prolonged COVID-19 downtime, and their full recovery can significantly contribute to the tourism industry. While early research suggests that small businesses may exhibit greater resilience owing to their dynamic and flexible organizational structures, they often suffer the most during crises and are less prepared in various aspects of their operations. The unstable environment of developing countries further exacerbates the vulnerability of SMT sectors to crises (Dahles and Susilowati, 2015) and gives them the right to ask for government support during a pandemic.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Small and medium tourism-based (SMT), Covid-19, tourism industry

**PGRC – 051**

**Investigating Attitude and Behavioral Intentions among Senior Tourists toward Smart Hotels in Mainland China**

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After the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of smart technologies is rising (Jiang and Wen, 2020), hotel operators and academics are focusing more on the potential advantages of smart technologies in hotel management practices (Zabin, 2019), which can be referred as "smart hotel". Wu and Cheng (2018) coined the term "smart hotels" to describe the development of a novel business model that incorporates smart technologies or smart devices within the hotel industry. Due to the changing business model of the hotel industry, it would be beneficial to investigate how customers perceive smart hotels in the long run.

There are many studies that have focused on the behavior intention of AI and robotics in the hospitality industry. However, the impact of smart hotel on tourists willingness has been underexplored. Although few past studies have indeed investigated customer attitude towards smart hotel on demographically diverse respondents, the outcome of senior tourists still remain unknown. Since the global population is ageing, and the proportion of vacation expenditure accounted for by senior tourists is rising (Sangpikul, 2008). In particular, baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) who have been found to have different attitudes and lifestyles compared to previous generations of retirees, are increasingly drawn to partake in a variety of tourism experiences (Patterson and Balderas, 2020). Besides, China hosts the world's largest senior population, thus, given the importance of senior tourists to the contemporary hospitality industry, further research on the behavioral intentions of smart hotel among seniors is required.

Therefore, the current research is going to apply a quantitative approach to test the experiential factors among seniors toward the attitude of smart hotels. The questionnaire will contain four distinct sections. The first section will consist of questions related to the demographic profile of respondents, while the second, third and last sections will devote to the constructs of the proposed framework. Each construct will be measured by scales that validated by prior research. More specifically, there will be eight reflective constructs: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived security, perceived convenience, perceived compatibility, perceived entertainment, attitude toward smart hotels and intentions to stay. The four-item scale of perceived usefulness and ease of use will be adapted from Venkatesh and Davis (2000) and Yang et al., (2021). Perceived security will be modified from Kim et al., (2021) and Chen et al., (2021) with four measurement scales. Perceived convenience will be derived from Kim and Han (2020) with five items. Perceived compatibility will be adapted from Taylors and Todd (1995) and Han et al., (2021) with five items. Perceived entertainment will take from the three-item scales proposed by Tussyadiah et al., (2018) and Kim et al., (2021). Attitude scale will be modified from Han et al., (2021) , while intention to stay will be derived from Yang et al., (2021), both with three items. All of the scales in this study will choose 7-point Likert scales, ranging from '1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree'. Measurement items will be created in English and translate into Mandarin

using the back-to-back translation technique for greater consistency (Brislin, 1970). Besides, pilot study will be conducted before the formal data collection in order to finalize the questionnaire.

The target respondents will be senior tourists from mainland China. To qualify for participation in this study, participants will be selected based on three judgement criteria: (1) Over 50 years old (including 50); (2) had travelled during the past five years; (3) had stayed in hotels during their trips. Self-administrated questionnaires will be created on Wjx. cn (<https://www.wjx.cn/>), and will be distributed through both WeChat and online survey platform. The partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) will be used to analyze the data since the current study is prediction-oriented research which aim to predict future behavioral intentions of senior tourists to visit and stay in a smart hotel (Hair et al., 2017).

By examining the effects of usefulness, ease of use, security, convenience, compatibility, and entertainment on attitude and behavioural intention of senior tourists in the context of smart hotels, this research will contribute to the sparse literature on smart hotel by extending technology acceptance model, meanwhile, this study will also contribute theoretically to the literatures on senior tourism. In addition, incorporating new constructs such as security, convenience, compatibility and entertainment based on TAM framework, this study provides a novel conceptual framework in relation to the behavioural intentions of senior tourists. Last but not least, this study will provide important insights for hotel management regarding to the impact factors that senior tourists value the most toward smart hotel.

**Keywords:** senior tourists, smart hotel, behavioural intentions, hotel industry, China

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**PGRC – 052**

**Examining the Role of Beneshwar Fair in Transforming The Land Use/ Land Cover Of River Island At The Confluence Point of Mahi & Som River: A Study in Anthropology of Tourism**

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**Abstract**

Since time immemorial fairs and festivals have continued playing a vital role in the life of people in India. In modern times these fairs and festivals are important tourism centres as these places showcases cultural events thus promoting cultural tourism. Tourism brings about a substantial change in the surrounding land use/land cover dynamics. These changes are both negative and positive. In order to minimize negative changes, it is necessary to take into account the changes the landscape has gone through. In this study Beneshwar Dham river island located in Dungarpur District of Rajasthan is taken into account. It is the place which is known for the world's largest tribal fair event. Land use/land cover change analysis using Landsat data is being carried out. The results shows that built up area has increased rapidly from 24.44 sq.km to 45.63 sq.km between 1999 to 2021. Only the share of agricultural land has decreased from 157.8 sq.km to 110.53 sq.km while vegetation, mining, barren land and waterbodies shows slight uptick.

**Keywords:** Land use/land cover, River island, Remote sensing

**Introduction**

At the confluence point of Mahi and Som river, there is a magnificent river island formed by the deposition of Sediments brought by the two rivers. This island known by the name 'Beneshwar Dham'. Mahi river and its tributaries have done its work to transform most of this area into a denudational land. The site of Beneshwar dham is well know for its rich historical and cultural fabric which is highly revered by people since many centuries thus making it a unique landscape. Sacred sites are often associated with unique geographical landforms like rivers, mountains, hills etc. Such sacred sites shows unique blend of natural and cultural landscape. India boasts so many of such sacred sites and one of the prime example of it is the Beneshwar dham. The site is highly revered because of its location on the confluence point of Mahi and Som rivers thus making it as sangam or confluence point. Sangams in Indian cultures are often considered as the point of confluence of two or more rivers and this holds a place of high significance for the devotees. Jakham river which is another important river joins Som north of the Beneshwar dham thereafter Som river flows further down south to meet Mahi river near the Beneshwar dham, thus sometimes this place is also called as the confluence point of three rivers or 'Triveni Sangam' (Mahi, Jakham and Som rivers respectively). Thus this confluence point gives this place an intangible tint which has played a pivotal role in attracting thousands of devotees for immersing ashes of their dead ones into the holy waters. Every year during the months of January or February, lakhs of devotees visits this site, they immerse the ashes, perform rituals and also take bath in the holy waters. Other than this major event, during the full and no moon days, the devotees comes in large numbers to this site. Therefore the main objectives of this study is to understand the potential tangible & intangible assets of Beneshwar Dham and to find out the role of tourism in landuse/landcover changes Beneshwar dham and its surroundings has witnessed.



There are some important works which were taken into account which mainly focuses upon the assessment of landuse/landcover changes through the lens of tourism. Boori & VoAenAlek, (2014) assessed the land use/land cover disturbance in Jeseniky mountains Czech Republic due to the impact caused by tourism. The study took into account Landsat Satellite images of the Year 1991, 2001 and 2013. The study analyzed the changes in forest, Settlement, Pasture and agriculture from 1991 to 2013. The study concluded that the area witnessed reduction in forest cover from 1991 to 2001, thereafter it witnessed increase in forest cover from 2001 to 2013. Naik et al., (2018) analyzed the impact of coastal tourism on the land use/land cover in the parts of kundapura taluka in Karnataka. The study for understanding the decadal change in land use/land cover from 2006 to 2016 use IRS Satellite imageries. Vijay et al., (2016) assessed the impact of tourism on land use/landcover and also on natural slope in Manali. As slope is more prone to landslide in hilly areas, ASTER based digital elevation map (DEM) is used with the land use satellite imagery for the year 1989, 2000, 2005 and 2012. The built up area on various slopes is analysed. The study concluded that the built up area is increasing year by year. Lama et al.,(2019) assessed the impact of Ecotourism on the land use/ land cover of Shivpura watershed. The study took into account the Landsat ETM+ image for the year 1999 and Landsat OLI image for the year 2016. For the accuracy assessment, the study also took into account field observation technique.

**Materials and methods.**

Mostly secondary data are be used for conducting this study. Census handbooks, Reports published by government and various agencies are taken into account. Map of the study area is generated using shape file downloaded taken from Survey of India website ([https://onlinemaps.surveyofindia.gov.in/Digital\\_Product\\_Show.aspx](https://onlinemaps.surveyofindia.gov.in/Digital_Product_Show.aspx)). Photographs are derived by conducting field visit to the area. Details regarding the historical, geographical and cultural background the area are taken out from secondary sources like District Census Handbook 2011 for Dungapur District, Gazetteer of India, Reports published by the Devasthan department, Government of Rajasthan and news clippings on Beneshwar dham available online.

Beneshwar temple and its 10 kms proximity is analyzed to see the changes it went through. The 10 kilometres of Buffer is selected after analysing the impact Beneshwar dham have on its surroundings. This is done by conducting field visit and the main impact taken into account is based on the accessibility component. Beneshwar dham can easily be accessed from two important locations one is Sabla village and other is Ganoda village, the former is in Dungarpur District while the later is in Banswara District. Both locations are on State Highway 32 and from both locations the distance to reach Beneshwar dham is approximately around 10 kilometers. Thus for this study 10 kilometres proximity is being done using Buffer analysis tool in QGIS software as the site of Beneshwar directly influences 10 kilometers area surrounding it. Decadal changes are analyzed from 1999 to 2009 and from 2009 to 2021, For this change analysis NASA's freely available Satellite images are downloaded for the year 1999,2009 and 2021 from USGS website. Satellite images taken by Landsat 5 and Landsat 8 are used.

**Results**

The results derived are shown in the form of Table (1,2) and Graph (1) below.

CLASS	1999 AREA IN PERCENTAGE OF 2009	AREA IN PERCENTAGE OF 2009	AREA PERCENTAGE OF 2009	AREA PERCENTAGE OF 2021	AREA CHANGED (IN SQ KM)	CHANGE %
	SQ KM	AREA	IN SQ KM	AREA		
WATERBODIES	6.79	2.19	11.02	3.56	4.23	1.37
VEGETATION	70.91	22.94	79.63	25.76	8.72	2.82

BUILT-UP	24.44	7.90	36.15	11.69	11.71	3.79
MINING	37.43	12.11	27.57	8.92	-9.86	-3.19
BARREN LAND	11.66	3.77	17.13	5.54	5.47	1.77
AGRICULTURE	157.8	51.06	137.53	44.5	-20.27	-6.56

Table 1 showing the changes in different land use/land cover classes in study area between 1999-2009

CLASS	2009 AREA IN PERCENTAGE OF SQ KM	2009 AREA IN PERCENTAGE OF AREA	2021 AREA IN SQ KM	2021 AREA PERCENTAGE OF AREA	AREA CHANGED (IN SQ KM)	CHANGE %
WATERBODIES	11.02	3.56	11.55	3.73	0.53	0.17
VEGETATION	79.63	25.76	87.91	28.44	8.28	2.68
BUILT-UP	36.15	11.69	45.63	14.76	9.48	3.07
MINING	27.57	8.92	35.44	11.46	7.87	2.54
BARREN LAND	17.13	5.54	17.57	5.68	0.44	0.14
AGRICULTURE	137.53	44.5	110.93	35.89	-26.6	-8.61

Table 2 showing the changes in different land use/land cover classes in study area between 2009-2021

Table 2 showing the changes in different land use/land cover classes in study area between 2009-2021

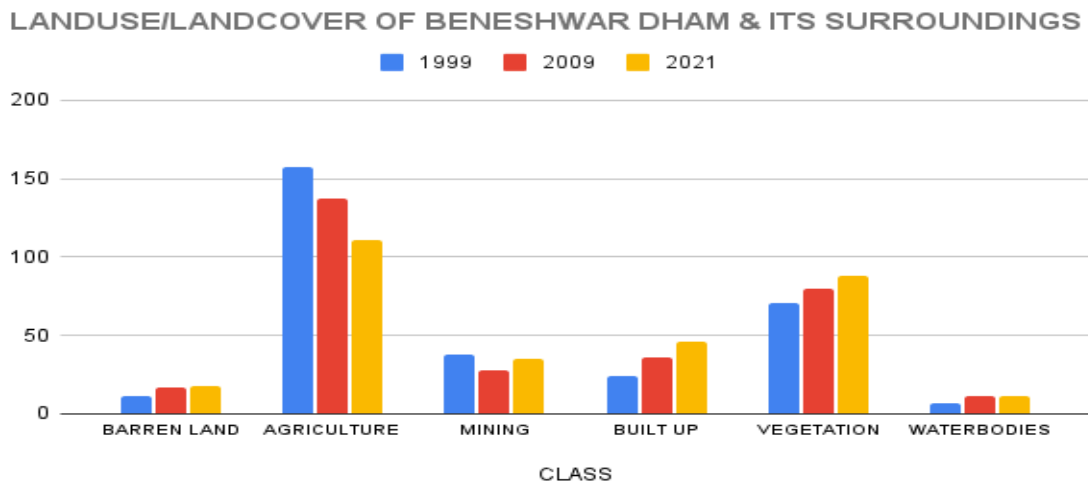


Figure 1 showing temporal changes in different land use/land cover classes between 1999,2009 and 2021

**Discussion**

The satellite images downloaded from the USGS portal of Landsat satellite helps us to have basic insights the temporal and spatial changes Beneshwar dham has gone through over the past two decades. Adjacent to remote sensing based analysis, the fieldwork done during the course of the study helped us to correlate the results. Water bodies which includes river Mahi and Som and also some of the ponds and lakes occupy the least area of the total land use/land cover of the area but it is most significant of all categories as it is already discussed that the significance of the confluence of Mahi and Som is certainly the reason behind the evolution of cultural landscape in the area. Vegetation in the area is increased according to satellite based land use/land cover classification, however this may show the growth of

shrubs on the dried portion of the river bed. Built up area nearly doubled from 1999 to 2021 and is expected to rise due to the plans put forth by the Devasthan department, Government of Rajasthan for improving the infrastructural facilities at Beneshwar dham that can help accommodate the tourist footfall at Beneshwar dham. Mining tends to be an important economic activity for the region as mining for minerals like quartz and feldspar is done therefore there are new leases which are granted by the Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Rajasthan.

### **Conclusion**

The present study took into account Landsat TM and Landsat 8 OLI images having spatial resolution of 30 metres. The future studies can work on more finer resolution satellite imageries derived from Sentinel 2B and Cartosat satellites having resolution of 10 metres to get more better results. More historical images predating 1999 can also be taken into account. Studies can be done which throws light on pre and post fair conditions at Beneshwar dham. This can help ascertaining the kind of pressure the area goes through when the tourist footfall is highest. Moreover this study took 10 kilometers of buffer and assessed the conditions of Beneshwar dham and its surroundings based on the accessibility component.

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**PGRC – 054**

**Residents' Attitudes and Stakeholders' Perceptions Towards Sustainable Tourism  
Development in Baa Atoll, Maldives**

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Sustainable tourism is a concept best described as the process of meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future (WTO, 1998). Lu and Nepal (2009) reveal that one of the principles of sustainable tourism is holistic planning and strategy-making. To encompass the holistic approach to sustainable tourism; it is pivotal that the interests of all stakeholders must be recognized (Hardy & Beeton, 2001) and that a lack of recognition creates an operational model of tourism, albeit not truly sustainable. Sustainability, and in turn, sustainable tourism; is of paramount importance to environmentally fragile regions such as tropical islands that predominantly utilize tourism as means of a primary income generator, evident by the Male' Declaration of Sustainable Tourism following a conference held by participating nations from the Asia-Pacific region in the Maldives in 1997. The Maldives is a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) situated in the middle of the Indian Ocean, consisting of 1,902 islands. The local population consists of 515 696 people living on 185 inhabited islands (World Bank, 2021), with the rest uninhabited, most used as tourism facilities following an enclave resort model of "one island, one resort" which ensures that the tourists and the residents do not interact unless through the scope of employment in tourism establishments. Since tourism started in the Maldives in the 1972; the small island developing state has seen major economic development, transforming the country from a fishing nation into the forefront of luxury tropical island tourism. As posited by the social exchange theory (Shakeela & Weaver, 2018); there is economic benefit for the Maldives through tourism, but the environmental, sociocultural and economic costs stemming from the development of tourism lead to discontentment amongst the local Maldivians. Tourism's contribution to the Maldives' gross domestic product is 75% in both direct and indirect revenue (Ministry of Tourism, 2011) but despite the evident economic success, the Maldivian perception of the industry has been historically noted in the First Tourism Master Plan (Ministry of Tourism, 1996) as largely hostile due to the belief that the local Maldivians do not find the remuneration and job opportunities presented by the industry to be sufficient: which can be illustrated by the high employment turnover rates and a dependency on expatriate labour: especially in management level positions. The reason for this misnomer is more multidimensional due to a plethora of factors which are socio-cultural and institutional (Henderson, 2008; Scheyvens, 2011; Shakeela, Breakey, & Ruhanen, 2012). This research aims to conduct a resident perception survey utilizing the revised edition (Yu, Chancellor & Cole, 2011) of the sustainable tourism attitude scale (SUS-TAS) developed by Choi & Sirakaya (2005) for resident perceptions, and multi-stakeholder perception of tourism sustainability (Mello et al., 2016; Luštický & Musil, 2016) in the selected area: the Baa Atoll region. The location is also home to the UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve: Hanifaru Bay. The region is unique geographically, in which the disposition of the area allows for segregations of whale sharks and manta rays which creates an opportunity to witness some of the most elusive aquatic wildlife; adding to the value of the tourism experience of Baa Atoll. However, in these situations, the sustainability of the tourism destination is of utmost importance as the natural characteristics and ecology of the ocean life would be disrupted by mass tourism

development. The utilization of a quantitative survey for residents and a semi-structured interview for stakeholders will allow the research to dwell deeper into the theoretical framework informing both of the studies, i.e: social exchange theory for residents and social representation theory for stakeholders, respectively. A lack of perception/attitudinal study regarding sustainable tourism development in the region of Maldives combined with a lack of SUS-TAS application in SIDS context relate to the importance of the study. The first phase of the research will utilize a positivist paradigm, with the use of a survey distributed to residents of Baa Atoll and will utilize a non-probability convenience sampling approach with a positivist paradigm. For phase two of the study, which is concerned with measuring stakeholders' perception of sustainable tourism development in the Maldives, interviews will be and transcribed verbatim to conduct content analysis. The stakeholders will include industry professionals, administrative and government officials, environmental activists and tourists; in a 4-tier weightage system (4 industry professionals, 3 administrative, 2 NGO and 1 tourist) and will utilize non-probability judgmental sampling approach with an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm. The findings will contribute to a cohesive understanding of the Maldivian tourism industry as well as investigating the sustainability indicators of a tourism industry in a SIDS.

**Keywords:** sustainable tourism development; small-island developing states; residents' attitudes; stakeholders' perception; Maldives tourism; mixed-methodology.

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**PGRC – 055**

**Multiple Stakeholders' Participation In Ecotourism Development For Future Sustainability At Royal Belum**

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Tourism is one of the main sources that contribute positively to Malaysia's economy. As tourists are attracted to unique local cultures and traditions, it is important to continuously improve facilities and services particularly in areas that attract international tourists. Malaysia is known as one of the earth's 12 "mega-diverse" countries, thus the government agreed to enhance the efficient management, conservation, and sustainable development of forest biodiversity. Furthermore, biodiversity contributes to economic, food security, environmental stability, national heritage, science, education, recreation, and ecotourism (Abdullah, et al. 2015). The Royal Belum State Park (Royal Belum; Perak, Malaysia) was gazetted as Belum Forest Reserve in 1971, and later in 2007 was re-gazetted due to its abundant bio-resources. It has become a region rich in unique ecosystems and a wide variety of flora and fauna species. In addition, this area is also enriched by a group of Jahai indigenous peoples (Orang Asli) who are still vibrant with traditional culture. The Royal Belum has the potential to be a focal point for ecotourism that is a natural and cultural ecosystem of the local community. Thus, ecotourism activities also involve local communities and communities who have significant control over tourism activities and their direct involvement in the development and management of which many benefits remain in the community. Ecotourism in the Royal Belum also minimizes the negative impact on the natural and socio-cultural environment of the Jahai people, while also working to support the protection of the natural environment by generating economic benefits through alternative income and employment opportunities for the local community. Prior research has shown vital effects of ecotourism in Royal Belum including activities relating to environmental education, indigenous lifestyle, and preserving the cultural heritage. The ecology of the area is a further pull for the resident socioeconomic. Ecotourism at Royal Belum has improved the lives of Jahai people through public education on the importance of ecology and the natural environment. Biodiversity includes plants, animals, microorganisms, and their environment(s). These can be categorized into three diversities, genetic, species or ecosystem (Manokaran, 1992). However, the biodiversity at Royal Belum is still vulnerable to harm due to climate change, thus reducing the full ecotourism benefits there. Royal Belum is a relatively pristine forest of Malaysia, a vital habitat for charismatic and keystone animals which function as their ecosystem homes. Even though the State Park provides many functions to the country and people, relatively scarce data was found to estimate the ecotourism value. Moreover, biodiversity from Royal Belum is maybe impacted by too much rainfall that weakens the resilience of its dipterocarp plants, unpredictable weather causing altered flower / fruit timings, homogenous animal makeup and potential harm to people and farmed species caused by the spread of zoonotic. Stakeholder participation is an invaluable part of sustainable ecotourism, because it organizes and evens out rulings according to the requirements of each group. A top-down ecotourism system expedites the growth but does not necessarily provide favorable results for the local people who inhabit the site.

Overall, this research sets out to ascertain the ecotourism value via mixed method approach, while improving the economic situation of activities at Royal Belum. Specifically, we seek to understand the development of continuous sustainable ecotourism within the Royal Belum vicinity, focusing on: (1) stakeholder participation, (2) development of Royal Belum as an Ecotourism destination, and (3) Ecotourism resiliency through quantitative survey in Royal Belum.

The study area will involve two Orang Asli settlements in Royal Belum: Kampung Sungai Kejar and Kampung Sungai Tiang. The prospective respondents will be asked to agree to participate in the survey by answering a questionnaire-guided interview. The study will employ a mixed method research by integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The qualitative approach is done by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with informants from stakeholders: tourists, local community (Jahai tribe), government officials, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. Other potential collaborators include scientists and park management. The quantitative approach will be done via desktop research and structured questionnaire for survey (WTP). Components in the survey instrument will be adapted, and the sample involved will be a minimum of 500 respondents at Royal Belum. Higher economics of ecosystem supported at Royal Belum will be a measure of services. The total biodiversity and ecotourism value of Royal Belum will be sampled three times per year. Biodiversity credits (Biocredits) are used as an indication of value, for the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme and to pay for biodiversity-enhancing activities. Biocredits will be calculated using the System of Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA). Willingness to pay will be determined through i) Contingent Valuation method (CVM) which determines the respondents' attitude towards enhancing biodiversity, and ii) Stated Preference (SP) which indicates willingness to pay for biodiversity services. Thereafter, the Individual Travel Cost Method (TCM; survey questionnaire) is used to obtain the main data. This information will be assessed with truncated negative binomial regression, to understand which factors are important for the local tourists in Royal Belum. Consumer surplus will be determined from regression, giving an estimate of benefits obtained by the visitors from ecotourism. Interviews will be studied according to themes and textual software, while an analysis of survey is undertaken using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS 20.0; Windows). Data will also be analyzed using PLS and Microsoft Excel.

The results from this study will be useful to improve its ecotourism by enhancing the local people's lives. Policy level outputs to Park Management (PSPC) can include a proposal to national policy on Ecotourism, and knowledge transfer via journal publications. Proposed titles of the latter are "Ecotourism valuation of Royal Belum State Park" and "SWOT analysis on the ecotourism resiliency at Royal Belum". Other possibilities are the economic estimation of ecosystem activities in yearly income from ecotourism. Finally, this information can be used by tourism administrations to apply in developing countries.

**Keywords:** mixed method; conservation; indigenous people; economy; community; resilience



**PGRC – 056**

**An exploratory study on drivers of destination recommendation for educational tourism: A study on integrating image, motivation, information, experience in Bangalore**

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**Abstract**

**Research problem**

This study addresses the research problem of understanding the drivers behind destination recommendations for educational tourism in Bangalore, India. As educational tourism gains prominence, it's essential to explore how destination image, motivational factors, information sources, and tourists' educational experiences interact to shape their recommendations. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of educational tourism dynamics in Bangalore.

**Method and methodology**

The study employs a comprehensive approach, starting with an extensive literature review and reliability tests to validate data collection instruments. Hypotheses are formulated and rigorously tested using statistical techniques like factor analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This mixed-method approach provides a holistic view of the subject, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis.

**Findings conclusions and future work**

The findings reveal that destination image, motivation, information access, and educational experience significantly impact tourists' destination recommendations. This research enhances our comprehension of educational tourism dynamics in Bangalore. Future research should focus on specific educational tourism sub-segments, examine the role of digital media in information dissemination, and explore the impact of sustainability practices. This study sets the stage for refining educational tourism strategies in Bangalore, meeting evolving tourist preferences, and promoting the city as an educational tourism hub.

**PGRC – 057**

**Factors Influencing the Adoption of ChatGPT by the Business Events Professionals in Klang Valley, Malaysia**

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**Keywords:** Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT); Business Events; Technology Acceptance; Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT); Event Industry; Event Professional

**Extended Abstract**

The advent of advanced technology, particularly in the realm of artificial intelligence (AI), has brought forth a new era of transformative innovations. Among these innovations is ChatGPT, a chatbot tool developed by OpenAI, based on the Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT) architecture. Since its launch in late November 2022, ChatGPT has garnered substantial popularity across various industries. It allows users to engage in conversations by simply inputting prompts and leverages OpenAI's language model.

In this extended abstract, we delve into the factors influencing the adoption of ChatGPT by business events professionals in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Business events professionals encompass a wide range of stakeholders, including event organizers, venue providers, audio-visual suppliers, public relations agencies, contractors, and others. These professionals play a pivotal role in orchestrating meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions—key components of the business events industry.

In the current era of unprecedented technological advancements, where online bots are prompting us to verify our human identities, one prominent innovation that has garnered widespread attention is ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer). Surprisingly, several major companies, including Accenture, Amazon, Apple, Bank of America, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Samsung, and Spotify, have chosen to prohibit or restrict their employees from utilizing ChatGPT in their daily work routines (Aaron, 2023). This phenomenon extends beyond corporate boundaries, as certain nations, such as China, Cuba, Iran, Italy, North Korea, Russia, and Syria, have also imposed bans on ChatGPT (Conor, 2023). These bans and restrictions are primarily attributed to concerns about data leaks, cybersecurity risks, and the potential for inaccurate responses. Notably, in Malaysia, where there are no such restrictions, the Ministry of Higher Education has even provided guidelines for the usage of ChatGPT (Christopher, 2023).

From the perspective of the global business events industry, there is a prevailing sentiment that the human touch remains indispensable despite the rise of ChatGPT. Experts like Spellos (2023) underscore the continued importance of human interaction, particularly in the context of meeting contracts. Eisenstodt (2023) warns against the commoditization of meeting contracts, which could potentially devalue the profession of meeting and event planning. Turner (2023) emphasizes the need for human oversight to ensure the accuracy of information generated by ChatGPT. While Ball (2023) acknowledges ChatGPT's ability to handle certain event planning details, it is acknowledged that it is not yet flawless. Overall,

despite ChatGPT's transformative potential, human elements remain integral to the core of the business operations (Ether, 2023). Some optimistically view ChatGPT as a tool that streamlines workflows (Moritz, 2023), while others, like Brockmeyer (2023), note its limitations, particularly in forming new and imaginative connections.

Interestingly, in Malaysia's business events industry, there is limited discourse regarding ChatGPT due to its unrestricted usage. Media analysis by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2023) reveals that discussions mainly revolve around artificial intelligence and the general improvement in work productivity through chatbots. The public, however, expresses concerns about the potential negative impacts on various industries. Education-related discussions about ChatGPT, such as those by Prema (2023) and Vignesh (2023), dominate the local discourse. Furthermore, only one local article from *The Star* (2023) reports on ChatGPT's ability to assist in budgeting, venue selection, outfit choices, vow writing, and more, drawing from an overseas publication. Insights shared during the AI-Powered Events forum organized by Taylor's University Malaysia (Rahul, 2023) emphasize ChatGPT as a starting point for creative event ideas, albeit with a caveat on the need for accuracy verification. Additionally, Micky (2023) highlights ChatGPT's role in enhancing productivity and providing valuable data, while Ng (2023) underscores its capacity to streamline processes and offer event professionals valuable insights.

The research objectives (ROs) for this study encompass a comprehensive investigation into the factors influencing users' behavioral intentions and adoption of ChatGPT. RO1 focuses on evaluating the impact of performance expectancy, examining how users' expectations of ChatGPT's performance influence their intention to use it. RO2 delves into effect expectancy, investigating how users' perceptions of ChatGPT's effectiveness affect their behavioral intentions. RO3 assesses the role of social influence, exploring how external factors and opinions shape users' intentions regarding ChatGPT. RO4 examines facilitating conditions, aiming to understand how the availability of resources and support impacts users' behavioral intentions toward ChatGPT. RO5 explores hedonic motivation, investigating the role of enjoyment and pleasure in shaping users' intentions. RO6 examines the relationship between price value and users' intentions, considering the perceived value of using ChatGPT. RO7 investigates the impact of habit, exploring how repetitive use influences behavioral intentions. RO8 focuses on information accuracy, examining how it moderates the relationships among these factors. Lastly, RO9 assesses the influence of users' behavioral intentions on their actual usage of ChatGPT. These research objectives collectively provide a holistic understanding of the factors driving the adoption and use of ChatGPT.

This study holds theoretical significance as it contributes to the limited body of research on ChatGPT adoption in the business events industry. It extends the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) by incorporating new variables and explores their effects on technology adoption. Additionally, it offers unique insights into the adoption of ChatGPT within the business events context. On a practical level, this research provides evidence-based recommendations that can influence decision-making processes for both business events professionals and technology companies. It addresses real-world challenges in the business events industry and suggests practical solutions, ultimately supporting technological advancements in the sector.

The research design is a critical element in this study, encompassing the chosen framework of research methods (Dwi, 2020). Employing a positivism approach, the study utilizes a

quantitative method to investigate the factors influencing ChatGPT adoption by business events professionals in Klang Valley, Malaysia. This method aims to measure correlations between independent, mediator, moderator, and dependent variables, revealing cause-and-effect connections.

Ethical considerations are paramount, with participants provided information sheets outlining the research's purpose, ensuring informed and voluntary participation. Anonymity, privacy, and the right to withdraw are safeguarded. Data collection involves primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires efficiently gather primary data, while secondary data is drawn from existing research and resources. The study focuses on the population of business events professionals in Klang Valley, Malaysia, in collaboration with MyCEB and MACEOS to determine their precise number. Sample size determination follows Krejcie and Morgan's formula (1970), considering sorted data from MyCEB and MACEOS. Questionnaires will be distributed both in person and online.

Convenience sampling is chosen due to resource and accessibility constraints, acknowledging that not all target respondents have an equal chance to participate. The questionnaire comprises five sections, including demographic variables, and deploys various measurement scales, from nominal and ordinal for demographics to Likert scales ranging from 1 to 5 for other sections. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS 29 and SmartPLS, with SPSS ensuring accurate calculations and efficient data management. SmartPLS is suited for predicting constructs, particularly the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2).

**PGRC – 058**

**Data-Driven Pilgrimage, Business Intelligence and Tour Services- A study at  
Prasanthi Nilayam, Puttaparthi District, Andhra Pradesh, India**

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**Extended Abstract**

The practice of pilgrimage precedes the advent of tourism in human behaviour by several centuries. Cohen (2004) contends that pilgrim tourism is one of the oldest and earliest form of tourism practiced by all civilization. In India, religious pilgrimage to places of reverence is an imprinted practise in India. Emerging technologies have evolved the concept of all personal, business, and professional transactions the world over. Almost in all countries, the respective governments have translated the country's public transactions into bits and bytes, necessitating all industries to follow suit. Not only this has impacted private players in all sectors, but had led to the unprecedented increase in the availability of open and big data. Religious Tourism as a socio-economic activity benefits from applications of technologies such as big data, intelligent system, artificial intelligence, machine learning, IoT, mobile technologies, social media and social media analytics including block chain that provide key insights of pattern, trends and associations (Gandomi and Hiader, 2015); (Alsahafi et al., 2023) which enables effective involved of all concerned stakeholders. The tourism industry in India, has experienced digitalization in all areas. The most significant change has been in the pilgrim tourism (Dada et al., 2022). In pilgrim tourism, understanding the digital side of tourism marketing includes all aspects related to digital initiatives that the tourist operatives supplies to potential and current pilgrims in terms of information in digital forms (e.g. accommodations, events, pilgrim's points of interest, hotels, restaurants, travel and so forth). Other the other hand pilgrim's demands refers to what they demand of a product or service during their pilgrimage. This study aims to examine the viability and efficacy of integrating data-driven methodologies, business intelligence techniques, and upgraded tour services in order to optimise the pilgrimage experience and boost overall happiness among pilgrims.

The study area is Puttaparthi. Puttaparthi is a spiritual town located in a tiny town-Puttaparthi of Andhra Pradesh State of India. Puttaparthi has gain global fame as a centre of Spiritual located on the banks of Chitravathi River surrounded by hills-famously known for the birthplace of Indian Guru Sathya Sai Bai and his ashram-*Prasanthi Nilayam*. Understanding which factors of digital initiative of the pilgrim tourist operators influence the demand includes all aspects related to the pilgrim's spiritual, religious beliefs, events that match their requirements, the period or season of the events, the service quality they experience and their previous experience. This information would be a crucial input serving as KPIs and performance tracking for assessing the service effectiveness, customer satisfaction and for the marketing & promotion efforts of the tourist operators including social media marketing, SEO marketing. The Literature on data-driven initiatives of tourist operations is under-developed with many gaps in knowledge of the initiatives undertaken in particular the characteristics of the digital initiatives of pilgrim tourism. Shortcomings in the literature have inhibited determining whether such initiatives could impact the pilgrims and their pilgrimage

experience. This study aims to unearth the viability and effectiveness of integrating data-driven methodologies, business intelligence techniques, and upgraded travel services by the tourist operators in order to enhance the pilgrimage experience and boost pilgrim contentment. Furthermore, understanding its impact on the pilgrims experience and satisfaction is the core essence of the study.

For Data collection, an onsite survey method was employed. A self-administered 5 point Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from pilgrim population visiting the study area-Puttaparthi. Data from 303 pilgrims was collected using convenience sampling method. The main outcome was the pilgrim satisfaction. The Statistical analysis was performed using SAS JMP statistical software. The framework fit was evaluated using structural equation modelling (SEM). The level of satisfaction of religious-pilgrim tourists with various aspects of tourist operator's digital initiatives, offerings, infrastructure, and tourism-related services are analysed. Factor analysis resulted in 4 critical factors of pilgrim satisfaction and 3 critical factors of tourist's data driven initiatives factors for the study purpose. To assess the impact of the data-driven initiatives of the tour operators on the satisfaction of Puttaparthi pilgrims, a structure equation modelling was conducted using the derived factors for analysis. Based on the factors derived, the level of satisfaction was determined

Statistical analysis showed the measurement model and the path model were significant and destination, accommodation and website were the key factors that impacted the pilgrim satisfaction. SEM confirmed all the four hypothesis do have significant statistical relationships. The findings indicate that the tourists operators and their digital initiatives play a critical role in the pilgrim experience and concludes that the data-driven initiatives has significant impact in luring pilgrims and this should be improved for the tourists to attract and improve the tourism in the study area.

This study holds significant practical implications, particularly for stakeholders involved in the marketing of pilgrim tourism. Additionally, it prompts tourism academics to reassess the previously established notion of digital uniformity within other travel industries. Further research in the area of tourist operations can be explored since there is a dearth of empirical research regarding tourist operators and their empowering role in the industry which can contribute a substantially to the literature.

**Keywords-** Data –driven Tourist operations, Experience, Puttaparti, Pilgrimage, Pilgrim Satisfaction, Pilgrim Tourism,

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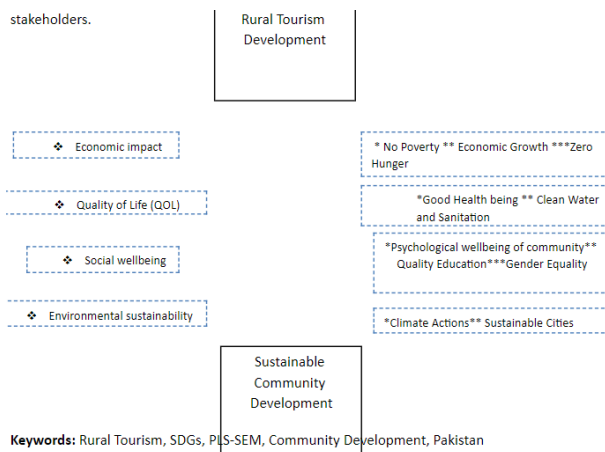
**PGRC – 059**  
**Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals through Rural Tourism in Punjab-Pakistan**

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**ABSTRACT**

Rural Tourism Development

This paper explored the potential of rural tourism in Punjab that how the sustainable development goals can be achieved through proper planning. Punjab’s rural areas are so diverse in their lifestyle and local tradition from South to North. The local festivals are mostly based on religion, Folk heroes of literature, art and poetry displaying local/Cultural handicrafts, agritourism is another aspect of rural tourism that can bring a developing infrastructure for the rural areas worth visiting. Therefore, it is easy to achieve SDGs through rural tourism. Data of 300 employed people were collected through Likert scale questionnaire. The Partial Least Square Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used for the analysis through SmartPLS 4.0. In the findings several constructs were measured by multiple items and these constructs have reflective measurement models as indicated in the given graph. The findings of this study showed in the graph that economic impact, QOL, social well-being and environmental sustainability were positively related to tourism development and indirectly play a role in sustainable community development. This study gave some important implications to the stakeholders.



Keywords: Rural Tourism, SDGs, PLS-SEM, Community Development, Pakistan

# Education



**PGRC – 101**

**Challenges and Solutions for AI Integration in Resource-Starved ESL/EFL Classrooms  
or Poor Digital Acquisition Environment**

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The integration of AI into resource-starved ESL/EFL classrooms is both a challenge and an opportunity. By addressing infrastructure limitations, enhancing teacher training, embracing personalized learning, promoting digital inclusion, and ensuring data privacy, educators and policymakers can tap on the vast AI's potential to revolutionize language education in traditionally resource-constrained settings. With these strategies in place, the disruptions caused by AI integration can be minimized, ultimately benefiting students and their language learning journeys.

The deployment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into traditional ESL/EFL classrooms presents a promising avenue for enhancing language learning, but impoverished settings often struggle to implement AI tools and platforms effectively due to various challenges. This abstract explores these challenges, discusses key tools and platforms for AI integration, and proposes strategies to overcome these obstacles with minimal disruptions.

Limited access to technology, inadequate teacher training, and large class sizes besides some other not so clearly identifiable challenges cropping up while implementing AI tools and platforms to enhance learners' gainful engagement might lead to unwanted disruptions.

Existing studies on AI integration in language education, highlighting common challenges and successful implementations through case studies involving on-site observations, interviews with educators, and surveys of students and teachers and the raw data collected from these sources are found to be inadequate in analysing the key challenges and effective strategies for AI integration.

Mitigating the challenges of AI integration in resource-starved ESL/EFL classrooms involves a comprehensive strategy that encompasses infrastructure improvement, teacher training, personalized learning, digital inclusion, and data privacy. Digital inclusion involves bridging the digital divide for equitable AI integration and in order to ensure that all students have access to AI-powered education, governments and organizations can implement programs to provide low-cost or subsidized devices to underserved students.

Collaborating with local internet service providers to offer affordable or free internet access can further promote digital inclusion, reducing disparities in access to AI-driven resources.

The dominant forms of AI application that include Automatic Evaluation Systems, Neural Machine Translation Tools, Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs), AI Chatting Robots, Intelligent Virtual Environment, and Affective Computing (AC) in ITSs at play worldwide have not been thoroughly reviewed under rigorous conditions and the researches done so far uncover a current paucity of robust research on applying AC in the EFL context and exploring pedagogical and ethical implications of AI in the EFL context.

Challenges from technical and teachers' perspectives, as well as future research directions need to be ascertained to proffer new insights for the future study.

The booming Artificial Intelligence (AI) provides fertile ground for AI in education. So far, few reviews have been deployed to explore how AI empowers English as Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and facilitate desirable learning outcomes.

With Artificial Intelligence (AI) unceasingly affecting all domains of human life, recent years have witnessed the dramatic growth of AI in education (AIEd) (Hwang et al., 2020). Specifically, AIEd is anticipated to grow by 43% from 2018 to 2022 as projected currently (Becker et al., 2018), whereas the Horizon Report 2019 (Alexander et al., 2019) predicts AI applications of teaching and learning will develop even more significantly. As one key issue discussed by UNESCO (2019), AIEd proliferates surging scientific output (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2019). Likewise, various AI applications integrating analytical techniques [e.g., Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP), Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs), Affective Computing (AC)], have been widely harnessed in English as Foreign Language (EFL) context and are exerting profound impacts. A large and growing body of literature has suggested that AI can benefit language teaching and learning (Gao, 2021; Pikhart, 2021; Klimova et al., 2022). To date, many reviews on AIEd have emerged (Chen et al., 2022).

Unfortunately reviews concentrating on AI in the EFL context tend to be comparatively scarce. However, there

have been notable studies and initiatives that have explored the use of AI in EFL education, yielding specific outcomes and insights. A case in point is Duolingo, a popular language learning platform, has been at the forefront of AI integration in EFL education and research conducted by Duolingo has shown that their AI-driven system adapts to individual learner needs, providing customized exercises and feedback, resulting in improved language proficiency.

Research studies have explored the use of AI-driven chatbots for language practice in EFL classrooms also showing that chatbots, such as those integrated into messaging apps or virtual classroom environments, offer students an opportunity for conversational language practice and can improve speaking and listening skills by providing learners with a virtual conversation partner, enabling practice in real-world language scenarios.

Using AI for automated writing assessment in EFL contexts can help analyse and provide feedback on students' written assignments, helping to improve writing skills offering timely and objective feedback, assisting students in refining their writing abilities. AI applications focused on pronunciation correction and improvement have been tested in EFL classroom to detect and provide feedback on learners' pronunciation errors. EFL students can make significant strides in improving their pronunciation with the help of AI tools, leading to enhanced communication skills.

While these research initiatives have yielded positive outcomes regarding the use of AI in EFL education, it's important to note that further research is needed to explore the long-term effects, scalability, and pedagogical implications of AI integration. As technology continues to advance, and as educators and researchers gain a deeper understanding of AI's potential

and limitations in EFL education and there will be greater refinement in our approaches and gainful insights by honing our pedagogical and pragmatic stances.

Viewed from two perspectives, namely learner-facing and teacher-facing AI applications (Baker and Smith, 2019) NMT tools, AI Chatbots and ITSs are supposed to be learner-facing AI applications, which can promote adaptive or personalized learning, while AESs, IVE, and AC in ITSs can be regarded as teacher-facing systems to support teaching and reduce workload by automating administration, assessment, feedback, and data detection in the authentic EFL context . EFL teachers who are adept at technological tools deployment can harness IVE to construct an interactive and collaborative virtual reality learning environment even under resource-crunched classrooms to scaffold EFL learning (Melchor-Couto, 2017; Lan et al., 2018).

Current technical handicaps in traditional age-old classrooms need not deter the EFL teachers from spurring the pedagogical potential and expanding the breadth and depth of the application in the EFL context and that can be done by exploring some offline options for AI integration to leverage technology for enhanced language learning without being solely dependent on continuous internet connectivity.

Integrating AI effectively often requires innovative approaches and options that prioritize offline solutions to overcome connectivity and infrastructure limitations. Offline language learning apps such as Tandem, Memrise, or Drops, can be downloaded and used without an internet connection on a local server. Likewise, USB drives or portable hard drives can be loaded with AI-powered language learning modules. Students can plug these devices into available computers in the classroom to access learning materials offline, bridging the technology gap effectively. Traditional printed textbooks or worksheets can be enhanced with QR codes that link to offline AI-powered resources. Students can use their smartphones or devices to scan these QR codes and access supplementary online content, even without continuous internet access.

**Keywords:** AI integration, customized exercises and feedback, Resource-Starved ESL/EFL Classrooms, booming Artificial Intelligence

**PGRC – 102**

**Emotional intelligence as a correlate of stress among the higher secondary school students in Goa**

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**Extended Abstract:**

**Introduction:**

The rapid development of this 21st century era is challenging for the adolescents. The future generation will have to live and work in a transformed world and the fear of experiencing something completely new and unknown can create stress. Students in the higher secondary school are in the stage of transition and go through a lot of emotional, mental and physical stress. Small quantity of stress is good as it can motivate and help people be more productive. However, too much stress or strong response to stress are harmful. Thus, the ability to control the emotions has become important for not getting carried away by the flow of negative elements.

The current study is aimed to identify the nature of relationship between emotional intelligence and stress faced by the higher secondary school students of Goa with respect to gender ,locale, type of management and grade level . Almost 230 students from class 11th and 12th were investigated using emotional intelligence scale. The stress level were assessed using Perceived Stress scale (PSS) which was constructed and standardized by Sheldon Cohen (1983) . The interdependence of emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students was found using Karl Pearson's Product Moment co-efficient of correlation.

This study is important as it has used higher secondary students in Goa as a study sample, who, as per researcher's knowledge, have not been studied before on the basis of variables included in this study: gender, grade level , locale, type of management. This study contributes significantly in the domain of student psychology as it analyzed psychological variables necessary for a student's effective academic performance and wellbeing.

**Objectives:**

To assess the levels of emotional intelligence of higher secondary school students of Goa

To assess the levels of stress among higher secondary school students of Goa

To find out whether there exist any significant difference in the levels of emotional intelligence of higher secondary school students of goa.

To find out whether there exist any significant difference in the levels of stress among the higher secondary school students of goa.

To find out whether there exist any significant relationship in the levels of emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students in the total sample .

To find out whether there exist any significant relationship in the levels of emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, locale and type of management in Goa.

To find out whether there exist any significant difference in the relationship between the levels of emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students with respect to gender ,locale ,type of management in Goa.

**Hypotheses:**

There exists significant difference in the levels of emotional intelligence among higher secondary school students in Goa.

There exists significant difference in the levels of stress among higher secondary school students in Goa.

There exists significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students in total sample in Goa.

There exists significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, locale, type of management and grade level in Goa.

There exists significant difference in the relationship between the emotional intelligence and stress of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, locale, type of management and grade level in Goa.

#### **Methodology used for the study**

Normative survey method was adopted in the study.

#### **Population and sample for the study**

The present study was conducted on 230 higher secondary school students of Salcete taluka of South Goa district. Students from 7 different higher secondary schools were selected through random sampling technique while taking into consideration the demographic factors such as gender of the student, Locale of residence and the type of management of the school were considered while selecting the sample to ensure the representation of all strata and it also in aiding to avoid most of the bias.

#### **Tools Used for the study:**

Personal data sheet prepared by the investigator.

Emotional intelligence scale prepared and validated by the investigator. The tool included six dimensions namely self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, social-awareness, social skills and emotional receptivity. For the construction of the scale, the investigator initially prepared 80 test items after consulting the experts, the statements were reduced to 69 statements.

A Perceived Stress scale (PSS) scale to assess the level of stress among higher secondary school students was adopted which was constructed and standardized by Sheldon Cohen (1983).

#### **Data interpretation:**

To interpret the raw data, analyses were done using Percentage Analysis, Mean, Standard Deviation and 't' test.. The results showed that,

There is significant difference in level of emotional intelligence among the higher secondary school students of Goa.

There is significant difference in level of stress among the higher secondary school students of Goa.

#### **Findings:**

In total sample of 230 higher secondary school students of Goa 10.87% have higher level of Stress, 70% have average level of Stress and 19.13 % have low level of Stress.

In total sample of 230 higher secondary school students of Goa, 14.78% have higher level of Emotional intelligence, 75.21% have average level of Emotional intelligence and 10 % have low level of Emotional intelligence.

On the basis of the classificatory variable 'gender', further divided into 'male' and 'female', the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Stress was analysed by the investigator using Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient "r". There exists a negligible

negative correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress among both, male and female students.

On the basis of the classificatory variable 'locale', further divided into 'Urban' and 'rural', the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Stress was analyzed by the investigator using Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient "r". It is observed that for rural students there exists negligible non-significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress and for urban students there exists a no significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress.

On the basis of the classificatory variable 'type of management', further divided into 'Government', 'Government aided' and 'Private', the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Stress was analyzed by the investigator using Karl Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient "r". It is evident that among the calculated correlations, for Government higher secondary students there exists negligible negative correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress. For Government aided higher secondary students there exists a negative correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress significant at 0.05 level and for private higher secondary school students there exists no significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and stress.

The relationship between Emotional intelligence and stress scores of higher secondary school students of Goa was found out using Karl Pearson's product moment co-efficient of correlation. The results revealed that there exists negligible non-significant relationship between the Emotional intelligence and Stress scores of higher secondary school students in of Goa.

To compare the significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence of higher secondary school students of Goa in total sample the researcher used the One Way ANOVA. It is observed that there exists significant difference in the levels of Emotional intelligence of Higher Secondary School Students of Goa in the total sample.

To compare the significant difference in the level of stress of higher secondary school students of Goa in total sample the researcher used the One Way ANOVA. It is observed that there exists significant difference in the levels of stress of Higher Secondary School Students of Goa in the total sample.

#### Conclusion

The study reveal that higher secondary school students have varied levels of Emotional intelligence and Stress. It also revealed that there exists significant difference in the levels of Emotional intelligence of Higher Secondary School Students of Goa in the total sample. Analysing the significance of the relationship between Emotional intelligence and Stress for the total sample revealed a negligible correlation between the two; any change in one variable would lead to a change in the other variable. Based on each of the classificatory variables also, the relationship between Emotional intelligence and stress proved non-significant through a negligible or negligible negative correlation for each gender, each locale and each type of management.

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence, stress ,higher secondary students

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**PGRC – 103**

**Positive Behaviour Management Strategies For Low Level Disruptive Malaysian National Secondary School Students.**

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The aim of this preliminary study is to investigate the reason why current behaviour management strategies employed by teachers are still ineffective to curb with low-level disruptive behaviours among secondary schools' students. Furthermore, assist pre and in service secondary school teachers by suggesting evidence based positive behaviour management strategies to deal with low-level disruptive secondary school students.

According to the Malaysian National Education Philosophy "Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic, based on a firm belief in and devotion to god..." (National Education Blueprint 2013-2025). Thus, it is the responsibility of educators to nurture and produce students whilst preparing them to face world's challenges upon graduation, other than the parents, Therefore, positive classroom management is crucial to achieve the efforts and rationale stated in the Malaysian National Education Philosophy (National Education Blueprint 2013-2025).

According to an article titled Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement, recognised that teachers were great contributors to the effects which significantly affect the outcomes of change (Erwin and Garman, 2010; Hall and Hord, 2011). This situation also included the shift from using punitive strategies as a preferred strategy such as caning/beating, scolding, criticising, giving sarcastic remark, arguing, referring to school authority and labelling to non-punitive strategies such as positive behavioural management strategies for low-level classroom disruption (Mazwati, et al., 2016).

Cooperative and problem-solving strategies as well as effective mutual communication could also be utilised when dealing with low-level disruptive students (Tayebmahvar, et al., 2018). From the other perspective, disruptive students would definitely impede the teacher's ability to teach effectively in the classroom. This was because, problematic behaviours require vigorous amounts of the teacher's attention and time to cope with it.

Rosenberg (2021) stated that disruptive behaviours were obstinate though they were minor such as talking or being out of seat without permission in a classroom. In addition to these minor infractions, also referred to as surface level behaviours (low level disruptions), serious problems such as defiance or aggression (high level disruptions) were what the teachers sometimes encountered in the classroom. These disruptive behaviours were still a problem to a classroom environment regardless of the degree in disruption. Not only that, disruptive behaviours which indirectly interferes the teachers' ability to carry out their roles would also hinder the teaching and learning process. So, to put in simple words, the definition of disruptive behaviour was simply the contrary of what was expected by teachers or students in the class (Fakhrudin, 2018).

According to a recent study on teachers' perspective on secondary level students' disruptive behaviours, the teachers pointed out that several students engaged in disruptive behaviours as the purpose is to gain attention from the teacher or their friends. The disruptive behaviours described in the interviews were: Conversing with their companions, raising their voices, meandering around the classroom and yelling. (Krishnansamy, et al., 2019). On the other side, peer group influence was also a dominant factor that contributed to discipline problems among students. From the results, the teachers found out that the students were forced by their acquaintances at school to fight and steal. This situation can lead to other major problems such as murder, robbing, vandalism and others. In this case, the students were pressured by the other students to do such acts at school. Refusal in obeying would result in the jeopardy of the students' safety. (Yahaya, et al., 2021).

The two major goals of this study are to investigate the challenges involved in applying current behaviour management strategies used by teachers to manage low-level disruptive behaviours among their students. Moreover, further assist pre and in service secondary school teachers by suggesting evidence based positive behaviour management strategies to deal with low-level disruptive secondary school students.

This study will focus on collecting qualitative data in the form of in-depth one-on-one audio recorded interview via Zoom and Ms Teams. The type of interview that will be used in this study would be structured and semi-structured interview. An interview protocol will be created to assist the researcher to stay on track. The collected data will be analysed via qualitative data analysis, inductive approach to thematic content analysis and field notes scribes as alternative to transcription. Since this study aims to assist in-service and pre-service teachers, it is crucial to use qualitative study to gain detailed insights on the current practices/strategies used, challenges involved in applying the strategies and its effectiveness to curb with low-level disruptive students from the horse's mouth.

The present study will utilise data from eight teachers from a national secondary school in Ampang, Selangor. These teachers are chosen through the process of snowball sampling. The school uses the Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM), aimed to develop a broader base of intellectual capacity, self-confidence, and skills in the students, to cope with new areas of knowledge and technological knowledge, and teach values based on the National Philosophy of Education. These teachers are experienced individuals in their respective field of study. Majority experiences ranged from 12 to 33 years and they are all in-service teachers. All of the teachers possess a Bachelor's degree in their respective fields. They also come from various field of studies such as English language, Moral studies, Life skills, Science, Mathematics. Apart from being subject teachers, some of them are also discipline teachers and counsellors. These discipline teachers and counsellors will be of the highest contribution to answer the second research objective and question of this study.

It is hoped by identifying accurate behaviour management strategies which caters to the needs of students would be helpful for teacher as the integration of accurate strategies will assist the teacher to control the classroom. This situation would also result in students' behavioural outcomes. It is anticipated that this study would be an 'eye opener' for new/trainee teachers, as well as experienced teachers to not take classroom disruption lightly. Thus, this study is specifically designed for both new and experienced teachers where it will include necessary information on positive behaviour management strategies to deal

with low-level classroom disruption. The outcomes of this study will focus more on the positive approach to tackle students' low-level disruptive behaviours in the classroom environment.

Moreover, this present study is expected to be beneficial for pre and in service teachers that are struggling to spot the accurate/tailored behaviour management strategies for their low-level disruptors, unaware of evidence based positive classroom management strategies for low-level disruptions and its effectiveness. Since this research will be focusing on positive behaviour management strategies for low-level disruptive Malaysian secondary school students, it may be helpful for both pre and in service teachers that are still using outdated or the same behaviour management strategies with every batch of students.

Most importantly, this study seeks to provide the importance of choosing the right strategies when dealing with certain level of disruptions in the classroom. Specifically, the impact of positive approach towards misbehaving students or students with major behavioural problems. This is because, in many cases, teachers having the ability to choose the right approach to deal with a disruptive student will have a direct/indirect impact on his/her motivation, emotional/mental health, their ability and future endeavours. "A teacher affects eternity; they can never tell where their influence stops" (Henry Adams, 19th century).

**Keywords:** Behaviour management; Positive behaviour management strategies; Disruptive behaviours; Low-level disruptions; Classroom management; National secondary school students

**PGRC – 106**

**Personality Traits, English Language Writing Anxiety, and Coping Strategies, and their Relationships among Chinese University Students**

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Writing anxiety in English has become a notable challenge for freshmen at Chinese universities. Such anxiety can significantly affect their academic performance, particularly during crucial exams like the College English Test (CET) (Zhang, 2017). In spite of numerous investigations into writing anxiety in second or foreign language contexts, research targeting the interrelation of personality traits, coping strategies, and this specific anxiety within China's tertiary education remains limited.

The research questions about writing anxiety, BFPTs, and coping strategies are addressed:

What are Chinese university non-English major students' personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism)?

What is the level of Chinese non-English major university students' EFL writing anxiety?

What is the predicting relationships between the students' personality traits, EFL writing anxiety, and coping strategies?

Based on research question 3, the following null hypotheses are proposed:

H01: Personality significantly and positively predicts coping strategy use.

H02: Personality significantly and positively predicts EFL writing anxiety.

H03: EFL writing anxiety significantly and positively predicts coping strategy use.

H04: EFL writing anxiety significantly mediates the effect of personality on coping strategy use.

This research is anchored in seminal theoretical frameworks: the Affective-filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), Big Five Personality Theory (Goldberg, 1990), and Coping Theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While some studies have touched upon the relationship between personality traits and EFL writing anxiety, they remain few and far between. Additionally, there's a pronounced lack of in-depth research focusing on coping strategies within this realm.

This study adopted quantitative methodologies. The initial phase centered on collecting and analyzing quantitative data, aiming to gauge the scope of students' English writing anxiety, personality traits, and coping strategies. Employing a purposive sampling strategy, we engaged 141 university students from diverse academic disciplines for this study. This cohort consisted of 73 females and 68 males, aged between 18 and 24, representing fields such as the arts, sciences, engineering, and social sciences. Three instruments were used in the study:

1. Big Five Inventory (BFI): Originating from Goldberg's work in 1990, comprising 44 items, participants respond using a 5-point Likert scale.
2. Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI): Crafted by Cheng in 2004, this 22-item inventory employs a 5-point Likert scale for responses.
3. Brief COPE: Introduced by Carver in 1997 and encompassing 28 items, this scale sheds light on various coping realms, with responses anchored to a 4-point Likert scale.

Data were input into SPSS software for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to determine means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions. Further, correlational analyses were run by SEM to identify relationships between variables.

After the data collection, based on the research questions, the following results were revealed as follows:

1. RQ1: What are Chinese university non-English major students' personality traits (extroversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, neuroticism)? Participants exhibited varying mean scores across the Big Five personality dimensions. They scored highest on Openness ( $M=33.664$ ), followed by Agreeableness ( $M=32.671$ ), Conscientiousness ( $M=29.464$ ), Extroversion ( $M=23.943$ ), and Neuroticism ( $M=23.621$ ).

A proclivity towards Openness, as exhibited by the participants, aligns with the findings of McCrae and Costa (1987), who argued that individuals high in this trait tend to be more imaginative, curious, and receptive to novel experiences. The prominence of Agreeableness in this cohort corroborates with previous studies, such as Graziano and Tobin (2009), which associate higher agreeableness scores with cooperative and compassionate behavior. The lower scores in Extroversion and Neuroticism resonate with the cultural paradigms posited by Markus and Kitayama (1991), suggesting that collective cultures, like that of China, might produce individuals who are more reserved and less emotionally reactive.

2. RQ2: What is the level of Chinese non-English major university students' EFL writing anxiety? There is a pronounced ESL writing anxiety (Mean=65) among the participants. Analysis of the SLWAI indicated average mean scores for Cognitive anxiety ( $M=23.964$ ), Somatic anxiety ( $M=19.500$ ), and Avoidance behavior ( $M=21.536$ )

Horwitz et al. (1986) postulated that language learning could be a significant source of anxiety, with writing being especially challenging due to its tangible and evaluable nature. The dominance of Cognitive anxiety echoes Cheng's (2002) assertion that negative self-perceptions and fear of negative evaluation are prime factors of writing anxiety.

3. What is the predicting relationships between the students' personality traits, EFL writing anxiety, and coping strategies? All paths among the three tested variables were significant at the  $p < 0.050$  level. Anxiety showed a moderate effect on coping strategy use, while the influence of personality on anxiety and coping strategy was mild. Importantly, anxiety partially mediated the relationship between personality and coping strategy use ( $p = 0.009$ ).

Personality could account for 5.3% of the variance in writing anxiety, indicating a limited influence. However, when considering both personality and anxiety, they explained a significant 35.0% of the variance in coping strategy use. All Q2 values were positive, and all items showed larger RMSE and MAE values by PLS methods than by LM estimations.

The mediation effect of anxiety between personality and coping resonates with Spielberger's (1983) theory of state-trait anxiety, suggesting that temporary states of anxiety (like writing anxiety) can intensify or modify the habitual ways (personality traits) people cope with stressors. Furthermore, Eysenck's (1992) theory postulated that personality factors influence individuals' perceptions of stress, which then shapes their coping responses. This study's findings seem to align with this theory, underscoring the complex interaction between inherent traits and contextual stressors

The robust predictive capacity of personality and anxiety, particularly on coping mechanisms, aligns with the assertions of JL Meléndez et al. (2000) and Wright et al. (2010), who emphasized the intertwined nature of personality, stressors, and coping strategies. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping also posits that personal characteristics and evaluations of stressors jointly influence the coping strategies employed, a phenomenon well-reflected in the current study.

**The primary takeaways from the study are:**

1. Participants exhibited a marked preference for the personality traits of Openness and Agreeableness. Recognizing these tendencies offers educators invaluable insights to shape learning environments that align with these dominant characteristics.
2. There was a notable prevalence of ESL writing anxiety, especially cognitive anxiety, among the participants. Such findings highlight the urgent need for academic interventions, as many students grapple with deep-seated concerns about their English writing prowess. The imperative here is the augmentation of support structures to address students' emotional well-being.
3. While personality influenced both writing anxiety and coping methods, anxiety's role as a mediator stood out. The more substantial impact of anxiety on coping strategies, overshadowing the direct effects of personality traits, suggests that the experience of writing anxiety can potentially supersede innate personality dispositions when managing stress.
4. Although personality traits might not be dominant predictors of writing anxiety on their own, they become potent predictors of coping strategies when coupled with anxiety. By grasping these dynamics, educators can fine-tune support systems, addressing both the genesis of anxiety and the subsequent coping responses.

**Keywords:** personality traits, writing anxiety, coping strategies, university students, English as a foreign language (EFL)

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**PGRC – 107**

**Examining the Relationships among Teacher Leadership, Psychological Capital, and Professional Learning Community in Hebei Province of China: A Conceptual Framework**

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**Abstract**

Since the late 1990s, China has been committed to radical reforms of its higher education system (Li, 2012). Like other countries worldwide, university teachers in China are expected to play a vital role in its educational reforms (Ye et al., 2019). Despite their impressive achievements, Chinese university teachers under the current higher education system are still facing different challenges in the era of Education 4.0 (Tian et al., 2016). The extant literature shows that heavy workloads make teachers lack motivation, passion and interest in their work, which is detrimental to their teaching quality and professional development (Chen et al., 2022). Moreover, as the centralised education system implemented by the Chinese Ministry of Education controls teacher training policies and the implementation strictly, it has weakened teachers' independent inquiry and critical thinking in their professional development and growth (Lo, 2019).

While the research literature points to the essential role of school principals in facilitating teacher professional development, there is still considerable evidence of teachers' capability to be their own development leaders (Leithwood et al., 2020). Some scholars argue that teacher leaders can be a vehicle for reforming education and improving teaching and learning to promote teacher professional development (Liang & Wang, 2019). However, teacher leadership practice in China is still in its infancy, the practice of teacher leadership is yet to be embraced by university leaders and teachers. Besides, research on this area seems particularly important in the Chinese context to demonstrate the role of teacher leadership in teacher professional development and university reform.

Meanwhile, university teachers are facing more professional pressures than ever before (Chen et al., 2022). This pressure has created tremendous psychological stress on teachers, dramatically affecting their work performance (Yan & Niu, 2014). Moreover, influenced by China's collectivist culture, university education leaders have neither valued the role of individual psychological competencies in their community (Lu & Smith, 2022) nor included the building of teachers' psychological capital as part of their in-service training (Liu et al., 2021). Indeed, a focus on teachers' psychological capital would contribute to their overall quality and competence in this new era, optimise the education structure and development of teachers in higher education, and provide a strong impetus for China to build world-class universities (Kim et al., 2018). Therefore, more concrete empirical research is needed to examine teacher's psychological capital, especially in universities (Wu et al., 2022).

On the other hand, in terms of school reform, it is well-accepted that the professional learning community in schools is the best vehicle for improving teaching quality and student performance (Spencer, 2016). It provides an organisational mechanism for teachers to

engage in professional dialogue, collaboration, and systematic sharing and discussion of teaching content, formats and methods to improve teaching practice (M. Lai, 2021). Since teacher leadership functions best in establishing a professional learning community within and between schools (Hairon et al., 2015), it is the ideal venue for teachers to work collaboratively, exercise their leadership skills, and engage in shared inquiry (Harris, 2003). While most of the existing literature on PLC has focused on the Western context, the concepts and practices in Asia, especially China, have yet to be addressed (Zhang & Pang, 2017). Therefore, there is a need for more empirical research on PLC in the Chinese educational context.

Furthermore, while all these three variables exhibit different characteristics from those in Western countries within specific educational contexts, cultural statutes and institutional influences (Bin & Zhu, 2020; Xie et al., 2021; Zhang & Pang, 2016), 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 Hebei Province of China whether: i) TL is significantly related to PC and to what extent TL affects PC among university teachers in Hebei Province of China; ii) PC is significantly related to PLC and to what extent PC affects PLC; iii) TL is significantly related to PLC and to what extent TL affects PLC; iv) there is any significant mediating effect of PC between the causal relationship of TL and PLC; and v) PC is a total mediator of the causal relationship between TL and PLC among university teachers in Hebei Province of China.

The research framework of this study aims to provide a 'soft explanation' of research content and social reality by summarizing the relevant research literature and theories (Levering, 2002). The conceptual framework for this study presents a systematic view through three variables and 17 key indicators, as shown in Figure 1:

Latent variable 1 (independent variable): Teacher Leadership (TL) which is measured by six indicators, namely (a) *Association Leadership*; (b) *Professional Learning Leadership*; (c) *Assessment Leadership*; (d) *Instruction Leadership*; (e) *Community Leadership*; and (f) *Policy Leadership*;

Latent variable 2 (mediating variable): Psychological Capital (PC) which is measured by four indicators, namely (a) *Confidence (Self-efficacy)*; (b) *Hope*; (c) *Optimism*; and (d) *Resilience*;

Latent variable 3 (dependent variable): Professional Learning Community (PLC) which is measured by seven indicators, namely (a) *Collective Inquiry and Sharing*; (b) *Shared Purpose and Responsibility*; (c) *Supportive Leadership*; (d) *Organizational Structure*; (e) *Collaborative Relationship*; (f) *Institutional Barriers*; and (g) *Cultural Barriers*.

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Relationships of TL, PC, and PL

This conceptual framework integrates relevant theories to guide refining research questions that include: Formative Leadership Theory (Ash & Persall, 2000), Positive Psychology Theory (Seligman, 1998),

Organizational Learning Theory (Senge, 1990), Positive Organizational Behaviour Theory (Luthans et al., 2002) (for the relationship between TL and PC), and the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2004) (Bandura, 1986) (for the relationship between PC and PLC).

Teacher Leadership (TL) is the process and capability of teacher leaders to coordinate and influence organizational members in specific situations to achieve common goals. Teacher leaders often promote teacher professional development, improving student learning and the quality of school education through their empowerment, professional competence, knowledge, and emotions when they interact and collaborate with students, colleagues, and parents in a school-centered surrounding environment.

Psychological Capital (PC) is a relatively stable psychological state and tendency developed by individuals during their growth process, which shows the psychological ability of individuals in organisational groups, such as the confidence to strive for success in facing challenges; the desire for success, and goal adjustment when necessary; positive attributions and perceptions of present or upcoming success; and the resilience to persevere, adapt and recover under dilemmas.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) it is an informal learning community of teachers who consciously organize collaborative learning within this culture to transfer, share, innovate and transform knowledge to improve their overall teaching that contributes to student learning and the educational transformation of schools. Overall, the establishment of PLC is an ideal place to facilitate teacher leaders to exercise leadership skills, teachers to learn collaboratively and engage in shared inquiry, and a sound and optimal means to improve student progress and school change.

The study will contribute to the education arena from theoretical and practical perspectives. In terms of theoretical perspective, firstly, this study adopts a more comprehensive approach to screening from an academic standpoint by integrating several validated conceptualization theories to analyze the specific link among TL, PC, and PLC in the educational setting of Hebei Province, China. The results of this study will confirm how the theoretical and conceptualizing logic of these three variables applies to research in the Chinese educational context. Secondly, by investigating the relationships among TL, PC and PLC at Hebei University, this study will promote teachers' substantive understanding of the related concepts, characteristics and the impact in the field of professional development. In terms of practical perspective, firstly, by measuring the six dimensions of TL, i.e., *Association Leadership*, *Professional Learning Leadership*, *Assessment Leadership*, *Instruction Leadership*, *Community Leadership*, and *Policy Leadership*, this study may provide beneficial insights to university leaders to better understand, refine, or even develop TL behaviours among teachers. Secondly, by investigating the relationship among TL, PC, and PLC in Hebei universities, this study will help the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) and teacher training institutions to improve or design professional development programmes for developing TL, improving teachers' PC and establishing PLC for university education reform.

**Keywords:** university teachers; teacher leadership; psychological capital; professional learning community; teacher professional development

PGRC – 109

**Impact of Explicit Metadiscourse Instruction on EFL University Students' Reading Comprehension: Exploring Language Proficiency and Content Familiarity**

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**BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES**

While metadiscourse instruction is prevalent in the West to enhance reading, its uptake in China remains fledgling. Among the 20 EAP course-offering universities in China, only a select few incorporate explicit metadiscourse instruction (Zeng, 2018). Most Chinese research has honed in on the linguistic nuances of metadiscourse, overlooking its instructional implications for reading comprehension (Liang, 2016). Addressing this oversight, our study was anchored by four core objectives:

To evaluate the main effect of explicit metadiscourse instruction on reading comprehension.

To determine the interaction effect of explicit metadiscourse instruction, language proficiency, and content familiarity on EFL students' reading comprehension.

To assess the interaction effect of explicit metadiscourse instruction and language proficiency on reading comprehension.

To investigate the interaction effect of explicit metadiscourse instruction and content familiarity on reading comprehension.

Centrally, the research spotlighted the effects of explicit metadiscourse instruction on reading comprehension among varied proficiency EFL students in China, navigating through both familiar and unfamiliar academic texts. Relying on Hyland's model, our focus was on two specific metadiscourse markers: engagement and attitude markers. Bernhardt (2011) underscores the significance of these markers, emphasizing their capacity to shed light on an author's personal stance and enrich our understanding of reader-text interplay.

Your methodology has around 7 paragraphs. Please make it more concise to around 2 paragraphs just to highlight how you collected data (experiment procedures) and the data analysis .

**METHODOLOGY**

Adopting a true experimental design, this study utilised a 2x2x2 factorial mixed approach centred on Explicit Metadiscourse Instruction (EMI), Language Proficiency (LP), and Content Familiarity (CF), with EMI as the primary independent variable and reading comprehension as the dependent variable (Gray, 2010). From 300 psychology students, 120 were rigorously selected via an IELTS-inspired language proficiency test (Lewis & Fabos, 2010, cited in Mauranen, 2014) and a prior knowledge test endorsed by Pérez-Llantada (2013) and Fatalaki et al. (2014), ensuring their familiarity with psychology texts and unfamiliarity with engineering content.

For the main experiment, participants were equally divided into experimental and control groups, balancing both HLP and LLP cohorts. Over four sessions, the former group received focused metadiscourse instruction, while the latter engaged in standard reading lessons. Post-instruction, both groups confronted reading comprehension tests comprising psychology

and engineering texts, carefully chosen to maintain linguistic consistency. The tests, entailing diverse questions like true/false and short answers, had an upper limit of 55 points.

## **RESULTS**

The present study, designed around a 3-way 2 x 2 x 2 factorial mixed approach, dissected the reading comprehension scores of subjects through a 3-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The between-subject factors underpinning the research were Explicit Metadiscourse Instruction (EMI: MI vs. No EMI), Language Proficiency (LP: HLP vs LLP), with Content Familiarity (CF: FT vs UFT) operating as a nuanced within-subject factor.

Initially, the data underwent rigorous preliminary analyses to validate assumptions, including data distribution normality, homogeneity of variances, and the equivalence of covariance matrices. This procedural step was imperative to ensure that the data was apt for robust statistical exploration. Following this, a synthesis of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed.

In the intricate landscape of 3-way ANOVA, a noteworthy significant interaction effect emerged between EMI, LP, and CF. Such an interaction establishes that the synergy between EMI and LP under familiar text conditions doesn't mirror the dynamics when presented with unfamiliar text conditions. This observation remains consistent with other two-factor interactions in the study. The challenge then lies in pinpointing the specific relationship nuances among EMI, LP, and CF. A focused analysis unveiled significant interactions between EMI and LP for familiar texts. Tukey's HSD test, a post hoc analysis, affirmed that EMI benefitted HLP students more pronouncedly when they delved into familiar texts.

Contrastingly, the effect of EMI didn't demonstrate any tangible variation between HLP and LLP students in unfamiliar texts. More granular analyses further displayed that while EMI didn't drastically influence LLP students' comprehension across familiar and unfamiliar texts, its impact was notably different for HLP students. Specifically, HLP students exhibited superior comprehension of familiar texts vis-a-vis unfamiliar ones.

These intricate patterns of data provide compelling insights: Explicit metadiscourse instruction appears to be more advantageous for students with higher linguistic proficiency, especially when they engage with content that resonates with prior familiarity. Interestingly, the distinction brought about by EMI in reading comprehension wasn't evident when both high and low proficiency students navigated unfamiliar texts. In a broader educational spectrum, while EMI augmented the reading comprehension of students proficient in language across both text categories, their comprehension acumen shone brighter with familiar texts.

Meanwhile, the efficacy of EMI appeared somewhat neutralized for LLP students, showing no discernible distinction in comprehension across both text types. This observation underscores a pivotal hypothesis: The influence of explicit metadiscourse instruction on reading comprehension is potentially moderated by two distinct but intertwined variables - the student's command over language and their prior familiarity with content.

## **IMPLICATIONS and CONCLUSION**

This study underscores the intertwined relationship between Explicit Metadiscourse Instruction (EMI), linguistic proficiency, and content familiarity in reading comprehension. Anchored in the constructivist learning perspective, the findings emphasize the pivotal role of metadiscourse awareness and content knowledge in comprehension, especially among students with Higher Language Proficiency (HLP).

For EAP educators, the results advocate for integrating EMI specifically tailored for HLP students, with a focus on familiar content. However, addressing the distinct needs of LLP students may require a blend of foundational language instruction with metadiscourse elements.

Despite its insights, the research has limitations, such as its exclusive focus on psychology students and a binary language proficiency classification. As a recommendation, academic institutions might design EMI-rich modules for HLP students and provide training to educators on leveraging metadiscourse for comprehension. Further research should broaden the scope, considering a more varied academic and linguistic demographic.

**Keywords:** Explicit Metadiscourse Instruction, EFL Learners, Language Proficiency, Content Familiarity, Reading Comprehension

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**PGRC – 110**

**Assessing Poetry Learning: A Curriculum-Centric Examination of Lecturer's  
Assessment Beliefs and Practices**

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Poetry teaching and assessment and authentic assessment share a common emphasis on real-world relevance, complexity, student engagement, clear assessment criteria, and fostering reflective learning (Fleming & Stevens, 2015). They prioritize holistic and meaningful education that goes beyond superficial understanding, encouraging students to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic contexts while promoting creativity and introspection (Sekhar, 2016). Authentic assessments are designed to measure students' ability to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world situations (Millbrook, 2020). They are typically more complex and challenging than traditional assessments, but they also provide students with a more accurate picture of their learning (Qutub, 2018). Authentic assessment measures students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world situations, featuring five key dimensions (Gulikers, 2004): a complex and relevant task, a physical and social context mirroring reality, a result/form resembling real-world products, and clear, skill-focused criteria. While more challenging than traditional assessments, they offer a more accurate reflection of learning and prepare students for success in real-life scenarios (Koh, 2017). Authentic assessment in a poetry curriculum ensures that assessment methods align with the nature and goals of the subject, fostering deeper understanding, creativity, and the application of poetic concepts in real-life contexts. It moves beyond rote memorization and multiple-choice tests to capture the essence of poetry as a form of artistic expression and communication.

The research gap in the connection between poetry curriculum, authentic assessment, and lecturers' assessment beliefs and practices involves the need for comprehensive studies that investigate how instructors' assessment beliefs influence their practices in poetry education. This gap extends to the alignment of assessments with curriculum goals, the impact of professional development on assessment practices, the effects of authentic assessment on student outcomes, and the validity of assessment methods. Additionally, it calls for exploration of the influence of diverse pedagogical approaches and cultural factors in poetry education. Addressing these gaps would enhance our understanding of effective poetry education and its assessment strategies.

This study employed a rigorous maximum variation sampling method to purposefully select participants with diverse characteristics and perspectives, encompassing various age groups, genders, education levels, teaching experiences, and assessment training. Data collection involved a 13-question semi-structured interview guide, meticulously designed with input from an expert panel and a pilot study, drawing from relevant literature on the relationship between poetry curriculum and authentic assessment. To ensure data saturation and thematic richness, iterative processes such as peer debriefing, member checking, memo writing, and theory and participant triangulation were utilized. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants (N=16) who had



completed questionnaires, aiming to gain insights into how the poetry curriculum influenced their assessment beliefs and practices.

Qualitative data collected from the interviews underwent thematic analysis, employing a combination of deductive and inductive coding methods to categorize and uncover recurring patterns and themes within the interview transcripts. The NVivo 12 Plus software facilitated systematic exploration of the interview data and the identification of recurrent themes. The entire coding and theme identification process encompassed five sequential steps: becoming familiar with the scripts, coding the data, generating initial themes, reviewing themes, and delineating main themes and sub-themes.

Furthermore, this study utilizes a cyclic five-element curriculum model, explicitly delineating 'objectives,' 'instructional methods,' 'content and subject matter,' 'assessment framework,' and 'evaluation' to scrutinize the impact of the poetry curriculum on lecturers' assessment beliefs and practices. The sub-themes within each main theme were refined based on the level of certainty and rigor, ensuring a comprehensive and nuanced analysis.

Thorough thematic analysis underscores the pivotal role played by the five core components of the curriculum--teaching objectives, instructional methods, content, assessment framework, and evaluation --in shaping instructors' beliefs and practices in poetry assessment. These components establish a crucial connection between teaching beliefs and actual practices.

Firstly, the diversity of poetry teaching objectives among educators influences their assessment beliefs and practices, highlighting inherent strengths and weaknesses. Prioritizing language skill development, for instance, leads to precise evaluations of language proficiency and communication skills but might overlook broader competencies. Conversely, adopting a competency-based approach assesses critical thinking and cultural understanding but may miss interdisciplinary links and holistic learning prospects.

Secondly, the choice of instructional methods, whether teacher-centered or student-centered, significantly impacts assessment practices. A teacher-centered approach aligns with syllabus content and content reproduction but may lack active student involvement and higher-order thinking. In contrast, a student-centered approach prioritizes engagement and higher-order skills but introduces challenges like time consumption and standardization.

Thirdly, the focus of assessment on poetic techniques and elements often centers on factual aspects, which tend to align with lower-order thinking. Conversely, assessing personal connections and creativity in poetry exploration fosters higher-order thinking but may not fully cover the curriculum and can be context-constrained. Assessing ethical and moral aspects gauges poetry's role but might lack depth due to a focus on rote interpretations.

Fourthly, the choice of assessment methods closely ties in with specific poetry teaching objectives. Traditional summative assessments tend to prioritize lower-order thinking skills, while formative assessments explore higher-order thinking. Balancing these approaches proves challenging, introducing uncertainties in educators' assessment strategies. Additionally, assessment guides wield substantial influence, offering a road-map for objectives, standards, and methods. However, disparities between guidelines and actual practices can emerge due to inadequate knowledge and training.

Lastly, curriculum evaluation and accountability play a pivotal role in aligning educators' assessment practices with poetry comprehension, skills, and ethical exploration. However, excessive rigidity may risk autonomy and the essence of learning. Simultaneously, evolving education necessitates ongoing curriculum adaptation, requiring novel assessment

principles, innovative poetry assessment methods, and synchronized techniques with new curriculum aims. Challenges arise from training gaps, interdisciplinary demands, and integration delays. Striking a balance between these factors is paramount for effective assessment and the overall success of education. Collectively, these factors contribute to differences in assessment orientation and the consistency of teachers' assessment beliefs and practices.

The study highlights that instructors' beliefs and practices in poetry assessment are influenced by a range of factors, including curriculum components and individual characteristics like teaching experience and educational backgrounds. These variations lead to differing orientations in assessing lower-order thinking skills and higher-order thinking skills within poetry instruction, posing challenges for developing effective assessment beliefs and practices. The findings emphasize the need for fostering more authentic assessment approaches that promote enhanced student learning, especially in higher order thinking skills.

However, some instructors harbor misconceptions about assessing poetry in real-life contexts and encouraging higher-order thinking skills. Implementing such assessments presents difficulties. In the process of revising and adapting the curriculum, older teachers and those with limited teaching experience may face uncertainty and complexity due to the absence of timely professional training. The development of assessment beliefs and practices among poetry teachers is a dynamic and ongoing process influenced by individual factors occurring at various curriculum stages.

Furthermore, it's important to recognize distinctions between poetry assessment and general English language assessment. These differences warrant further theoretical and practical research attention, offering opportunities for deeper exploration in the field.

**Keywords**

Curriculum Assessment Beliefs Assessment Practices Poetry Assessment

PGRC – 111

**Unpacking L2 writer's feedback processing in an innovative learning environment empowered by ChatGPT**

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Feedback in second language (L2) writing, especially written feedback, has been extensively studied, but the internal mechanism of feedback processing remains a black box, particularly in classroom assessment (Lui & Andrade, 2022). The emergence of the new feedback paradigm, characterized by self-directed meaning-making and information-generation from technology-mediated feedback, has further widened the knowledge gap (Jensen et al., 2023). There is a lack of process-oriented investigation into learners' feedback processing in contemporary feedback practices, including the use of automated corrective feedback (ACF) provided by artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots like ChatGPT.

Retrospectively, the application of ACF in L2 pedagogy is characterized by its advantages such as instant feedback provision and improved writing accuracy (Ranalli, 2018). However, criticisms include low learner uptake, limitations in addressing complex grammatical structures, and a lack of personalization in feedback (Shadiev & Feng, 2023). Newer ACF providers like Grammarly have shown improved performance but still face challenges, such as lower utility compared to online peer feedback (Thi et al., 2022). The introduction of ChatGPT in L2 writing assessment brings novel perspectives to ACF, extending beyond grammatical errors to more comprehensive feedback (e.g., Mizumoto & Eguchi, 2023; Yan, 2023). It considers individualized needs through bidirectional human-machine interaction, where students' agency in seeking feedback is pivotal (White et al., 2023). Empirical studies on feedback processing in L2 pedagogy have primarily focused on behavioral and cognitive dimensions, particularly depth of processing. Some studies have examined engagement and revision behaviors but have not sufficiently delved into regulatory strategies (Koltovskaia, 2020). However, a process-based investigation into students' processing of technology-enhanced feedback was scantily conducted. Based on the review of existing literature, the author develops a conceptual framework for the processing of ChatGPT-generated ACF, emphasizing the connection between provision and processing of feedback. It highlights the importance of metacognitive strategies, influenced by external factors and individual characteristics.

The present study aims to address the following research questions. **RQ1:** Do L2 writers use metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and evaluation) in processing ChatGPT-generated corrective feedback? **RQ2:** How do L2 writers' individual characteristics (L2 learning experience, L2 proficiency, writing competence, and AI literacy) and the external factors (error types, task types, and type difficulties) contribute to explaining the differences in metacognitive strategy use? **RQ3:** How do L2 writers metacognitively regulate the cognitive processing of ChatGPT-generated corrective feedback?

In this study conducted within a Chinese university's EFL program, 24 sophomore participants with an average age of 19.6 years and prior English learning experience (average of 10.4 years) engaged in a 5-week writing project after receiving training on ChatGPT for

Automated Corrective Feedback (ACF) and prompt writing skills. Data collection involved audio-recordings of participants' metacognitive regulatory and cognitive feedback processing strategies, screen-recordings of their writing and feedback activities, and categorization of ChatGPT-generated corrective suggestions. Think-aloud protocols (TAP) were used to capture participants' verbalizations, transcribed for analysis, and a coding scheme was employed for metacognitive and cognitive activities. The study included descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Kruskal-Wallis tests, hierarchical multiple regression (HMR) analysis, and lag sequential analysis (LSA) to explore metacognitive strategy use, the influence of individual and

external factors, and sequential patterns of (meta)cognitive activities, offering a comprehensive examination of metacognitive regulation during ChatGPT-generated ACF processing in the context of EFL writing instruction.

According to the results of the study, participants' metacognitive strategy use varied, with the highest planning percentage in week 3 (66.58%), monitoring peaking in week 4 (48.2%), and planning regaining the lead in week 5 (41.2%). Kruskal-Wallis tests indicated significant differences in metacognitive strategy use across these weeks, showing a general decline in planning, fluctuations in monitoring, and an upward trend in evaluation. Hierarchical multiple regression (HMR) results revealed that individual characteristics explained substantial variance in metacognitive strategy use, with external factors contributing modestly. Writing competence and AI literacy were significant predictors for metacognitive planning. L2 proficiency, writing competence, and AI literacy significantly influenced the usage of monitoring strategies, while L2 experiences, L2 proficiency, and writing competence affected metacognitive evaluation. Error types and task types had a significant impact on metacognitive planning. Sequential analysis classified participants into four groups based on writing competence and AI literacy, with Group A and B displaying more sophisticated metacognitive regulation during feedback processing, while Groups C and D exhibited less effective and linear regulatory patterns. These findings provide insights into the complex interplay of individual and external factors in metacognitive regulation during ChatGPT-generated ACF processing in EFL writing instruction.

Against the context of existing empirical and theoretical insights, the present study revealed that individual factors, including L2 proficiency, writing competence, and AI literacy, significantly influenced metacognitive strategy use. Higher language proficiency and writing skills were associated with greater metacognitive strategy utilization. Surprisingly, external factors had limited explanatory power, showcasing ChatGPT's adaptability in providing tailored feedback. The study also highlighted the importance of fostering feedback-literate learners who actively engage with AI-based learning assistants. Moreover, it revealed that higher language proficiency was linked to more sophisticated regulatory patterns, challenging the notion that ACF providers hinder metacognitive monitoring and evaluation. However, lower language proficiency limited effective feedback processing despite some degree of engagement. Unexpectedly, AI literacy had a less pronounced impact on behavioral transition patterns, suggesting the need for further investigation and careful integration into L2 pedagogy. In conclusion, this study advances our understanding of metacognitive regulation in AI-enhanced learning environments and calls for a nuanced approach to AI literacy integration.

This research carries both theoretical and pedagogical implications. It introduces and validates a novel conceptual model elucidating L2 writers' metacognitive regulation in the context of GAI-enhanced learning, expanding existing L2 pedagogy theories. This model offers a theoretical framework to comprehend how L2 writers respond to GAI-generated ACF, shedding light on the previously underexplored domain of feedback processing. Moreover, it underscores the vital role of metacognition in feedback processing, highlighting that students' regulation of learning behaviors and cognitive processes bridges pedagogical input and observable learning outcomes. This focus on metacognitive regulation opens a promising avenue for unraveling the assessment and feedback "black box." Lastly, the study provides guidance for L2 writing pedagogy in the era of technological advancements. Emphasizing the development of language proficiency and (meta)cognitive skills becomes paramount as students increasingly engage with AI-mediated feedback. To facilitate this, there's a growing need for AI-literate and tech-savvy language educators who can effectively integrate AI-based technologies into L2 classrooms through metacognitive scaffolding and explicit instruction.

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**PGRC – 112**

**Barriers and Facilitators To Malaysian Teachers' Mental Health Literacy: A Study on Teachers' Experiences**

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Teachers play a key role in addressing student mental health issues. To be able to do so, teachers need to have developed mental health literacy, which consists of the knowledge of and attitudes towards mental illnesses and methods to support those who struggle with mental illnesses. This study aimed to explore Malaysian teachers' experiences of the external factors that facilitate and hinder them from developing their mental health literacy.

Mental health literacy (MHL) comprises knowledge on and attitudes towards mental illnesses and methods to support those who struggle with mental illnesses (Furnham & Swami, 2018). Like other literacies, MHL requires development to be effective, and this paper aims to explore Malaysian teachers' experiences of the external facilitators and barriers to their MHL development. These external facilitators and barriers warrant exploration because of how crucial it is for teachers to be mental health literate. MHL decreases stigma, promotes early identification of and intervention for those suffering from mental illnesses, and empowers people to obtain mental health care when they require it (Beukema et al., 2022; Dias et al., 2018; Furnham & Swami, 2018; Miller et al., 2019). Strong MHL is especially crucial for teachers to possess since teachers frequently interact with youths, a population prone to mental illness and therefore in need of access to mental health interventions (Ohrt et al., 2020; Yamaguchi et al., 2019). These interventions can be carried out by teachers, necessitating both developed teacher MHL and this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore Malaysian teachers' experiences of the external factors that facilitate and hinder them from developing their mental health literacy. By shedding light on the teachers' experiences of these factors, this study aimed to raise awareness among educational stakeholders in Malaysia in the hopes that they can reduce the external barriers and increase the external facilitators, and therefore enable Malaysian children to obtain a holistic education that meets all of their needs.

This study employed a qualitative design, purposeful criterion sampling, online one-on-one semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis, document analysis, and member checking to explore Malaysian teachers' experience of the factors that influence the development of their MHL. Five Malaysian teachers from public schools were recruited. Gender, age, and educational level were considered due to their influence on MHL development. Additionally, this study exclusively recruited females to control for gender differences in MHL. Participants were also restricted to those under 60, consistent with prior research. Only individuals with a Bachelor's degree were included, given the impact of academic education on MHL. Fluency in English was also ensured as it was essential for data analysis.

Prior to collecting data, the study reviewed and validated the semi-structured interview guide, conducting a pilot study for further refinement. A demographics questionnaire was distributed through the researcher's teacher network to select five participants based on specified criteria. After providing project information and obtaining signed consent, virtual

interviews were scheduled, with participants receiving interview topics and questions. Zoom recorded the interviews. Following each interview, the researcher conducted a reflection to assess potential biases. Transcripts were generated using Zoom recordings and Microsoft Word's transcription feature. Additionally, the researcher requested relevant documents from participants and collected online documents for analysis. Document analysis aimed to ensure interview content credibility and triangulate findings (Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2021)

To enhance rigour, validity, and reliability, the study employed analytical triangulation involving thematic analysis, document analysis, and member checking (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Natow, 2020). Expert validation of the instrument further ensured reliability and validity in this qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach (2006), was chosen for its accessibility and pattern-exposing capabilities.

This study successfully found thirteen factors—five facilitators and eight barriers—that influence the development of teachers' mental health literacy. The five facilitators identified were in two distinct themes, 'people who facilitate' and 'structures that facilitate'. Interestingly, social support from school counsellors and colleagues proved influential, aligning with previous research findings. Additionally, structural support such as integrating mental health topics into the curriculum and implementing anti-bullying and Ministry of Education programmes were found to be beneficial in developing teacher MHL.

The eight barriers identified were in three themes, 'barriers due to Malaysian context,' 'unsupportive school community,' and 'structural barriers'. Harmful societal beliefs, such as superstitions and fear of mental illness, were identified, emphasising the need to address these beliefs in MHL programs. The study also highlighted the significance of a whole-school approach to overcoming challenges within the school community, including unhelpful admin staff, ignorant older colleagues, and dismissive parents. Lastly, structural barriers like teachers' excessive workload and time constraints underscored the importance of reducing these burdens to promote teacher MHL development.

This study revealed two important implications. Firstly, it demonstrates that developing teacher MHL in Malaysia is feasible. The participants in this study showed willingness and capability to enhance their MHL when provided with essential social and structural support. Some have even taken the initiative to self-educate using online resources. This willingness highlights the potential for progress in addressing the issue of underdeveloped teacher MHL, even in the face of numerous challenges. Secondly, the study highlighted the impact of the entire school environment on teachers' MHL development. Previous programmes often focused solely on teacher training, neglecting crucial factors such as reducing teacher workload and educating administrative staff, parents, and older colleagues (Yamaguchi et al., 2019). Recognizing the holistic influence of the school community is key for more effective teacher MHL development initiatives.

Future studies can expand upon this study's findings by examining the factors that influence the MHL development of the other members of the school community. Though developed teacher MHL is undoubtedly important in a school's ability to address its students' mental health issues, teachers cannot fully tackle student mental health alone. A group whose MHL-developing factors would be interesting to examine would be the school counsellors, as they are seen as in-school advisors on student mental health. Therefore it can be said that



their MHL needs to be the most developed out of all the members of a school's staff and is thus worthy of study.

**Keywords:** mental health literacy; student mental health; teacher mental health

**PGRC – 114**

**Practices and Challenges on the Integration of Nurseries and Kindergartens (INK) in China**

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Early childhood development lays the foundation of the entire development of human beings, and early childhood education and care (ECEC) play a significant role in preparing children for lifelong learning. Global trends show the increasing integration of ECEC for young children's learning experiences before primary school age, and subsequently, China has issued a series of related national documents since 2019. Considering that nurseries and kindergartens are the two main entities providing ECEC in China, the integration of nurseries and kindergartens (INK) has become the primary approach for integrating ECEC in the country. Consequently, the INK policies encourage kindergartens to enrol children under three years old, providing a seamless and coherent care and educational experience for children. However, despite the strong policy encouragement, no specific national implementation plan for the INK exists.

Hence, various challenges arise in institutions implementing the INK. These challenges mainly encompass inconsistent policy implementation, lack of continuity in curriculum and activities, kindergarten-style education in nursery classes, inferior age-appropriate environment, oversight of transitions, and inadequate teacher capacity. Along with these challenges, several questions have emerged from reality: How can INK be effectively implemented in a scenario where the governance and guidelines for nurseries and kindergartens are distinct and separate? How can holistic and coherent education and care for young children be implemented from nursery to kindergarten? How can developmentally appropriate activities and environments be provided to integrate two age groups of children? Based on these, the proposed study aims to uncover the perspectives and challenges administrators and teachers face when implementing INK while delving into the current practices of INK implementation within the Chinese context.

To address these issues, this study will employ a qualitative explanatory multiple-case study in Kunming City to investigate the practices and challenges of implementing the INK. Institutions implementing the INK will be selected as cases within the actual operational settings. Administrators and teachers will be the participants to be interviewed to gain in-depth and multiple perspectives on implementing the INK. Subsequently, teachers' classrooms will be observed to investigate the implementation of developmentally appropriate activities (DAA) and the provision of developmentally appropriate environments (DAE) for children during the transition from nursery to kindergarten.

The research findings of this study will fill the gap of empirical research in the field of INK in China. It is also anticipated to be the first qualitative multiple-case study within the realm of INK in China. First, the findings of administrators' and teachers' perspectives, challenges and expected support on INK will be a valuable resource for decision-makers to understand the challenges of implementing INK. Second, research findings on DAA and DAE will aid administrators and teachers in addressing issues tied to kindergarten-style education in

nurseries, overcoming the challenges when implementing INK and developing effective strategies and approaches that facilitate a smooth and continuous transition from nurseries to kindergartens.

**Keywords:** Integration of nurseries and kindergartens (INK); Early childhood education and care (ECEC); Transition; Developmentally appropriate activities (DAA); Developmentally appropriate environment (DAE)

**PGRC – 115**

**Parents And Students' Perception: How The Implementation Of School-Based Assessments Affects Students' Learning Motivation**

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Researchers have studied learning motivation for decades, including how it is influenced by different factors. Studies have been conducted to investigate student learning motivation and assessment. According to research, the form of assessment has a major impact on the level of student learning motivation. Previous studies found that high-stakes assessments (HSA) have an effect on students' learning motivation since the test has consequences for the test taker. For example, the HSA results can be used for school applications and professional development. Teachers and test takers will be more motivated to prepare for the HSA and do well in them. It is rather common that teachers rush to finish exam topics and give students a lot of (drill) to improve test response (Chin et al., 2019; Noh & Matore\*, 2020). According to Wall and Alderson, this is the washback effect. It illustrates how assessment affects teaching and learning where It could be both beneficial and negative. Students may take on more responsibility and be more driven to learn as a result of the positive washback effect. On the other hand, a negative effect of washback could be spending too much time preparing for tests and losing sight of the true reason for studying (Chinda et al., 2022).

The Minister of Education replaced HSA in primary and lower secondary schools (UPSR and PT3) with school-based assessment to foster a more holistic approach to learning that balances human capital development. However, there have been some opposition from parents and teachers (Chin et al., 2019; Noh & Matore\*, 2020). They were afraid that the policy would have an impact on students' learning motivation, which could change their behaviour and attitude towards learning. Above all, educators and parents were concerned that this policy would demotivate their children from learning. According to Hasanudin's study (2023), this is the negative washback impact that caused the stakeholders to experience negative psychological feelings such as tension, anxiety, and worry. This demonstrates the gap between policymakers' and other stakeholders' perceptions of SBA, such as parents and teachers. In particular, The perceptions of parents require further investigation as they may greatly influence how students' learning is supported. In addition, the student's point of view is significant because they are the ultimate beneficiaries of the assessment and it is important to understand how their learning motivation has been affected. The objectives of this study are to investigate parents' and students' perceptions of how the SBA's implementation affects student learning motivation.

The data in this case study was acquired through interviews with two focus groups (parents and students). This method allowed the researcher to understand how students and parents view the SBA's implementation and student learning motivation. This study used non-probability sampling. The researcher used a snowball sampling strategy to recruit students and their parents. The first group comprised four Malaysian public upper elementary school students in grades 4-6 (ages 10 to 12). They are the ones affected by the most recent assessment policy. The researcher sought relatives and acquaintances who had primary

school-aged children who were qualified to participate in the study. The researcher then presented the study to them and asked them to invite other possible participants. This method was chosen since these students are expected to engage in physical focus groups. The research of Ghazali and colleagues (2022) served as reference for the current interview questions used in this study. Prior to collecting data, a pilot test was conducted to improve the interview protocols. A thematic analysis approach was employed to analyse the data from all of these focus groups.

According to the findings, the majority of students disagree that SBA improves their learning motivation. They claimed that their interest in a particular subject is what drives them to learn. They are primarily motivated to learn because of their passion for the subject (Wardani et al., 2020). A student shared that she enjoyed the topic regardless of how well she performed in the course. In addition, her parents agree with this statement. They believe that their child's learning motivation was driven by personal interests or the learning experience rather than the examination or its outcomes. Interestingly, this is in contrary to Hasanudin and his team's (2023) conclusion, where learning motivation is said to be related to assessment. In this light, only one student in our study talked about formative SBA, such as projects that pushed her to learn. She excels at project-based evaluation. Self-determination theory (SDT) could explain this, whereby This girl is given autonomy through SBA, encouraging her to learn.

Furthermore, the majority of students expressed that they will prefer summative SBA, such as exam papers. They responded that they prefer test papers since they occur only once and are simple to reflect the level of understanding of the subject. Furthermore, one of the students said that the test paper was simple to answer in comparison. The overall finding suggest a different possibility from past research that implies formative learning improves student learning motivation. This is because feedback and scaffolding will be offered to assist students in meeting their learning objectives (Näsström et al., 2021; Chinda and colleagues, 2022). This is an intriguing phenomenon.

The parents shared a numerous possible factors to explain the reason why this group of the students are not affected by teh washback effect. Firstly, as COVID-19 affected three out of four school years of the students' primary schooling, parents feel this cohort has limited assessment skills. There were also fewer assessment opportunities for teachers. According to parents, this group of children has a limited understanding of assessment. As a result, regardless of the method of assessment, the washback impact is hardly discernible. Parents acknowledged being ignorant of how the SBA is performed, particularly the most recent summative SBA. Parents stated that the SBA report card does not assist them in comprehending their students' progress. This is because academics cannot provide personalized and thorough feedback on students' progress in large classrooms.

In conclusion, both students' and parents' perspectives of how SBA implementation influences students' learning motivation differ. Due to the lack of transparency and awareness in the practice of SBA, participants have little comprehension of the most recent assessment policy. As an outcome, it produced an unfavourable feeling among parents. This is become the obstacle to improve the assessment system in malaysia which emphasize on balances human capital development such as SBA (Malik et al., 2021). As a result, the findings have highlighted the need to improve the transparency of assessment policy implementation, particularly the Ujian Akhir Sesi Akademik (UASA) approach and framework. This will increase the awareness among those stakeholders in their child's learning journey. In general, both

students and their parents are unaware of UASA. It is shown that the school plays a significant role in explaining the format and scoring system of the UASA. Nevertheless, since the sample size is limited, the research's conclusions are insufficient to generalize. As a result, the researchers would encourage larger participant sizes in future investigations. Furthermore, a longitudinal approach is suggested for doing a comparable study. This method will provide a clearer picture of how one aspect affects another (Caruana et al., 2015). Teachers' perspectives may also be further explored to add to our understanding of this issue. It would be extremely useful for researchers to investigate how SBA adoption affects changes in student learning motivation and how different initiatives may be put in place for improvement of student learning and motivation.

**Keywords:** learning motivation; school- based assessment; high- stake assessment; parents; students

**PGRC – 117**

**The Reflection of a Novice Researcher: Lessons Learned From Fieldwork Experience**

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**Background:**

I am a Chinese PhD candidate who is presently conducting research on “University Teaching in China: Investigating the Classroom Practice of Western-Educated Chinese Academics from Science-related Fields”. To have a deeper understanding of the pedagogy adopted by these academics, the values and the justifications that underpin their choices and also the issues and challenges they face, I adopted the qualitative case study approach which focused on understanding the complexity of the phenomenon within the boundary of the selected university and the time period of fieldwork. Methods of unstructured interview, non-participant classroom observation and document analysis were used to collect data.

I am now at the stage of data analysis. At this stage of my journey, I recognized the importance of reflection which prompted me to engage in a thoughtful analysis of the aspects I perceived as shortcomings in my study. This process enabled me to identify areas that required particular attention, one of which involved fieldwork.

Before fieldwork, I felt like I have already understood clearly about the steps of the data collection and data analysis. As outlined in my research proposal, in accordance with the principles outlined in the existing literature, I acquired a general understanding of the basic procedures involved in data collection and analysis. However, while embarking on the actual fieldwork, I discovered that the practical implementation of these procedures was considerably more complex than what presented in scholarly texts. In the realm of practical fieldwork, it is imperative to take into account the contextual factors associated with a given circumstance. This entails careful consideration of various details that should be anticipated and noticed beforehand. Failure to adequately attend to these aspects may have detrimental effects on the quality of the data.

Furthermore, as a novice researcher, I have also been learning about classroom observation and interviews as I was conducting fieldwork. I recognized the skills of asking questions in the interviews plays an important role in the quality of the data collection. For the purpose of collecting rich data as well as enhancing my interviewing abilities, with the guidance of my supervisor, I have been studying how to ask further follow-up pertinent interview questions to the participants, but it takes time to become proficient at this. During the initial stages of the interview, I encountered limitations in my ability to ask or challenge the participants for further questions regarding the research. This greatly affects the logic and integrity of the story when it comes to case writing. However, as my

comprehension of the research topic deepened and my skills progressively improved, I found that I could respond more quickly to the questions asked by the participants in the interview, as well as judge in time whether the information was clear and rich enough, and whether and how to follow up the questions.

Simultaneously, given the contextual framework of this study within Chinese universities, another lesson I learned was the necessity of understanding cultural and linguistic uniqueness, especially those closely related to the research questions. During my fieldwork, I was involved with the matter of translation. The interviews were originally conducted in Chinese and required subsequent translation into English. To reduce the potential inaccuracies arising from

translation, it was crucial to acquire detailed interpretation from the participants to ensure their viewpoints were accurately conveyed and not misrepresented as far as possible.

One thing that a researcher should take note is the distinctive characteristic of the Chinese language, wherein a single word may possess multiple interpretations. In order to ensure the accuracy of the data and the rigor of the research, it becomes essential to ascertain the intended meaning of participants. For instance, one of the participants mentioned about "Wenti"(问题) when talking about her teaching approach. Nevertheless, this term in the Chinese language encompasses two meanings, wherein one signifies "questions" while the other implies "problems". I was not aware of these discrepancies until I began writing the case. Due to such difference may connect to different kinds of teaching approach, specifically inquiry-based approach and problem-based approach, I had to return back and interview her again to seek her clarification with detailed examples. Novice researchers should be attentive to cultural characteristics of participants, refraining from making assumptions about their intended meanings. It seems that it is imperative to develop a mindset characterized by open-mindedness and a willingness to consider alternative perspectives.

Given the aforementioned challenges that I faced during this journey, I realize that this may also be encountered by other novice researchers. Although there exists a considerable part of literature pertaining to the topic of novice researcher reflection (Clarke, 2006; Gesch-Karamanlidis, 2015; Hawamdeh & Raigangar, 2014; Wohlfart, 2020), but seldom have there been scholarly works specifically addressing the reflection and experience sharing related to doing a qualitative case study within the context of a Chinese university. Thus, the objectives of this paper are as follows: As a novice researcher, to share some of the methodological challenges I faced during fieldwork.

how to improve the credibility of the data in fieldwork conducted in the Chinese context.

In short, apart from helping to enrich the literature in this area, my reflection of the fieldwork are expected to also contribute to more informed debates and help the novice researcher to have a clearer picture of the process of data collection. Through the process of organizing and reflecting

on these experiences and details, it is also anticipated to facilitate the awareness of novice researchers regarding the potential challenges or unforeseen circumstances that may arise during similar studies. Consequently, they can proactively equip themselves in accordance with the specific context and circumstances of their research, particularly within the Chinese context.

**Keywords:** qualitative research; case study; novice researcher; reflection; data collection; data analysis;

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**PGRC – 118**

**Use of Mobile Devices in Teaching English by Teachers in China After COVID-19  
Pandemic**

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Using mobile devices in educational settings has become more widely accepted by students and teachers in developed countries because of the easy access to the Internet and the convenience it affords for sharing information and exchanging ideas anytime and anywhere. Research has found that the mobile phone has been the primary tool of mobile learning among other devices in the past decade, highlighting their significance, particularly in language education. The Ministry of Education has emphasized integrating information technology into English courses in China. This necessity to use mobile devices is rooted in the global adoption of online learning, which witnessed a surge in 2020. After COVID-19, schools may prioritize virtual instruction or hybrid models that blend online and offline teaching. This strategic approach remains relevant, especially as sporadic COVID cases and seasonal outbreaks persist, disrupting traditional face-to-face teaching. However, there is a lack of understanding regarding Chinese English teachers' use of mobile devices in teaching after the COVID-19 pandemic. This knowledge gap raises questions about the use behaviors by educators in China as they navigate this technological frontier. To bridge this knowledge gap and contribute valuable insights to the evolving landscape of education in China, this study aims to discover the current use of mobile devices in teaching English among Chinese educators after the COVID-19 pandemic. By shedding light on these use patterns, this research seeks to provide guidance and inform pedagogical strategies, benefiting stakeholders like researchers, educators, and institutions.

A semi-structured questionnaire, interviews, and observations were adopted to collect data. The questionnaire combines closed-ended and open-ended questions. A total of 265 Chinese English teachers participated in the survey, among which six individuals were selected for interviews, and their classes were observed. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed using six steps: transcribe the data from recording and notes; read the database through; code the texts; identify the themes based on the categories; report the findings; reflexivity.

Teachers' uses of mobile devices in teaching English were broadly categorized into experience, use frequency, preference for mobile functions and apps, use in different teaching segments, and use in teaching language skills.

The findings underscore that Chinese English instructors consistently and frequently incorporate mobile devices into their teaching practices. They do so primarily due to its inherent convenience, effectiveness, seamless integration into their daily routines, and vital role as a teaching tool during the pandemic. In contrast, those teachers who employ mobile devices with lower frequency tend to view them as unnecessary in their teaching and often perceive their skills in utilizing mobile devices as inadequate. Regarding the specific mobile functions employed, Chinese English educators commonly use web searches, camera

functionalities, and voice memo capabilities in their teaching contexts. Furthermore, they frequently employ various mobile applications, including mobile-enhanced teaching platform apps, English language learning apps, social media applications, educational press-released apps, news apps, and streaming video platforms. These apps, tailored to specific language skills, offer a treasure trove of exercises, multimedia content, and interactive features that enrich the learning experience.

The diverse utilization of mobile devices is particularly evident in both in-class activities and post-class practices, where various mobile applications are harnessed to facilitate learning. Before the commencement of classes, teachers frequently utilize mobile devices to share preparatory materials with their students. Mobile-enhanced teaching platform apps are utilized in the classroom for attendance-taking and making important announcements. In-class activities encompass various dynamic and interactive practices, such as group discussions, roll calls, polling, brainstorming sessions, in-class quizzes, students' work demonstrations, sharing of slides, and real-time online information retrieval. Instructors prefer to recommend diverse educational resources accessible through different mobile applications for post-class practice. They also efficiently manage homework assignments, often using mobile-enhanced teaching platform apps or *WeChat* to distribute and collect assignments. Additionally, mobile applications are instrumental in monitoring students' learning progress, as they provide valuable references for evaluation, including records of students' progress and quiz scores.

Across language skills encompassing listening, speaking, reading, writing, translation, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, mobile devices have demonstrated their capacity to facilitate convenient access to learning resources, interactive applications, and communication tools. Among the common teaching practices employed by educators, using materials sourced from different language learning

mobile apps has evolved into a customary and highly effective approach. Educators have seamlessly woven multimedia content into their instructional fabric, including text passages, videos, audio clips, and images. These multimedia resources support the effectiveness of their teaching and enrich students' overall learning experiences, fostering deeper engagement and comprehension. Furthermore, the seamless sharing of instructional materials has been streamlined through the utilization of mobile-enhanced teaching platform apps and popular messaging platforms or *WeChat*. This facilitation of material sharing ensures that students have easy access to essential course materials anytime and anywhere. In line with the ethos of autonomous learning, instructors often take on the role of facilitators by recommending useful mobile apps to their students. These recommended apps serve as additional resources, enabling students to explore and practice language skills independently fostering self-directed and lifelong learning habits.

Chinese English instructors commonly embrace mobile devices in their teaching due to their convenience and effectiveness, with a particular emphasis on diverse apps for enhancing language skills and seamless integration into daily routines. At the same time, those who use them less frequently often find them unnecessary and perceive their skills as inadequate. The study has revealed that English educators favor a range of mobile functions and applications. The inherent attributes of mobile devices and the extensive availability of educational applications affirm their significance as indispensable tools for educators. Notably, integrating mobile devices transcends the boundaries of specific instructional phases; rather, it

permeates every aspect of English language pedagogy, from instructional planning and classroom management to in-class activities, post-class practice, homework administration, and assessment. In essence, these findings illuminate the pervasive and multifaceted integration of mobile devices within the pedagogical practices of Chinese English teachers, showcasing its significance as a pivotal tool in enhancing English language education in various dimensions, from classroom instruction to post-class engagement and evaluation. The practical implication is that educational institutions and policymakers should recognize the widespread adoption of mobile devices among Chinese English instructors and consider supporting the integration of diverse apps into language teaching to enhance convenience and effectiveness while addressing the needs and skills development of educators who use them less frequently.

**Keywords:** teachers, mobile devices, teach English, China

**PGRC – 119**

**Conceptual framework for a Study on Tertiary English Teachers' Collaboration in the Context of a University in Southeast China**

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Teachers need to be proficient collaborators in order to successfully perform their job in the 21st century. Continuous and professional collaboration among teachers plays a crucial role in ensuring the quality of education. There are two main problems concerning teacher collaboration in China: a lack of sufficient awareness about teacher collaboration and a limited willingness among teachers to engage in cooperative efforts. Yet there are few studies examining English teachers' collaboration in higher education in the context of China. To fill in the gap, this research plans to investigate teacher collaboration among tertiary English teachers towards professional development in the context of China. The objectives of the study are first to examine the attitude of tertiary English teachers towards collaboration in their profession; secondly, to explore how teacher collaboration is currently practised among tertiary English teachers and to identify challenges faced by English teachers in efforts to collaborate in the context of China.

This study would employ key elements from theory of planned behavior, community of practice and social learning theory to form a conceptual framework. All theories are under the umbrella of social constructivism to some extent. Employing critical and interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives may generate new insights about collaboration as a pathway for transformation for teachers' advancement in professionalism.

Social constructivism, deeply rooted in constructivism, is a very important branch of constructivism. It develops its theoretical perspective within the field of social sciences, particularly in sociology and education, that focuses on how social

interactions and cultural contexts shape and influence individual knowledge and understanding of the world (Amineh & Asl, 2015). It suggests that individuals actively construct their knowledge and beliefs through interactions with others and through their engagement with social and cultural norms, values, and practices (Vygotskiĭ & Cole, 1978). From perspective of social constructivism, knowledge is perceived as the process of constructing meaning and comprehension through interactions within a social context (Yurtseven & Bademcioglu, 2016). It recognizes the significance of social context in shaping individual understanding and meaning-making. It acknowledges that knowledge is not solely an individual acquisition but is co-constructed through interactions with others. This perspective provides a nuanced understanding of how social processes and cultural influences shape our perceptions and interpretations of reality.

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is improved by Ajzen (1991) on the base of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Madden, 1986), in an attempt to predict and understand people's intentions to engage in various activities. It is a social psychological theory that explains human behavior by considering three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985&1911; Ajzen & Madden, 1986). The attitude towards the behavior refers to the overall perception or evaluation of a particular behavior. The subjective norm represents the

perception of influence or social pressure from others on engaging in a specific behavior. The perceived behavioral control means the degree to which one believes that he or she can perform a given behavior and the degree of difficulty in performing that behavior. These three constructs interact with each other in different situations and specific contexts which may decide and explain one's intentions to act a particular behavior.

Teacher collaboration involves various behaviors including sharing information and knowledge, co-planning, problem-solving and so on. Those

behaviors refer to practice to some extent. Though the theory of planned behavior shows psychological aspect of study, it is closely related to social constructivism as such behaviors are taking place in a social platform with both online and offline. In the case of teacher collaboration, the teachers' intentions or actual practice of engaging in collaborative activities will be influenced by teachers' beliefs and perceptions about the benefits and value of collaborating with their peers for professional development. The theory of planned behavior will help gain insights into teachers' willingness to collaborate and identify factors that may hinder or facilitate their engagement and understand how perceived expectations, support, and encouragement from social environment shape teachers' collaboration behavior in their profession.

Community of practice (COP) was first produced by Lave and Wenger (1991) in their co-authored book *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. It refers to "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). Three characteristics are crucial to a community of practice, namely the domain, the community and the practice. The domain means the members shall have a shared interest and show commitment to the community. The community indicates that members shall engage in joint activities and discussions and build relationships that enable them to share information and learn from each other. The practice refers to the actions members take to address recurring problems through sustainable time and interactions. They build a collective library of resources, including experiences, tools and materials during the process (Wenger, 2011). The combination of the three elements constitutes a community of practice, which is closely related to social constructivism and social learning. As communities of practice are actualized in the real world of participation in daily activities. Community of practice involves people work together to complete collective and

collaborative learning through shared competency which is applicable to this research.

Social learning theory is developed by American psychologist Albert Bandura which emphasizes the role of observational learning and social interactions in shaping human behavior (Bandura, 1977). It holds that individuals acquire new behaviors or knowledge by observing and modelling others in a social context (Bandura, 1977; Akpan & Kennedy, 2020). The modelling process comprises four steps, including attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. It is a cognitive process in which individuals actively process and interpret information from the environment, make judgments about the consequences of behavior, and use cognitive strategies to guide their actions. Motivation plays a very important role during the process which is in the form of reinforcement or punishment. From a social learning perspective, teacher collaboration can provide opportunities for teachers to observe and learn from one another through joint planning, observation, and feedback. Teachers can also learn from one another through the sharing of resources and the exchange of ideas. Thus, this theory can provide useful insights into the key concepts that underpin effective teacher collaboration.

By integrating these three theories, it can help explore the complex interplay between individual factors (attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control), socio-context factors (domain, community support, practice), and social interactions (observation, modeling, motivation) in shaping teacher collaboration towards professional development. This integrative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the contextual and psychological factors that influence collaborative practices among teachers and can inform the design of effective collaborative professional development interventions and strategies.

**Keywords:** Tertiary English teachers; Teacher Collaboration; TPB; COP; Social leaning

## PGRC – 120

### The Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis of IEEL Questionnaire

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#### **The Result of Exploratory Factor Analysis of IEEL Questionnaire**

The factor analysis method can also be used to reduce the number of related variables into a more manageable number prior to multiple regression analyses (Pallant, 2020). Factor analysis can be categorized into two main groups: EFA and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) (Williams et al., 2010). An EFA analysis enables the investigator to explore a relatively large number of latent dimensions, often represented by a set of items, to construct a theory or model (Pett et al. 2003; Swisher et al. 2004; Thompson 2004; Henson & Roberts, 2006). The IEEL assesses the integration and environment provided for EL in kindergarten. The items of the questionnaire were drawn from previous instruments and other related literature (NAEYC, 2019; ECER-R, 2015; Neuman, 2014; Huang, 2018). There was no specialized questionnaire that measured the integration of EL and the environment provided for EL in China before this study. The ultimate goal of developing this questionnaire for the study is to establish a theoretical framework for creating and researching integration EL and the creation of EL environments in Chinese kindergarten settings. Therefore, EFA is considered appropriate and has been employed for factor analysis in the IEEL questionnaire.

There were five methodological issues that researchers should take into account for utilizing EFA (Fabrigar et al., 1999). First, the researcher should determine if the EFA is the most appropriate statistical method to achieve the purpose of the study (Fabrigar et al., 1999). This step has already been addressed in the preceding paragraphs. In the second step, the variables of the study, sample size, nature, correlation value, and missing values should be selected (Fabrigar et al., 1999; Sürücü et al., 2022). As for sample size, it is suggested that sample sizes should be 100 or

greater (Hair et al., 1995a). In their guide to sample sizes of EFA, Comrey and Lee (1973) rate 100 as poor, 200 as fair, 300 as good, 500 as very good, and 1000 or more as excellent. The sample size of 150 in the pilot study was adequate for conducting factor analysis because it is above the recommended numbers. The fundamental statistical technique employed in factor analysis relies on the correlation coefficient, which assesses the relationship between two variables (Sürücü et al., 2022). The correlation loadings as follows: 0.30 = minimal, 0.40 = important, and 0.50 = practically (Hair et al. 1995a). Tablchnick and Fidell (2013) suggested an inspection of the correlation matrix for evidence of coefficients greater than 0.3. It was recommended that the correlation coefficient should be a minimum of 0.32, and variables with correlations lower than this threshold should be omitted from the factor analysis (Tabachnick et al, 2007). An examination of the correlation matrix revealed many coefficients of 0.30 and above. Testing the sample adequacy and suitability of data for factor analysis must be conducted before extracting constructs (Burton & Mazerolle, 2011). An assessment of sample adequacy can be made by examining the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (Kaiser, 1970). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value for sampling adequacy was 0.967, exceeding the recommended value of 0.60 (Pallant, 2009; Netemeyer et al., 2003). (See table 4.2).

Table 4.2

The result of the KMO and Bartlett's Test of IEEL in Pilot study

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		878
<hr/>		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9688.420
<hr/>		
	Df	2775
<hr/>		
	Sig.	.000
<hr/>		

The significance of the Bartlett Spherical Test is .000 ( $p < .005$ ). According to

Bartlett's test of sphericity (Bartlett 1950), the chi-square output must be significant. When the matrix does not meet the criteria for being an identity matrix, it suggests that factor analysis may be appropriate only if the significance level ( $p$ -value) is less than 0.05, as suggested by Hair et al. (1995) and Tabachnick & Fidell (2001). The results of Bartlett's test indicated that items were sufficiently correlated for principal components analysis. All the results indicated that is appropriate for factor analysis.

After the evaluation of data suitability for EFA, the extraction procedure should be chosen, and then the method to decide the number of factors to retain (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Following the extraction phase, the researcher needs to determine the number of constructs to retain for rotation (Taherdoost et al., 2022). Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was recommended for use when there was no existing prior theoretical basis or model (Gorsuch, 1983). The IEEL was developed based on previous instruments and other related literature (NAEYC, 2019; ECER-R, 2015; Neuman, 2014; Huang, 2018). Before this, there was no dedicated theoretical research on EL in China. So PCA was suitable to be used to extract factors for the IEEL questionnaire. Kaiser's criteria (eigenvalue > 1 rule) (Kaiser, 1960), Parallel Analysis (PA) (Horn, 1965), and Scree test (Cattell, 1966) were employed to determine the number of meaningful factors. According to the K1 - Kaiser's (Kaiser 1960) method, only constructs that have eigenvalues greater than one should be retained for interpretation. 15 components explain a total of 74.677 percent of the variance in this stage. The scree plot analysis suggested the presence of eight factors, and these factors reflect the theoretical



and conceptual intent. Once the number of factors has been determined, the next step is to try to interpret them, to assist in this process, the factors are rotated (Pallant et al., 2020). The last step in EFA analysis is

for the researcher to select the rotation method that will yield a final interpretable solution (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Orthogonal rotation results in solutions that are easier to interpret, describe, and report (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). The Varimax method is the most employed orthogonal approach, aiming to minimize the number of variables exhibiting high loadings on each factor (Pallant et al., 2020). An EFA of the correlation matrix was carried out, utilizing principal component analysis with varimax rotation to ascertain the factor structure. Factor scores can be seen as variables suitable for extended statistical analysis, or they can serve to mitigate the issue of multicollinearity by generating unrelated variables (Yong & Pearce, 2013). The values of the factor loadings are crucial in deciding the number of factors to retain (Sürücü et al., 2022). Items that loaded on more than one factor were deleted (Sharma et al., 2012). Field (2013) suggests suppressing factor loadings below 0.3. For retained factors, it is advisable to have a minimum of three items with loadings exceeding 0.4 (Samuels, 2017). At least two or three variables must load on a factor so it can be given a meaningful interpretation (Henson & Roberts, 2006; Isaac S & Michael, 1997). Standardized loading estimates should be 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher (Hair et al., 2010). According to the standards provided above, twenty-four items were removed from further analysis. RA3, PE8, PE4, PE5, PC2 had loading less than 0.5 and items PW10, PE15, BC2, PE14, PW14 loaded on more than one factor. RA6, SU2, and PSE5 loaded on a factor where they conceptually did not relate to the construct. Items PE6, PE7, PE9, PE10, PE6, PC4, BC4, PSE1, PsE2, PE16, PW11 loaded on a factor less than 3 variables. After deleting the items, the results of this new analysis confirmed the nine-dimensional structure theoretically, a total of 54 items were

ultimately retained. The nine valid factors: are psychological environment, pre-writing, story understanding, physical resource, book concept, reading attitude, phonological awareness, and print convention and physical layout (see Table 4.3). The nine retained factors accounted for 69.985 % of the explained variance. The KMO was 0.885.

However, Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) also discuss the drawbacks of EFA and emphasize that decisions regarding the number of factors and the choice of rotational methods rely on practical considerations rather than purely theoretical criteria. Even though items PW 10, PsE5, and PsE 12 should be eliminated in the EFA analysis, it still retained in the instrument because the constructs represented the theoretical and conceptual intent. Although BC 5 and PC 1 meet the requirements of factor analysis, they were still removed because they duplicated the meaning of other questions within the same dimension. Therefore, they were deleted. Consequently, the final IEEL questionnaire instrument scales contain a total of 55 items. Including 8 demographic variables and one open-ended question, the instrument of the IEEL questionnaire comprises a total of 64 items.

Table 4.3

*Factor Loadings for the IEEL Scale: PCF With Varimax Rotation With 9-factor Solution*

IEEL item	Factor loading								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Factor 1 Pre-writing									
Pre-writing 8	.858								
Pre-writing 7	.848								
Pre-writing 6	.812								
Pre-writing 5	.797								
Pre-writing 4	.785								
Pre-writing 1	.783								
Pre-writing 2	.782								
Pre-writing 3	.771								
Pre-writing 12	.690								
Pre-writing 13	.617								
Pre-writing 15	.568								
Pre-writing 9	.551								
Factor 2 Psychological environment									
Psychological environment 8		.805							

Psychological environment 4	.778	
Psychological environment 9	.758	
Psychological environment 11	.746	
Psychological environment 3	.743	
Psychological environment 10	.722	
Psychological environment 6	.705	
Psychological environment 7	.646	
Factor 3 Print Convention		
Print Convention 1	.767	
Print Convention 6	.759	
Print Convention 7	.728	
Print Convention 5	.728	
Print Convention 3	.620	
Factor 4 Story Understanding		
Story Understanding 3	.693	
Story Understanding 5	.692	
Story Understanding 4	.668	

Story Understanding 6	.586	
Story Understanding 1	.574	
Factor 5 Reading Attitude		
Reading Attitude 5	.762	
Reading Attitude 2	.655	
Reading Attitude 1	.651	
Reading Attitude 4	.624	
Reading Attitude 7	.568	
Factor 6 Physical Resource		
Physical Resource 17	.792	
Physical Resource 12	.741	
Physical Resource 13	.690	
Physical Resource 18	.674	
Physical Resource 11	.571	
Factor 7 Book Concept		
Book Concept 5		.685
Book Concept 6		.664

Book Concept 8	.624
Book Concept 1	.552
Book Concept 7	.540
Factor 8 Phonological awareness	
Phonological awareness 4	.775
Phonological awareness5	.700
Phonological awareness 2	.686
Phonological awareness 3	.592
Phonological awareness 1	.502
Factor 8 Physical Layout	
Physical Layout 2	.758
Physical Layout 3	.694
Physical Layout 1	.570

Based on the content and construct validity test, the revised IEEL used in this study is a valid instrument to measure kindergarten teachers' integration and the environment provided for EL.

**PGRC – 122**

**Predictors and Outcomes of Employee Involvement in Strategic Planning in Higher Education institutions in Oman**

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**Abstract**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in numerous international countries are among the organizations that view strategic planning as a critical procedure. Consequently, it is imperative to comprehend the major causes of employee participation in activities related to strategic planning as well as the effects that come from it. However, there hasn't been much discussion of the key variables influencing employees' involvement in such a process or how such involvement can impact the employees' attitudes, behaviour, and performance at work. The backdrop of the current study primarily focuses on employee participation in the strategic planning process inside higher education institutions (HEIs) in Oman, which is regarded as a significant Middle Eastern nation. Building upon the aforementioned discussion, this research has established pertinent research questions to investigate in the context of the Omani HEIs sector, as follows: (A) What are the most crucial factors affecting employees' involvement in the strategic planning process in HEIs? (B) What are the outcomes of employees' involvement in the process of strategic planning in HEIs in Oman? (C) Does employees' commitment moderate the relationship between employee involvement in strategic planning and its associated outcomes?

Consequently, the current study highlights the significance of employees' involvement in the strategic planning process in HEIs in Oman by determining the most substantial factors affecting employee involvement in strategic planning in HEIs and exploring the outcomes of this involvement within the work environment in HEIs in Oman. More specifically, this study aims to (1) evaluate the impact of both employee motivation and transformational leadership on employee involvement in the strategic planning process in Omani HEIs, (2) assess the influence of employee involvement in the strategic planning process on both employee satisfaction and employee performance in HEIs in Oman, and (3) examine the moderating impact of employee commitment on the relationship between employee involvement in the strategic planning process (as a predictor variable) and employee satisfaction and employee performance (as outcome variables).

In doing so, a quantitative approach was applied depending on a self-administered questionnaire that was distributed in person and online to both faculty members and administrative staff working at public HEIs in Oman. The questionnaire was made accessible in both English and Arabic to make sure that every respondent was aware of it since HEIs include Arabic and non-Arabic native speakers. In this way, the survey's Arabic translation was done through a back translation process. Aside from the cover page, the questionnaire form has two sections: one for the socio-demographic information about the respondents (such as age, gender, and work experience) and another for the items that make up the investigated constructs (i.e., employee motivation, transformational leadership, employee involvement in the strategic planning process, job satisfaction, employee commitment, and employee performance) that are measured using some indicators

adapted from prior studies and are graded on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). In this vein, a combination of non-probability sampling techniques, including (a) purposive sampling by distributing the survey to concerned employees at HEIs in Oman, (b) convenience sampling by sending the survey link to respondents through their emails and social media networks (such as WhatsApp), and (c) snowballing sampling by requesting the surveyors to share the survey link to their co-workers at HEIs in Oman. The use of such methods of sampling aided in obtaining a sufficient number of responses. In this respect, a total of 393 responses were valid for further analysis.

The PLS-SEM technique has been used in the current research, based on SmartPLS 3.0 software, for the goals of data analysis and hypothesis testing. The two stages of PLS-SEM involve evaluating both the measurement model and structural model. The findings found that employee motivation has a positive and significant impact on employee involvement in strategic planning ( $\beta=0.518$ ,  $t=14.573$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Moreover, it is established that transformational leadership has a significant and positive effect on employee involvement in strategic planning ( $\beta=0.452$ ,  $t=12.475$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, the results revealed that employee involvement in strategic planning has a significant effect on employee satisfaction ( $\beta=0.372$ ,  $t=7.479$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and employee performance ( $\beta=0.198$ ,  $t=2.901$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Finally, employee satisfaction positively and significantly affects employee performance ( $\beta=0.373$ ,  $t=4.589$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). The findings also indicate that employee commitment moderates the relationship between employee involvement in strategic planning and employee performance ( $\beta= -0.076$ ,  $t=3.078$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). However, employee commitment did not moderate the relationship between employee involvement in strategic planning and employee satisfaction ( $\beta= -0.037$ ,  $t=1.857$ ,  $p=0.063$ ).

This study provides a set of academic and managerial contributions in various ways. First, it adds to the underpinning theories, such as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg, 1966) and LMX theory (Gerstner & Day, 1997) by developing and testing an integrated theoretical framework concerning the key determinants and outcomes of employee involvement in the strategic planning process in HEIs. Second, it contributes to the body of knowledge in HRM in the HEIs domain by illuminating the relationship between employee motivation, transformational leadership, involvement in the strategic planning process, and satisfaction, commitment, and performance. More specifically, this study represents one of the first efforts to assess the impact of employee motivation and transformational leadership on their involvement in strategic planning in HEIs. To the best of our knowledge, no published research has looked at the effects of such predictors on employee involvement, and how the latter could affect employee satisfaction and performance, notably in the GCC countries including Oman. Additionally, it is regarded as one of the earliest investigations of the moderating role of employee commitment on the direct paths between employee involvement in the SP process and employee satisfaction and performance in HEIs. In addition, this study produces various managerial contributions and practical guidelines for senior managers and employees at HEIs by illustrating how motivation and transformational leadership could be both powerful catalysts for boosting employee involvement, which in turn plays a crucial role in enhancing their satisfaction and performance in HEIs. Despite the contributions made by this research, there are a number of limitations that point to possible directions for further research.

**Keyword:** Motivation; transformational leadership; employee involvement in strategic planning; satisfaction; commitment; performance

**PGRC – 123**

**Rethinking the Ripple Effects of Poverty on Girls Education in Nigeria.**

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**Abstract**

This research examines rethinking the ripple effects of poverty on girls' education in Nigeria. But again, sadly, inequality in girls' education is another pre-existing problem requiring urgent attention – Nigeria's high poverty rate only exacerbates it. Meanwhile, evidence suggests that educating girls in rural communities empowers girls by providing opportunities and impacting all outcomes and walks of life. The study engaged in explorative and content analysis of data from secondary sources like articles, journals, newspapers, policy papers, and the Internet. Poverty's ripple effects have resulted in many girls giving to early marriage, unwanted pregnancy, and gender-based violence. There is a need to work and understand that many girls are also caught in the middle of attacks and displacement from terrorists in the country, thereby compounding the ripple effect of poverty on girls' education in Nigeria. The government and stakeholders need to work to find a lasting solution for prioritizing girls' education and ensuring that the country's chain of poverty is broken through the required policy implementation. The study concluded that policymakers must invest in inclusive and equitable education and infrastructure for all, especially vulnerable girls in rural and poor communities in Nigeria.

**KEYWORDS: Girls education, Poverty, Inequality, Empowerment, Nigeria**



**PGRC – 125**

**To investigate the impact of student creativity on the adoption and use of ChatGPT among post-graduate students**

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**Abstract**

The integration of Generative AI, exemplified by ChatGPT, into educational environments has raised intriguing questions regarding the role of student creativity in its adoption and utilization. This thesis explores this dynamic by conducting a comprehensive survey analysis targeting post-graduate students. The study aims to elucidate the influence of student creativity on the acceptance, usage patterns, and overall educational impact of Generative AI.

In recent years, Generative AI has gained prominence as a powerful tool for enhancing learning experiences, facilitating personalized education, and fostering innovative thinking. To better understand the mechanisms driving its successful integration, this research investigates the relationship between student creativity and the adoption of Generative AI in an educational context.

The survey analysis comprises responses from a diverse sample of post-graduate students, spanning various academic disciplines and institutions. The research employs a multi-faceted approach to measure creativity, incorporating both self-assessment and external evaluation methods. It also assesses the level of familiarity with and exposure to Generative AI technologies among the participants.

The findings of this study are expected to shed light on how student creativity influences their propensity to adopt and effectively utilize Generative AI in educational settings. Moreover, it aims to discern whether certain facets of creativity, such as ideation, problem-solving, or artistic expression, have a more pronounced impact on the acceptance of these technologies.

Ultimately, this research not only contributes to our understanding of the pivotal role of student creativity in shaping the future of education but also offers insights and recommendations for educators and policymakers seeking to harness the potential of Generative AI to foster innovation and enrich the learning experiences of post-graduate students.

**Keywords:** Generative AI, ChatGPT, student creativity, adoption, usage, educational impact, post-graduate students, survey analysis, innovative thinking, personalized education, creativity assessment, technology adoption, ideation, problem-solving, artistic expression, educational innovation, learning experiences, educational policy.

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**PGRC – 126**

**Relationships of Principal Change Leadership Competency, Teacher Agency, And Teacher Commitment: A Conceptual Framework**

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In pursuit of the attainment of Quality Education for All as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of United Nations, developing countries such as the Philippines put premium in establishing structures, policies, and reforms to provide quality education and access to quality education among Filipino learners. One of the most comprehensive and latest educational reform in the basic education sector in the Philippines is the implementation of K to 12 system. By extending the number of years from the previous ten years to 12 excluding Kindergarten, the basic education levels now have six years in the primary or grade school, four years in secondary or junior high school, and two years in senior high school level. It aims to develop young Filipino learners to be proficient in the 21st century skills who are also equipped with knowledge, attitudes, and abilities at par with global standards. Particularly in relation to the performance of Filipino basic education learners in International Large-Scale Assessments (ILSAs) such as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM), compared to other countries in the region, Philippines has been performing poorly in Mathematics, Science, and Reading areas. Based on this, a number of studies imply the need to review the implementation of the K to 12 reform with regard to the difficulties and challenges in executing its plans and strategies at school levels.

Numerous studies in local setting show that the persistent challenge to provide quality education amidst the implementation of K to 12 system coupled with the difficulties encountered during pandemic especially by private secondary schools have substantiated the need for effective school leadership and highly committed teachers. These difficulties facing the Philippine education system can make it difficult for school principals to provide effective leadership (Cahapay, 2021), limit the agency of teachers (Tenedero et al., 2022), and lead to low commitment among teachers (Gumarang, 2021; Jamon et al., 2021). School principals are expected to be competent in change leadership to execute required changes for school improvement. At the same time, considerable studies affirmed that teachers with high level of agency and commitment affect the success of educational outcomes. In general, school change leadership is next to teacher effectiveness in achieving the goals of ensuring and delivering quality education. School principals and teachers have the responsibility of implementing educational reforms and innovations such as the K to 12 system and especially in this period where there is a high demand for 21st-century skills, adaptive traits, and post-pandemic changes.

In connection to the above, this paper presents a conceptual framework with an attempt to elucidate the relationships among Principal Change Leadership Competency (PCLC), Teacher Agency (TA), and Teacher Commitment (TC) among private secondary schools in CALABARZON Region of the Philippines (Figure 1). Based on related research, this framework is limited to three latent variables and 13 of their respective factors listed below:

Latent variable 1 (independent variable): PCLC which is measured in terms of the four steps in the change process: Goal Framing, Capacity Building, Defusing Resistance and Conflict, and Institutionalizing;

Latent variable 2 (mediating variable): TA which is measured by five factors: Teaching Efficacy, Role Obligation, Professional Identity, Self-Adjustment, and Decision Participation;

Latent variable 3 (dependent variable): TC which is measured by four factors: Commitment to School, Commitment to Students, Commitment to Teaching, and Commitment to Profession.

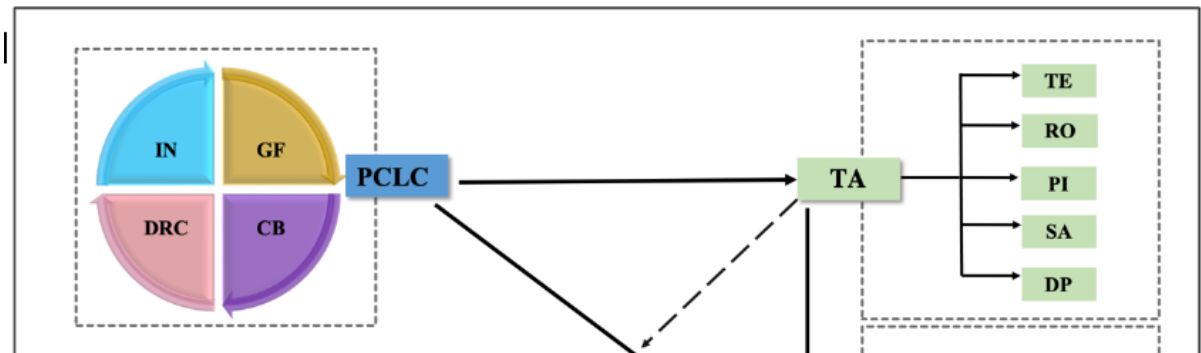


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Relationships of PCLC, TA, and TC

Change leadership encapsulates the process that embodies the capability of school leaders to manage and lead the institution in circumstances of any change (Tai & Omar, 2013). Having change as a process, there are various changed models critically reviewed in the study of Tai and Omar (2014), such as Lewin's (1985), Nilakant & Ramanarayan's (2006), Hayes' (2010), and Kotter's (1999). This review led to the development of their set of school processes modeled as principal change leadership competencies, namely, Goal Framing, Capacity Building, Defusing Resistance and Conflict, and Institutionalizing (Tai & Omar, 2014). As the concept of PCLC just recently surfaced, less is known about how this change process has extended to various contexts, hence, this framework offers to relate it to two teacher constructs: teacher agency and teacher commitment.

Sang et al. (2019) posits that TA is an interactive process between teachers' personal and professional contexts reflective of their judgment, reflection, adjustment, and creation during teaching and professional development. They enumerated five key dimensions of TA: Teaching Efficacy, Role Obligation, Professional Identity, Self-Adjustment, and Decision Participation. In most of the current studies, TA relates to teachers' performance in varied contexts of school environment (Bafadal et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, TC has been considered as a multidimensional construct (Thien et al., 2014). These dimensions depend on the roles and responsibilities of the teachers in schools. Studies generally described teacher commitment as teachers' internal drive and attachment to the profession, school, teaching work, and students with the purpose of upgrading their skills in teaching, developing student learning, contributing to the success of the school, and supporting the advancement of teaching profession.

PCLC has emerged as a new concept in school leadership that enables schools to adapt to change. TA and TC are crucial beliefs that have the potential to affect and reinforce the changes initiated by principal change leaders in schools. Sustaining both of these is essential to achieving the goals of any educational institutions. The importance of the interrelationships among these three variables is essential in developing more effective school principals and efficient teachers and ideally lead to the improvement of quality of education delivered to the students. In addition, the guiding theories to these identified variables are Change Leadership Theory (Higgs & Rowland, 2000), Competency Theory (Cairns, 2000), and Principal Change Leadership Competency Model (Tai & Omar, 2014); Human Agency Theory (Bandura, 1989), Teacher Agency (Priestly et al., 2015), and Teacher Agency Model (Sang et al., 2019); A General Commitment Model (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2001), and Teacher Commitment Model (Thien et al., 2014) for PCLC, TA, and TC respectively. The relationship between PCLC and TA can be explained by Leadership Theory (Northouse, 2016) while the relationship between TA and TC is supported by Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Based on these concepts and in the context of the state of the Philippine basic education, five research objectives are developed, i.e., to investigate whether i) Principal Change Leadership Competency is a significant predictor of Teacher Agency and identify the extent of the effect of Principal Change Leadership Competency on Teacher Agency; ii) Teacher Agency is a significant predictor of Teacher Commitment and the determine the extent of the effect of Teacher Agency on Teacher Commitment; iii) Principal Change Leadership Competency is a significant predictor of Teacher Commitment and if the former has a significant effect on the latter; iv) there is a significant mediating effect of Teacher Agency between Principal Change Leadership Competency and Teacher Commitment; and v) Teacher Agency is a total mediator between Principal Change Leadership Competency and Teacher Commitment.

The proposed conceptual framework attempts to fill the gap in literature about the relationships among principal change leadership competency, teacher agency, and teacher commitment in the Philippine context. Moreso, by recognizing the interplay of the relationships among these variables, this may provide relevant data in proposing programmes that would align the leadership competencies of Filipino school principals to address the demands and challenges in Philippine basic education system particularly in uplifting quality education. Additionally, it may offer relevant information and reference to the Department of Education especially teacher training institutions in planning for a more responsive professional development programmes for teachers to overcome difficulties especially in fostering teacher agency and teacher commitment in providing quality education to Filipino learners.

**Keywords:** Principal change leadership competency, teacher agency, teacher commitment, K to 12 System

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**PGRC – 127**

**Case Analysis: I'm Still on the Journey**

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**Background:**

This paper reflects on my journey as a novice researcher. I am a PhD student from China, currently engaged in research on the topic of "The Self-regulated Learning Practice of University Students in China: A Case Study of One Technical University." My approach to this study is qualitative.

Interviews and observations are commonly used tools in qualitative research. Through these methods, my responsibility is to provide as accurate a representation as possible of the phenomenon under study based on the data shared by the participants, thus strengthening the trustworthiness of my study.

At the outset of my first case analysis, I embarked on interviews and observations involving a single participant. Confident in my abilities, I submitted what I believed to be a perfect and academically rigorous first draft to my advisor. However, under my advisor's guidance, I soon recognized significant issues within this initial version. My initial draft regrettably incorporated an excessive amount of personal bias and subjective judgments, lacking the objectivity and neutrality necessary in research. All my interview responses appeared tailored to endorse my own hypotheses or viewpoints rather than genuinely seeking unbiased data. Recognizing the need for refinement, I commenced the revision of the second draft. The second draft, however, still fell short of presenting the participants' provided data with clarity, and the referencing of their original statements remained inappropriate and inaccurate. Consequently, the third version remains under continuous refinement.

My experience could be said to mirror the challenges faced by many PhD students. Due to my limited research experience, I could not expect to showcase my research outcomes credibly right from the start. Constant adjustments were, and still are, essential for a novice researcher navigating the initial stages of case analysis. My aspiration is to share with fellow researchers the multiple iterations of my case analysis draft, portraying my ongoing academic journey and the obstacles I have encountered along the way.

**Objectives:**

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

- i) To visually illustrate the challenges encountered by novice researchers in the initial stages of their research.
- ii) To offer a more intuitive depiction of the process of improvement and share how, as a novice researcher, one enhances the quality of qualitative analysis.



iii) To explore how, within the context of case analysis, to provide a more authentic representation of the phenomenon under study, thus strengthening the trustworthiness of the study.

iv) To draw inspiration from personal experiences and motivate novice researchers to prioritize

adaptability, objectivity, and ethical conduct in their qualitative research endeavors.

### **Methodology:**

#### i) Research design:

In my research, I employed a qualitative research approach with the aim of gaining a nuanced understanding of my experiences as a novice researcher in the initial stages of my research journey. Qualitative research was well-suited for exploring the complexities of these experiences.

#### ii) Data Collection Methods:

**Semi-Structured Interviews:** I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants to gather rich, in-depth insights into their self-regulated learning practices. These interviews provided the primary source of data for my case analysis.

**Observations:** I conducted observations of participants' learning behaviors and strategies to complement the interview data. These observations offered a real-world context for understanding how self-regulated learning manifested in the participants' daily routines.

**Document Analysis:** Documents mainly include participants' written work and policy documents.

#### iii) Participants:

I employed purposive sampling to select participants based on specific criteria. The chosen participants were residential students at the technical university majoring in mechanical engineering, with an actual data collection period of approximately six months. These students were among the largest population within the university, possessed a foundational understanding of the subject matter, and were in their second year of study, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of their learning habits and approaches. Given the predominant male representation in this major, I focused on male students to ensure the practical applicability of the research findings. The initial sample size for this study was eight participants, with the possibility of expansion based on data saturation.

#### iv) Data Analysis:

**Thematic Analysis:** I used thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns in the interviews and document analysis. This approach allowed for the extraction of meaningful insights regarding the challenges I faced, and the improvements achieved as a novice researcher.

Comparative Analysis: I conducted a comparative analysis to compare the initial drafts of case analyses with subsequent versions, highlighting the transformations and refinements made over time.

v) Reflective Practices:

Throughout my research, I remained reflexive, acknowledging my role as both an observer and a participant in the study. Reflexivity involves continuous self-awareness and critical reflection on how my own experiences and perspectives might influence the interpretation of data.

vi) Feedback Process:

I engaged in a feedback process with participants, providing them with the opportunity to review and comment on the findings, thus enhancing the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study.

vii) Ethical Considerations:

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, including obtaining informed consent from participants,

ensuring their anonymity and privacy, and obtaining approval from the relevant ethics review board at Taylor's University.

viii) Limitations:

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research, such as the small sample size and the specific focus on one technical university in China. These limitations may impact the generalizability of the findings.

**Conclusion:**

This paper reflects on my journey as a novice researcher conducting qualitative research on self-regulated learning practices among Chinese university students. It highlights the challenges I faced, emphasizing the importance of constant adjustment, perseverance, objectivity, trustworthiness, and ethical conduct in qualitative research. My objectives include visually illustrating these challenges, offering an intuitive view of the improvement process, and exploring methods for providing authentic participant data feedback in case analysis.

Methodologically, my research employed qualitative design, using data collection methods like semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. The participants were purposively selected second-year male mechanical engineering students. Thematic and comparative analyses revealed recurring themes and the evolution of case analyses. Reflectivity and a feedback process with participants enhanced trustworthiness. My experiences could serve as a resource for novice researchers to draw on, particularly in terms of underscoring the significance of rigorous research practices.

**Keywords:** novice researcher; qualitative research; participant data feedback

**PGRC – 128**

**Managing International Students in Universities of Shandong Province: Challenges and Strategies for Improvement**

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With the rising number of international students coming to China, scholars have paid more attention to the management of international students. At present, in China, a good management and the guarantee of their fostering quality have become the key points and difficulties that need to be examined thoroughly in the work of international students. This research aims to identify current challenges which are existing in the management of international students in universities of Shandong Province and provide strategies for improving the system of management to better meet the needs of international students and establish more comprehensive management regulations in universities as well. Thus, three research questions are proposed in this research. What are the existing challenges in the current management of international students in Shandong Province from the aspects of enrollment, teaching, life, and employment? What are the suggestions for improving the management to meet the needs of international students from enrollment, teaching, life, and employment? How to establish a new and more comprehensive management regulation for international students in universities of Shandong Province?

In addition, this research will also organize and analyze the research results on international student management at home and abroad in the past five years, and summarize what weaknesses still exist in the current research results achieve breakthrough in this research. To better explore the research questions as well as to propose valuable strategies, four well-known theories in the field of education and management will be selected in this research: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the ERG (existence, relatedness, and growth) theory, the NPM (new public management) theory and the human relations theory. Based on these four theories, a theoretical framework applicable to the management of international students is constructed. Also, this research will summarize several valuable experiences about the management of international students from the USA, UK, and Australia so that to make a reference for the further development of the international student management in Shandong, China.

A convergent design of mixed methods research combining quantitative research and qualitative research together will be adopted in this research. Purposive sampling will be selected in this research. For quantitative part, a questionnaire survey will be adopted. The questionnaire is only for the international students who are currently studying in universities of Shandong Province. Based on the formula from the Krejcie and Morgan Table in 1970, this research intends to select 377 students from 5 universities (75 of each university) to complete the questionnaire among nearly 19,400 international students from 82 universities in Shandong Province which have the qualification to enroll international

students. Besides, to ensure the validity of the questionnaire and the reliability of the results, this research intends to select 5 universities, each with more than 100 international students, to receive the most representative questionnaire results. For the qualitative part, the qualitative analysis will be consisted of two parts, the interviews, and the document analysis. Semi-structured interviews for the administrators, lecturers and international students will be held in three different universities. In this research, the interview with international students will be conducted with six students who are currently studying in universities. The interview with lecturers will be conducted with six lecturers (three language lecturers and three professional course lecturers) who are teaching international students. Interviews with administrators will be conducted with six staff members from the School of International Education or the Office of International Affairs who are responsible for the management of international students (two directors or deputy directors, two staff members with specific responsibilities and two guidance counselors who oversee international student management). The data will be collected and processed to find out the existing challenges in the management and suggestions proposed by international students and the administrators for improving the management standard of international students. In addition, this research will also use the document analysis to select several regulations issued by the Ministry of Education and three different universities (same as the interviews) on the management of international students especially from the aspects of enrollment, teaching, life and employment to analyze the national policies on the management of international students and the strengths and weaknesses of the regulations in different universities, so as to better understand the current situation of international student management in universities.

After the pilot study and the revision of the questionnaire and interview protocols, the data collection will start. Since this research selects the convergent design, the quantitative and qualitative data will be collected simultaneously. The quantitative data of this research will be conducted through an online questionnaire. Interviews will be conducted via online video, with audio and video recording to collect interview data. Document analysis will collect data relevant to this research by comparing the content of each document.

This research expects to present the existing challenges of management of international students in universities of Shandong Province by conducting questionnaire for international students and interviews with international students, administrators, and lecturers, completing the data collection and analysis in accordance with the proposed research questions and research methods. The suggestions proposed by international students, administrators, and lecturers on enhancing and improving the management of international students at universities will be compiled and summarized based on the contents of the interviews. In addition, this research will analyze the relevant policies and regulations, sort out the strengths and weaknesses of these documents in the formulation and implementation of international students' management to present a more thorough and organized picture of the current problems in the management of international student in universities of Shandong Province.

Currently, this research has completed the design of the questionnaire and interview protocols and is in the phase of pilot study. Before conducting the pilot study, both the questionnaire and the interview protocols were sent to the expert committee for evaluation. After adjusting and revising the questionnaire and interview protocols by the comments of the experts' committee, the pilot study started. This research selects 40 international students who are currently studying in universities of Shandong Province for the pilot study. Besides answering the items in the questionnaire, it also tested the layout of the questionnaire, the length of time it took to answer the questions, and the clarity of the questions as well. There were 6 respondents (2 administrators, 2 lecturers and 2 international students) attended interviews for the pilot study. Questions identified not clear during the pilot study will be further modified. After the validity and reliability of the instruments are determined in the pilot study, the data collection phase will start.

This research hopes to present the current problems in the management of international students in universities of Shandong Province by questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Through analyzing the mature experiences of international student management from the USA, UK, and Australia, and combining the relevant data collected by qualitative and quantitative research, effective and feasible strategies will be provided for universities to improve their existing management systems or establish new regulations of Shandong Province. Moreover, hope this research can provide valuable and worthy experiences for the improvement of international student management in Chinese universities.

**Keywords:** international students management; management strategies; enrollment; teaching; life; employment

**PGRC – 129**

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Early Mathematics of Early Childhood  
Education Preservice Teachers in Sichuan, China**

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As the importance of mathematics to social and economic success becomes more and more recognized, research begins to pay more attention to the early childhood mathematics education fields. Early childhood mathematics education has been at the center of attention for educators, policy makers and researchers internationally (Presser et al., 2015). Mathematics should be experienced to young children using effective teaching practices (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], 2013). Without effective teaching practices, young children do not become skilled at mathematics (Zhang, Y., 2015). Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) in mathematics has been recognized as one of the key elements of effective teaching practices. Many research have shown that is an essential component of teachers' knowledge for providing high-quality mathematics education, and it is directly related to effective teaching practices and students' mathematical accomplishment (Ball et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2004; Ma, 1999; McCray et al., 2012; Oppermann et al., 2016). Unfortunately, most studies on PCK in mathematics have been undertaken with elementary or secondary education teachers (e.g., Ball et al., 2008; Hill et al., 2005, 2004; Ma, 1999). There have been few studies on the pedagogical content knowledge in early mathematics (PCK-EM) of early childhood education (ECE) teachers only recently attracted the interest of researchers (e.g., Blömeke et al. 2017a, 2017b; Lee, 2017; McCray & Chen, 2012), and even less of ECE preservice teachers (e.g., Godoy, 2021; Li, N., 2021). However, most ECE preservice teachers have little training in specialized theoretical course on PCK-EM, even those with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education (Ginsberg & Golbeck, 2004). Besides, research have found that current courses for ECE preservice teachers do not necessarily include content, teaching techniques or practices that would appropriate for teaching mathematics in early childhood education (Parks & Wager, 2015). According to the international studies, ECE preservice teachers do not have sufficient PCK-EM (e.g., Esen et al., 2012; Goldrine et al., 2015; İnan, 2010; Parpucu & Erdoğan, 2017; Samuel et al., 2015). Established research suggested that ECE preservice teachers are likely to be certified without the appropriate PCK-EM necessary to promote mathematics in early childhood education (Godoy et al., 2021). Indeed, many ECE preservice teachers chose the major because they thought it did not require them to teach mathematics (Wang, X., 2014; Yu, B., 2016).

What is the real situation of PCK-EM of the ECE preservice teachers who have completed both theoretical courses and practicum in a specialized Preschool Educators College in China? This question is well worth studying. Therefore, the kernel of this study is to investigate the ECE preservice teachers' PCK-EM. Application of PCK theory provides a framework in a content-specific context to study early mathematics teaching. This study will be based on the PCK-EM Model (Zhang, Y., 2015). There were three dimensions of PCK-EM: (1) WHAT: Understanding of foundational math for teaching young children; (2) WHO: Understanding young children's mathematical learning patterns; and (3) HOW: Math-specific pedagogical knowledge that can facilitate young children's mathematical understanding. This study will

focus on NUMBER topic, the research objectives are: (1) to assess the existing level of ECE preservice teachers' PCK-EM, (2) to determine the differences of the dimensions of PCK-EM, (3) to identify the different groups of ECE preservice teachers according to their PCK-EM, and (4) to explore the ECE preservice teachers' PCK-EM in NUMBER topic. Corresponding to the data to be collected from ECE preservice teachers' PCK-EM in NUMBER topic in Sichuan Preschool Educators College of China, mixed method approach will be applied.

This study is a mixed methods design that applies the "explanatory sequential design." There will be two distinct parts. The first part will be the quantitative research phase, utilizing a video-based teacher-children interaction of "NUMBER 5" topic in the open-ended PCK-EM survey. Using simple random sampling method, 196 participants out of a total of 400 ECE preservice teachers (September 2021 intakes) from Sichuan Preschool Educators College of China will respond to the questionnaire. The second part will be the qualitative research phase, where classroom observation and semi-structured interviews will be conducted. Quota sampling will be used to choose a few ECE preservice teachers from each group identified through the data from PCK-EM survey.

Data collection will be conducted in five phases. In phase 1 data will be collected via PCK-EM survey to the ECE preservice teachers, sample ECE preservice teachers in the research will receive an email notice about the survey. The instrument will be offered collectively. The entire PCK-EM survey will be done in four classrooms in Sichuan Preschool Educators College of China from computers with

Internet access at the same time. The researcher in phase 2 analyzes the collected data with the use of SPSS to answer Research Question One and Two. The researcher in phase 3 analyzes the collected data with the use of Mplus to identify the different groups through the data to answer Research Question Three. In phase 4 data will be collected through the observation and interview of the quota sampling ECE preservice teachers which are from each group. In phase 5 recorded observation and interview data will be transcribed before coding, and qualitative data will be coded, categorized and themes emerged are identified. analyzes the coding data with the use of Nvivo to answer Research Question Four.

The quantitative data analyses of PCK-EM survey (n=196) will be conducted using SPSS for the first and second research question, and using Mplus for the third research question. The qualitative data analyses will be entered to the NVivo for qualitative thematic analysis for the fourth question. To answer the first question about the level of ECE preservice teachers' PCK-EM, Descriptive Analyses (Mean, SD, Minimum, Maximum, Percentiles) will be used. To answer the second question about the differences of the dimensions of PCK-EM of ECE preservice teachers, the Measures of ANOVA and Correlational Analysis will be applied. To answer the third question about the different groups of ECE preservice teachers according to their PCK-EM, Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) will be utilized. To gain more insight into the fourth question of how the PCK-EM of each different group of ECE preservice teachers helps them to teaching practices in NUMBER topic, this study will use a qualitative research method, the data will be analyzed thematically.

This study expect to reveal ECE preservice teachers understanding about WHAT, WHO and HOW of the PCK-EM dimensions in the NUMBER topic, and how the understanding of PCK-EM help the ECE preservice teachers teach preschool children in their teaching early mathematics practices. This study will add to the literature on PCK-EM and ECE preservice teacher preparation. Besides, this study will contribute to their professional growth and development, and provide reference for them to the effective implementation of early mathematical education activities in the future. In addition, This would be helpful for the

educational leaders to consider adjustments to related courses and curricula in their programs needed for ECE preservice teachers to be equipped to educate children mathematics knowledge.

**Keywords:** Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Early mathematics, Early childhood education, Preservice teachers

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**PGRC – 130**

**Exploring Teacher Dispositions in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in the Era of Blended Learning (BL)**

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Quality teachers have emerged as a central priority within Malaysia's Ministry of Education (MOE) (Jala, 2010), aligning with the nation's aspirations to establish itself as a global educational hub and foster a knowledge-based economy, as outlined in the Malaysia Economic Transformation Program (Samsi et al., 2020) and Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025. The unprecedented disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have compelled Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to pivot towards a 'new normal,' characterized by Blended Learning (BL) (Malay Mail, 2023). In this evolving educational landscape, it becomes imperative to investigate how teachers in HEIs are grappling with the challenges posed by this transition, particularly in the light of growing concerns regarding teacher quality and educational standards within Malaysian HEIs (Sidek et al., 2012 & Yousoff, 2018).

Within the realm of Psychology, it is widely acknowledged that an individual's traits, commonly referred to as dispositions that encompass attitudes, values and beliefs, significantly influence their behaviour. In the context of HEIs, teacher dispositions emerge as a critical determinant of teaching quality (Fonseca-Chacana, 2019). These teacher dispositions can be defined as traits of character that manifest in the context of teaching and learning (Donald Artinsine, 1995). However, as highlighted by Sidek et al. (2015) and Yousoff (2018) teachers in HEIs often prioritize research and publications over teaching, despite teaching being the core of their profession. This discrepancy raises concerns about the alignment between their career growth and their commitment to becoming quality teachers.

This study seeks to delve into the perspectives of educators within HEIs regarding the importance of specific dispositions and the extent to which these dispositions manifest in their teaching practices. Additionally, it aims to elucidate the factors that either facilitate or hinder the cultivation of these dispositions in the challenging educational landscape of BL. Through this investigation, the study aims to provide valuable insights into enhancing the quality of education in the context of the "new normal" in higher education.

In this study, Gardon Allport's theory of dispositions serves as a foundational framework for examining teachers' attitudes and dispositions toward the pursuit of high-quality teaching. By applying this theory, the study aims to understand how teachers' inherent dispositions influence their commitment to, and delivery of, excellence in education.

To explore the objectives of this study, a case study methodology will be employed, with a focus on a Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) in Malaysia and the use of a convenience sampling technique. The research will be divided into two stages. In the first stage, an online survey will be conducted to gain an understanding of teachers' perspectives on professional dispositions in HEIs. In the second stage, teachers from various courses in the chosen PHEI will be interviewed to acquire comprehensive and detailed data on their perceptions of the importance of specific dispositions and the degree to which they manifest

these dispositions in their teaching practices while blended learning. This necessitates a mixed-method approach that entails both quantitative and qualitative analyses to analyze the responses.

**Keywords:** Teacher dispositions, Quality teachers and Blended learning.

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**PGRC – 131**

**Exploring the Schooling Experiences of Children of Sex Workers in Dauladia,  
Bangladesh**

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**Extended Abstract**

The children of sex workers in Bangladesh confront a distinctive array of challenges and opportunities, emblematic of a complex social landscape (Ghosal, 2019). Prostitution, a deeply ingrained practice in this South Asian nation, casts a profound shadow on the lives of these children, who often find themselves marginalized and subjected to discrimination (Jannat and Letchamanan, 2022). According to estimates, there are approximately 140,000 sex workers in Bangladesh, and every year, around 13,000 children are born into this industry (Shoji and Tsubota, 2022). These children are often born into poverty and lack access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. In addition, they are frequently subjected to exploitation and abuse, including human trafficking, child labor, and forced criminal activities. Furthermore, the stigma and discrimination associated with their mothers' profession often prevent them from accessing education and other opportunities (Ghosal, 2019).

The study by Dalla et al. (2000) highlights the limited research available on the lives of children of sex workers, but what has been found shows that these children face stigma and exclusion from education, social environments, and economic opportunities, leading some to engage in sex work. However, other studies have shed light on the complexity of the issues faced by children of sex workers in accessing education. For instance, a study of Sebastian et al., (2022) found that poverty, lack of access to quality education, and social stigma were the main barriers preventing these children from accessing education. Moreover, a study by Hasan, R. (2019) revealed that cultural and traditional attitudes toward the children of sex workers also played a role in limiting their educational opportunities.

In the context of Bangladesh, research on sex workers has predominantly centered on aspects such as their physical and mental health, experiences of violence, living standards, and the challenges they face in poverty (Le Bail, H., and Giametta, C. 2022). However, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning systematic studies investigating the education of children born into the lives of sex workers. Existing literature has touched upon this subject only sparingly, with limited attention given to understanding the unique schooling experiences and educational outcomes of these vulnerable children (Beard et al., 2010; Shohel, 2013). This dearth of comprehensive research presents a critical need for further exploration into the perspectives, challenges, and support systems available to children of sex workers in their pursuit of education. By delving into this understudied area, this present qualitative study aims to investigate on the schooling experiences of these children and contribute valuable insights to inform policy and interventions targeted at improving their educational opportunities and overall well-being. This research embarks on an illuminating journey into the often-overlooked world of the schooling experiences of children born into the lives of sex workers in Bangladesh, with a particular emphasis on the Daulatdia brothel in the

Rajbari district, renowned as one of the largest brothels worldwide. Anchored within Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory and the social exclusion theory, this narrative qualitative study diligently strives to amplify the voices and emotions of these resilient children. Methodologically, it employs semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with students, teachers, and dedicated NGO officials affiliated with the school situated in Daulatdia. Additionally, an innovative ice-breaking activity was introduced, wherein children artfully depicted their daily activity clocks, revealing profound insights into their intricate daily lives.

From the rich tapestry of interviews and FGDs conducted, which engaged 20 children of sex workers, 8 teachers, and included semi-structured interviews with 3 management officials, several profound findings come to the fore. These young individuals resoundingly demonstrate remarkable resilience and unwavering determination in their pursuit of education, even when confronted with multifaceted challenges. Strikingly, their educational journeys are tinged with the persistent specter of stigmatization and isolation, stemming from the backgrounds of their families. These challenges contribute to a palpable sense of alienation within the school environment.

All interviews were conducted within the vicinity of the brothel area, ensuring proximity to the participants and their lived experiences. Dauladia boasts a unique educational landscape with three secondary schools catering to the diverse population of the area. These schools not only serve the children from the brothel but also welcome village children into their classrooms. More than 100 children of sex workers are pursuing their education in these inclusive schools. Complementing this, an NGO in the vicinity operates a primary school tailored to meet the specific needs of these marginalized children. Their programs encompass a spectrum of essential life skills, including basic etiquette, crafting, hygiene, and fundamental education.

Heartrending stories also surfaced during these interactions. One such account revealed the tragic consequences of stigmatization, wherein a boy from the brothel attempted suicide after facing discrimination from his schoolmates, resulting in the termination of his education.

The children themselves offered profound perspectives on their experiences. Despite enduring societal abuse, one child bravely expressed, "Sometimes in the street, a lot of people keep abusing us that your mother is not a good woman, but still I love my school and one day I will take my mother from this area." Another children articulated, "Life can be tough, and people can be cruel, but my dreams keep me going. I want to prove that I can achieve anything." This unwavering determination resonates with the aspirations of these remarkable young individuals.

Teachers consistently emphasized that with access to proper education and vocational training, the children of sex workers could significantly improve their life trajectories. A teacher from a neighboring secondary school emphasized the importance of empathy, saying, "Understanding their background and offering emotional support

can make a world of difference. I see great potential in these children. Given the unique physiological, psychological, and educational needs of these children in Dauladia, specialized support is paramount to harness their potential and create pathways to brighter futures.

**Key Words:** -children of sex worker, education for all, schooling experiences, Bangladesh.

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**PGRC – 132**

**Examining the Relationships among Learning-Centered Leadership, Professional Learning Community, and Work Engagement at higher vocational colleges in the Guangdong Province of china: A Conceptual Framework**

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Since the turn of the twenty-first century, China has issued a series of policy initiatives to promote education reform (Liu et al., 2016a; Qian & Walker, 2013). There is a consensus that school leaders are increasingly important in promoting student learning and school development (Day et al., 2016; Hammad et al., 2021; Hou et al., 2019; Walker & Qian, 2020). China's State Council issued the document of the Circular on the Issuance of the Implementation Plan for National Vocational Education Reform (document No. 4 [2019] of the State Council) (Zhao et al., 2019); proposed vocational education and general education are two distinct but equally significant forms of education (Hu, 2019; Qin, 2023). However, due to the Chinese long-time tradition of "respect academic education and neglect vocational education" (Hansen & Woronov, 2013; Yuan & Wang, 2021), students and parents generally believe that only students with poor academic performance choose vocational education (Hao & Pilz, 2021; Ling, 2015; Wang & Liao, 2008), higher vocational education is still at the bottom of the higher education system (Wang & Wang, 2022; Yuan & Wang, 2021). Unless higher vocational college leaders, especially principals, can implement an effective leadership style that leads teachers to learn in PLC and strengthen teachers' WE, which directly impacts student achievement (Goldring et al., 2009; Wright et al., 2023), the quality of education cannot be improved, and society's prejudice against higher vocational education cannot be changed easily (Durden & Yang, 2006; Hao & Pilz, 2021; Velde, 2009).

According to Murphy et al. (2006), learning-centered leadership (LCL) is the catalyst in promoting school reforms. However, LCL is a relatively new concept (Hammad et al., 2021; Kilinc et al., 2020), especially in China (Wang, 2016). Zhang and Koshmanova (2020) pointed out that due to China's Confucian culture and test-oriented educational environment, Chinese school leadership styles are mostly authority-oriented, which inhibits the development of LCL. Empirical studies on LCL in China are still limited (Hallinger & Bryant, 2013; Liu & Luo, 2015; Walker et al., 2015). Therefore, conducting research in this field is significant as it helps school leaders better understand their role in leading the learning process in schools to promote school reform and student achievement (Poom-Valickis et al., 2022), especially in vocational education.

Meanwhile, substantial research suggests that professional learning community (PLC) can positively influence teacher professional development and instructional practice (Vescio et al., 2008). PLC is recognized as the "best hope for school reform" (Tai & Omar, 2021). However, according to Zhang et al. (2016), several factors impede the implementation of PLCs in China, such as the hierarchical school system, ineffective school leadership, heavy workloads, unfavourable accountability policies, and insufficient funding and resources, all of which may lead to teachers' lack of motivation to participate in PLC. Additionally, most of the current research on PLC has been conducted in Western settings (Zhang & Yuan, 2020), and

only a few empirical studies examined PLC effects on teachers in China (Wang, 2016; Zhang & Sun, 2019; Zhang et al., 2016). Therefore, it is imperative to conduct studies to examine the effect of PLC, especially in vocational colleges in China, as sociocultural factors can shape and change PLC in specific contexts (Stoll et al., 2006).

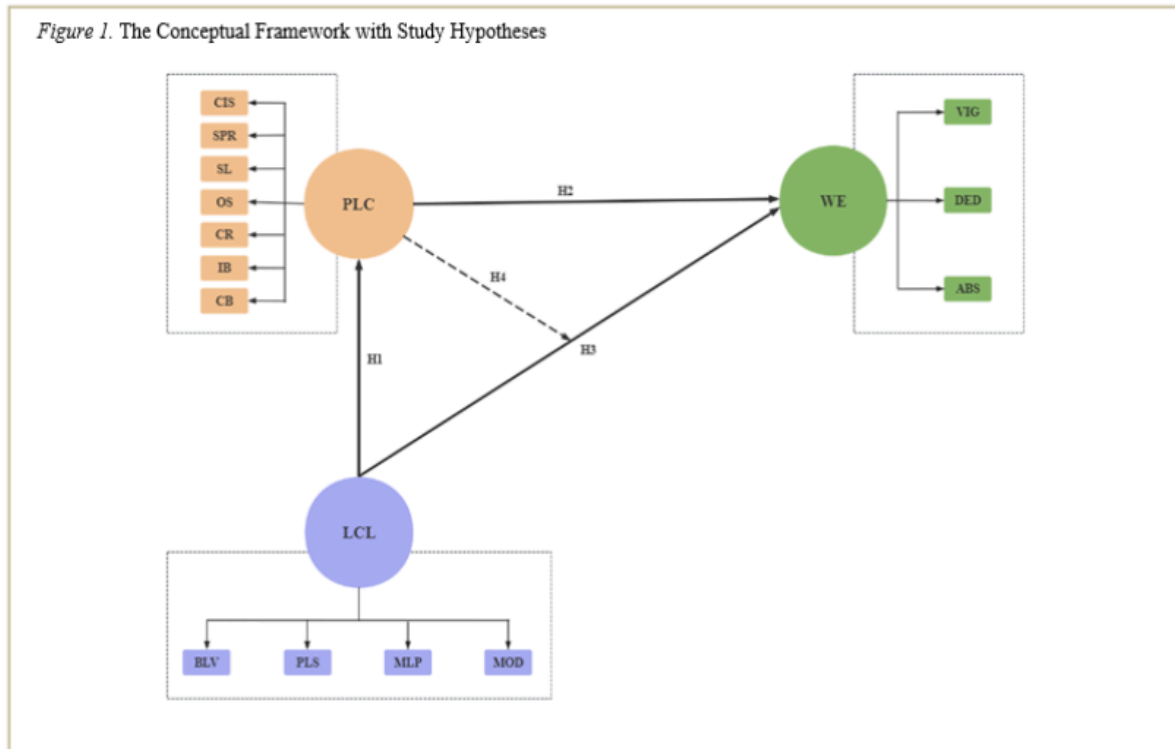
On the other hand, research shows that teachers' high work engagement can improve education quality (Xie, 2021) and positively impact personal and organizational development (Bakker et al., 2007). Notwithstanding growing evidence suggests that teachers' work engagement (WE) affects teaching and learning outcomes, the theoretical and empirical research on teacher WE remain insufficient (Perera et al., 2018). Most studies focus on WE of physicians and other healthcare workers (Fute et al., 2022), and only limited research on the teachers' WE in higher vocational colleges in China (Zhang, 2019). The evolving context of China's high vocational education system makes it necessary to investigate the WE are influencing mechanisms and how to strengthen teachers' WE to help Chinese high vocational education achieve the goal of building reform-led, development-supporting, Chinese-characterized, world-level higher vocational schools and professionals (Cai et al., 2022).

According to Leshem and Trafford (2007), a conceptual framework contributes to the coherence of the research by providing traceable links among theories, strategy, design, fieldwork, and significance. As shown in Figure 1, the conceptual framework of this study is confined to three latent variables and 14 indicators:

Latent variable 1 (independent variable): Learning-Centered Leadership (LCL), which is explained by four dimensions, namely *Building a Learning Vision*, *Providing Learning Support*, *Managing the Learning Programme*, and *Modelling*;

Latent variable 2 (mediating variable): Professional Learning Community (PLC), which is explained by seven dimensions, namely *Collective Inquiry and Sharing*, *Shared Purpose and Responsibility*, *Supportive Leadership*, *Organizational Structure*, *Collaborative Relationship*, *Institutional Barriers (negative)*, and *Cultural Barriers (negative)*;

Latent variable 3 (dependent variable): Work Engagement (WE), which is explained by three dimensions, namely *Vigor*, *Dedication*, and *Absorption*.



Note. LCL=Learning-Centered Leadership; PLC=Professional Learning Community; WE=Work Engagement; BLV=Building a Learning Vision; PLS=Providing Learning Support; MLP=Managing the Learning Programme; MOD=Modelling; CIS=Collective Inquiry and Sharing; SPR=Shared Purpose and Responsibility; SL=Supportive Leadership; OS=Organizational Structure; CR=Collaborative Relationship; IB=Institutional Barriers; CB=Cultural Barriers; VIG=Vigor; DED=Dedication; ABS=Absorption

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework of the Relationships of LCL, PLC, and WE

LCL refers to a process of influence whereby school leaders develop a common learning vision and offer favourable conditions to motivate, direct, and support professional learning activities to improve learning outcomes for school and personal development. The principals organize, manage, monitor, and implement a collection of learning programmes to increase teachers' instructional knowledge and skills to achieve the desired learning results. In addition, school leaders devote themselves to learning activities and act as role models for others.

PLC is a school-wide culture of collaborative learning to enhance teacher learning and student achievement. It is a robust approach comprising a group of teachers with a common vision and responsibility to collectively investigate and share instructional practices to improve their professional knowledge and competencies for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Developing a healthy PLC necessitates that school leaders provide guaranteed support such as procedures and policies, time and space, funds, facilities, and resources.

WE refers to an individual's positive, energetic, fulfilling, and devoted cognitive, emotional, conscious, and behavioural state toward their work. Work-engaged employees typically have zest, passion, and clear self-directed objectives regarding their work, appreciate and are immersed in what they do, and can overcome any obstacles to accomplish a task they believe is meaningful. It is not a transient but rather a lasting and pervasive condition of a person.

The underpinned theories or models that support this study are Learning-Centered Leadership Model (Liu et al., 2016), Communities of Practice Theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), Work

Engagement Model (Schaufeli et al., 2002) (for the three variables respectively), Social Learning Theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977) (for the relationship between Learning-Centered Leadership and Professional Learning Community), and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) (for the relationship between Professional Learning Community and Work Engagement)

Based on these concepts and in the context of Higher Vocational Colleges in the Guangdong Province of China, five research objectives are developed, i.e., to investigate whether i) there is a significant relationship between Learning-Centered Leadership and Professional Learning Community; ii) there is a significant relationship between Professional Learning Community and Work Engagement; iii) there is a significant relationship between Learning-Centered Leadership and Work Engagement; iv) there is a significant mediating effect of Professional Learning Community between the causal relationship of Learning-Centered Leadership and Work Engagement, and v) Professional Learning Community serves as a total mediator between the causal relationship of Learning-Centered Leadership and Work Engagement among the teachers at Higher Vocational Colleges in the Guangdong Province of China.

The study's significance comprises both theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical contributions, firstly, this study extends the existing literature on LCL, PLC, and WE in China, while Western leadership theories have largely disregarded the issue of their applicability and relevance in China (Wang, 2016). Secondly, this study validates the relationship between LCL and PLC; and PLC and WE, and thus will provide new insight into the above relationships. Thirdly, this study explains how LCL facilitates teachers' learning and engagement in the workplace through PLC as a mediator, providing a novel explanatory mechanism for how LCL enhances WE of higher vocational teachers in China.

Apart from the theoretical perspective, the study can also provide us with some practical contributions. Firstly, the study will offer practical information and guidelines for training centres of school principals and teachers in China to enhance their professional growth effectively. Secondly, this study will provide valuable information to school leaders on improving their LCL effectiveness and thus better promoting the school's sustainable development in China. Thirdly, the findings will provide new insights for policymakers and practitioners to advance a comprehensive understanding of how LCL can be an effective "path" to achieve faculty professional development and thus influence teachers' engagement in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Learning-Centered Leadership; Professional Learning Community; Work Engagement; higher vocational college

**PGRC – 133**

**The Practicum of Preservice Teacher in Training Professional Competence for Early Childhood Education Major Course in Changsha, China**

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Internationally, there is growing interest in assessing teacher competence prompted by demand for quality assurance and for greater recognition of the teaching profession (Schreuder, 1985). Growing emphasis on competence-based training is also increasing demand for assessing teacher competence. In 1998, the Ministry of Education in Belgium reached out to the teacher training institute, expressing their desire to incorporate specific competencies into teacher training programs. The objective was to establish a clear professional profile and outline the fundamental skills required for teachers (Struyven & De Meyst, 2010). Whereas (Ooyik, Lerner, & Pitts, 2021) clarified that the relationship between preservice teachers and their mentor teachers not only facilitated the development of teacher competencies but also played a crucial role in it. Specifically, a number of participants emphasized that they acquired vital skills such as actively engaging students, effectively pacing their lessons, differentiating instruction, and creating captivating lessons through observing and emulating the practices of their mentor teachers.

In China the issue of teachers' professional competence has also been the interest for the kindergarten education. China's Ministry of Education issued The Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers, importantly to sets out the direction and the basis for assessment and selection criteria for the training and preparation of early childhood teachers. The basic philosophy of the Professional Standards for Kindergarten Teachers for Trial Implementation states that the issue of enhancing the competencies of early childhood teachers has become obstacle in the further implementation of the Kindergarten Education Guidelines and has hindered the reform and development of a new round of early childhood education.

This study has four objectives: to evaluate the preservice teachers' professional competence before and after teaching practicum in Changsha normal college; to determine whether the preservice teachers' seven dimensions of professional competence is improved after practicum; to identify difficulties the preservice teachers experienced during the practicum in implementing the seven dimensions of the teaching professional competence for kindergarten children; to discover mentor opinions of preservice teachers' performance during the practicum experience.

This research adopts the method of mixed-methods study includes quantitative and qualitative method. To gather quantitative data, researcher will conduct an online survey. The survey will consist of closed-ended questions designed to address our research questions. The objective of this survey is to assess the professional competence of approximately two hundred preservice teachers before and after their teaching practicum at Changsha Normal College. Open ended questions will be included in the questionnaire to seek preservice teachers' difficulties to implement the seven dimensions of the professional competence. Furthermore, qualitative data will be collected to obtain a deeper explanation

to identify difficulties the student teachers experience during the practicum in implementing the seven dimensions of the teaching professional competence for kindergarten children

and to discover 15 mentors' opinions of preservice teachers' performance before and after the practicum experience. The qualitative component of the present study will involve an analysis of data collected from an open-ended survey, interviews, and written reflections. Therefore, the researcher will use a sample size of 200 for the online questionnaires, 30 for the interviews, and 21 participants for the reflective notes. As for sampling technique for reflective notes, the researcher will use proportional quota sampling. Quota sampling (Bandura, 1978) is a non-probability sampling method that relies on the non-random selection of a predetermined number or proportion of units. This is called a quota. There are two types of quota sampling, named proportional quota sampling and non-proportional sampling. In this research, the researcher will first divide the 200 pre-service teachers into different units (high level, medium and low level) according to the survey results of questionnaire and then recruit sample units until reach the quota. The researcher will select 10 percent pre-service teachers from 200 pre-service teachers. Approximately a total of 21 pre-service teachers will be selected in analyzing the reflective notes. The results of selecting the 21 preservice teachers will come from the open-ended questions.

This study will focus on the professional competence development of kindergarten preservice teachers in practicum by evaluating the preservice teacher professional competence before and after teaching practicum in Changsha normal college. It will also determine whether the preservice teachers' seven dimensions of professional competence is improved after practicum. Finally, to discover mentor opinions of preservice teachers' professional competence during and after the practicum experience and provide some recommendations for improving the professional competence course of preservice teachers in colleges of early childhood education major.

**Keywords:** Practicum; Preservice Teacher; Professional Competence; Early Childhood Education Major Course.

**PGRC – 134**

**A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of Regional University English Teachers: Constructing Core Values Education in English Teaching**

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This study explored how English teachers at regional universities conceptualize core values, develop their understanding of core values education, and implement their perspectives and experiences into their teaching practices.

Graduates from universities must shoulder significant responsibility for solving the complicated issues the globe is now facing. Higher education must alter how it views its goals and how it may fulfil its social obligations to have a say in determining the future. Whether to make this modification is a matter of value (Harland & Pickering, 2010). The significance of the value education received by university students is widely acknowledged in all spheres of society (Gao, 2022). Higher education is a values-laden enterprise (Dai et al., 2022). It is written in the Guiding Outline of Developing Core Values throughout the Curriculum (Gao Deng Xue Xiao Ke Cheng Si Zheng Jian She Zhi Dao Gang Yao) that the true meaning of training human talent and an essential part of it, involves comprehensively promoting the development of core values throughout the curriculum, that is embedding those values within the transmission of knowledge and the training of skills, helping students to form a correct worldview, a proper outlook on life and correct values (MOE, 2020). In contemporary times, there has been a notable changing trend in the sociocultural and educational domains, with different values intersect. Core values education is particularly significant as it helps young adults navigate this complex values landscape. English teachers play a pivotal role in negotiating contemporary society's intricate terrain of values. Regional English university teachers may not get their voice heard. Gaining an understanding of their experiences and viewpoints can yield significant insights into the efficacy of core values education, which is a vital component for comprehensive student growth and engagement in civic affairs.

Using a phenomenological approach within a qualitative research design, six participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. Participants conceptualized core values education as moral-related values, confidence in the political system and cultural-related values. Their understanding of core values education was shaped by multiple sources such as lectures in teacher development programs, networking, core values learning projects, political engagement, and involvement in community service. In implementing their perspectives into teaching, teachers utilized experiential learning, incorporated students' ideas into teaching methods, and employed technology. The findings emphasized the need for continuous learning, reflection on teaching practices, utilization of multiple sources, and participation in professional networking.

Nevertheless, several obstacles emerged, such as teachers' insufficient readiness to implement instructional methodologies and students' indifferent attitudes toward acquiring knowledge about the core values education. The research emphasizes the importance of fostering a collaborative relationship between teachers and policymakers to cultivate effective teaching methods, integrate experiential learning opportunities, and strengthen the incorporation of fundamental principles within the curriculum to bolster student

involvement. This study significantly contributes to enhancing the efficacy of core values education in universities located in regional areas.



**PGRC – 135**

**Working in a Public Higher Vocational College in China: The Job Satisfaction of Lecturers**

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**Extended abstract**

The insufficient number of lecturers in higher vocational colleges has become a critical issue given that the teacher-student ratio has reached 1 to 27.89 in 2021, with an increasing trend year by year, while the national standard ratio is set at 18 to 1 (Ministry of Education, PRC, 2022a; Ministry of Education, PRC, 2022b). Considering that lecturers are the most important resources in a college from a quality education standpoint, this is not a good situation to be in which among others calls for attracting new lecturers and retaining the current lecturers to address this issue (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2002, as cited in Slate, 2019, p. 10; Ma & Zhao, 2023). To mitigate this problem, some argued that a crucial factor to consider is the lecturers' job satisfaction (Hijazi et al., 2017; Edith Moloantoa & Dorasamy, 2017). A better understanding of lecturer's job satisfaction is critical and necessary as part of an important measure in formulating plans to help address the shortage of lecturers.

There have been studies in China that investigated the job satisfaction phenomenon in higher vocational college in the last seven years. Some were quantitative studies (Li & Qiu, 2022; Qin, 2021; Ren & Wang, 2020; Shao, 2020; Wang & Xu, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), while one used a mixed methods approach (Xu, 2017). Concerning the one using the qualitative approach, the article reported interviews were used to collect data from a relatively small sample of two full-time lecturers, two administrators, and two counsellors of Jiangxi modern polytechnic college, which is a public higher vocational college (Yang, 2019). Thus, to the best of my knowledge, there was a dearth of qualitative studies on the phenomenon of job satisfaction that focus solely on the experience of the full-time lecturers of public higher education colleges concerning this phenomenon.

Based on this scenario, particularly with regard to the dearth of research on the job satisfaction of public higher vocational college lecturers in China, more so from a qualitative research angle, this research focused on an in-depth understanding of the lecturers' job satisfaction and the issues related to it as grounded in their work environment.

To achieve this aim, the following central question framed this research:

What are the status and influencing factors of job satisfaction of lecturers working in public higher vocational colleges in China?

Based on this central question, the following sub-questions were investigated:

1. What are the views of the lecturers in a public higher vocational college in China regarding their satisfaction with their job?
2. What factors, both personal and work-related, underpin their level of satisfaction with their job?
3. How do these factors interact and vary between different lecturers?

Driven by these research questions, this research focused on an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of job satisfaction from the perspective of the lecturers concerned. The research was underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm, the approach, qualitative, while the design was case study. Case study was chosen because of the recognition of the

complexity of the phenomenon in question within the boundary involved in the investigation. It was employed to gain insight into the experience of eight selected lecturers on the phenomenon of job satisfaction grounded in their work setting.

College A was selected by using purposeful sampling from among the 63 public higher vocational colleges in Henan province, China. The selection criteria of this college were based on (i) a willingness to participate, (ii) years of college opening (iii) stable team of lecturers.

Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling were used for selecting these 11 participants after obtaining access to this selected college on the recommendation of two gatekeepers and two participants. These participants were selected based on (i) years of teaching, (ii) educational level, and (iii) gender, but three of them quit after the data collection was completed. So the sample size was reduced to eight, ranging in age from thirties to fifties in this research.

Data was collected during an 11-month fieldwork period from November 2022 to September 2023 using interview (semi-structured) and document analysis. Due to pandemic restrictions, my fieldwork was divided into three phases. The first three months involved conducting face-to-face interviews with participants. The following three months were dedicated to collecting documents related to topics mentioned by the participants, such as curriculum schedules, promotion policies, and recruitment policies. During the remaining five months, I spent as much time as possible at College A, visiting places where participants often spent their time, such as their offices, classrooms, meeting rooms, practical training classrooms, and cafeteria. I observed and experienced their workplace in the hope of gaining a more authentic and deeper understanding of the participants' perspectives.

Junzhe was one of the participants, who joined College A as a full-time lecturer in 2009 upon completing his Ph.D. He shared considerably with me in two interviews, both lasting over an hour, including personal and work-related details. Among them, he claimed that the factors influencing his job satisfaction, from greatest to least, were economic factors, workload, college policies, college empowerment, respect from the college, students, and society.

Despite his varying degrees of dissatisfaction with these aspects, Junzhe still chose to remain because he only could receive the housing allowances and personal computer benefits promised by College A after becoming a formal lecturer. Afterward, he signed employment contract, lecturer and associate professor appointment contracts, which stipulated a fixed term of service. If the lecturers resign before the term of service expires, they are required to pay damages for breach of contract. Furthermore, the authority for academic position evaluation was delegated from the provincial education department to the educational institutions themselves. This may potentially lead to a decrease in the recognition of academic positions held by lecturers, especially when compared to higher-tier educational institutions. The aforementioned issues have all to some extent impeded his turnover.

During nearly a year of fieldwork, I kept fieldwork journals to record critical incidents in a reflexive way that can contribute to strengthening the quality of data collected as well as the analysis of data to increase the rigour, hence the trustworthiness of the research. As a qualitative researcher, being a research instrument myself, I maintained a reflexive stance to mitigate my own biases and interpretations in trying to understand the emic perspective concerning the phenomenon. Ethical consideration was given priority and instituted through implementing appropriate informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy measures to ensure the interests and rights of the participants are protected for taking part in this research.

The findings of this research, while contributing to filling in the gap and adding to the scholarship in the area of job satisfaction among higher vocational college lecturers particularly in regard to China's context, can also help in assisting key decision-makers in China involved in public higher vocational education to craft better policies to address the issue of staff recruitment and retention to improve the quality of education offered in higher vocational colleges. It would not be surprising if others in similar positions in other countries might also find them useful in their own way as dictated by their particular context.

In addition to these, I encountered something both expected and unexpected: gaining access to the college did not necessarily mean I could obtain the information I needed, such as the number of full-time lecturers at this college, their names, basic information, and turnover situation. I had to rely on gatekeepers' recommendations. The two gatekeepers selected 10 participants based on my selection criteria, I also reached out to two additional participants through recommendations from the participants. It was undeniable that gatekeepers, due to their years of experience at the college, had a deep understanding of the lecturers working there. Still, I believed my choices might have been constrained. Perhaps this was because, as an outsider, I was attempting to understand a public educational institution. My understanding may bring unintended negative consequences to this college, even though I repeatedly stated that the college's name would be anonymized to protect the college as much as possible from being unintentionally harmed by my research.

Every participant is unique. They come with all the experiences they have gone through, which made them who they are. Everyone's real voice deserves to be heard, and this may be the essence of case studies in qualitative research. I have consistently strived to adapt my interviewing approach based on the diverse ages and personalities of each participant. Different participants have provided me with entirely distinct and rich sets of data. For instance, some may exhibit a stronger desire for a stable life due to their experiences during China's unique developmental period. Others might have developed a tendency to prioritize caring for others over themselves, stemming from neglect in their early life environments. Therefore, do not presuppose what participants will answer; instead, think and ask questions following the participants' responses. This may be the charm of a semi-structured interview.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Vocational college lecturers, Teacher attrition, Public higher vocational college

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PGRC – 136

**The cultivation of intercultural communication skills in the teaching of English culture at the university level**

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**Abstract:**

This study article provides a comprehensive analysis of the correlation between the inclusion of English culture in university curricula and the enhancement of intercultural communication skills, with a particular focus on its importance in the field of education. English functions not just as a means of communication, but rather as a conduit that facilitates the interconnection of many cultural groups. At the tertiary education level, it is not advisable for students to prioritize the acquisition of grammar and communication skills. Additionally, it is important to have a comprehensive comprehension of the culture, beliefs, practices, and social background prevalent in English-speaking nations. Cultural education has a significant role in facilitating students' linguistic comprehension and application of acquired knowledge, especially in the context of cross-cultural interactions, hence boosting their fluency in the English language.

The study begins by emphasizing the interdependence of education and English education, seeing them as interconnected components. This statement highlights the fact that acquiring proficiency in English entails more than just understanding grammatical principles and vocabulary. It emphasizes the need for education in order to unearth the cultural subtleties that are intricately woven throughout the language. Students may enhance their talents in English by deepening their grasp and application of the language via familiarizing themselves with cultural aspects. Cultural education need to be seen as an integral element rather than an elective supplement to English instruction.

The German pedagogical methodology used in the instruction of the English language serves as an illustrative case. In Germany, educators have long acknowledged the need of providing children with cultural background information. In Germany, education places emphasis not just on language abilities but also on the instruction of cultural factors. The objective of this strategy is to assist pupils in acquiring English language proficiency beyond just rote learning. It is important to have a comprehensive understanding and genuine appreciation for the cultural variations that exist among English-speaking nations. The German approach demonstrates that the incorporation of academic subjects into language curricula may provide pupils a comprehensive multicultural experience.

The convergence of education and language acquisition is closely interconnected. The pedagogy of language instruction places a significant emphasis on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary. However, it is equally important to include cultural education into the curriculum, as it enables students to comprehend the practical application of these linguistic rules and terms within specific settings. By integrating these two components, educators have the potential to improve students' comprehension of language use. The integration of cultural education enhances the educational experience. This resource offers pupils many views that they should take into account.

In the contemporary day, possessing effective communication skills has become essential. The development of excellent cross-cultural communication skills is of utmost importance for students, given the frequent interactions between individuals from many cultural

backgrounds. Cultural education assumes a significant role in cultivating an appreciation and comprehension of many cultures, so equipping students with the ability to navigate and adapt to a wide range of social environments, while mitigating the occurrence of misunderstandings or conflicts.

In order to augment communicative skills, it is necessary for students to acquire knowledge about the distinctive characteristics of the target language. Every language serves as a reflection of the cultural values, beliefs, and cognitive tendencies of its own society. In order to fully comprehend the meanings inherent in language, it is essential for pupils to possess a thorough awareness of these particular facets. Understanding the importance of respect and humility within a culture significantly contributes to one's comprehension of how communication operates within that language. Furthermore, cultural factors have a significant role in shaping the connotations and implications of language, since they are influenced by the speech patterns shown by persons from various social contexts. It is important for students to exercise caution and awareness of these distinctions in order to mitigate the occurrence of mistakes or misinterpretations during intercultural interactions.

In essence, a correlation may be seen between the cultivation of cultural education within higher education institutions and the promotion of intercultural communication proficiency. This relationship not only fits with the trend of English instruction but also caters to the entire development of pupils. Cultural education not only provides students with a comprehensive understanding and practical use of the English language, but also fosters their capacity to engage in successful cross-cultural communication. This level of expertise allows individuals to effortlessly adjust to various settings and facilitate improved cross-cultural interactions. In the contemporary age of globalization, this particular competency assumes significance in shaping the future success of students, including both their professional and social spheres. Therefore, it is essential for English language education to stress the incorporation of education as a fundamental element, aiming to cultivate persons who possess a comprehensive set of integrated abilities.

**Keywords:** Cultural education; Intercultural communication; Language teaching; Language proficiency; Cross-cultural competence

# **Food Studies & Gastronomy**

**PGRC – 201**

**Comparing the Social Representations of Food Manufacturers and Consumers on Food Safety and Food Risk in China**

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In recent years, China has faced numerous food safety incidents, leading to public outrage and a loss of trust in the food industry. These incidents range from melamine-tainted milk powder to contaminated seafood, and they have highlighted the need for effective risk management in the food supply chain. Risk perception and representation play a crucial role in food safety management. Therefore, this study aims to compare the social representations of enterprises and consumers on food risk in China and to propose a systematic and dynamic risk prediction and governance system.

The issue of food safety has gained increasing attention in China due to several high-profile incidents, including the 2008 milk scandal, where milk products contaminated with melamine caused widespread illness and deaths. These incidents have led to growing public concern about the safety of food products and have increased pressure on both enterprises and the government to improve food safety standards. Social representations refer to the shared beliefs, attitudes, and values that shape how individuals and groups perceive and interpret social phenomena. In the context of food safety in China, enterprises and consumers hold different social representations that influence their behaviors and decision-making regarding food products. Studies have investigated the social representations of food risk and safety among both enterprises and consumers in China. For example, a study by Zhang et al. (2018) explored the social representations of food safety held by managers in the food industry. The researchers found that managers perceived food safety as a crucial factor in maintaining their company's reputation and competitiveness. They also emphasized the importance of implementing strict quality control measures and adhering to regulatory requirements to ensure food safety. Another study by Gao et al. (2018) examined the social representations of food safety among consumers in China. The researchers found that consumers often relied on external cues, such as product labels and government certifications, to assess the safety of food products. They also found that consumers held different perceptions of food safety risks for different types of food products, with higher perceived risks for meat products and lower perceived risks for fruits and vegetables. Overall, these studies highlight the different social representations held by enterprises and consumers on food risk and safety in China. By understanding these representations, it is possible to develop targeted interventions and communication strategies to improve food safety practices and increase consumer confidence in food products.

Moreover, there are different social representations of food risks held by enterprises and consumers, which can affect their perception of food risks and their willingness to address them. Enterprises tend to focus on the economic impact of food risks, while consumers tend to focus on health and safety concerns. These differing perspectives can lead to conflicts



between the two groups and hinder the development of an effective risk management system.

The main objective of this research is to compare the social representations of enterprises and consumers on food risk and safety from the background of China. To achieve this objective, the research will pursue the following specific objectives:

To investigate how enterprises and consumers perceive the four main food risks identified by Jean-Pierre Poulain (health, environmental, social, and cultural risks) in the context of the Chinese food industry.

To propose strategies for developing a systematic and dynamic risk prediction and governance system for food safety in China, based on the findings of the study.

To investigate the social representations of food risk and safety held by enterprises in the food industry in China, including their understanding of food safety risks, quality control measures, and responses to food safety incidents.

To investigate the social representations of food risk and safety held by Chinese consumers, including their understanding of food safety risks, trust in food industry, and behavior in response to food safety incidents.

To compare the social representations of food risk and safety held by enterprises and consumers in China, and to identify common themes and patterns in their representations.

To analyze the implications of the social representations of food risk and safety held by enterprises and consumers in China for food safety governance and consumer protection.

The comparison of the social representations of food risk between Chinese enterprises and consumers is a complex issue that involves several challenges, including different perspectives, cultural differences, communication barriers, trust issues, availability and access to information, and power dynamics. The social representations of food risk among Chinese enterprises and consumers are thus important to understand to address food safety issues effectively. This essay aims to examine the problems associated with comparing the social representations of food risk between Chinese enterprises and consumers.

The selection of 400 participants for the quantitative phase will involve a systematic process to ensure the sample's representativeness. This study will employ a stratified random sampling method, initially dividing the target population into distinct strata or subgroups based on relevant criteria such as industry type for food enterprises and demographics for consumers. Within each stratum, participants will be randomly selected using a systematic random sampling technique. In the qualitative phase, the selection of participants for focus groups will be guided by a purposeful sampling strategy. This approach aims to select participants who possess specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the research objectives. This study will establish predefined criteria based on the study's focus, which may include participants from various sectors of the food industry, different age groups, and diverse cultural

backgrounds. These criteria will help capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences, ensuring the richness and depth of insights. Each focus group will consist of 6

participants for smaller group sizes in qualitative research. Additionally, maintaining a balance between diversity and homogeneity within each focus group will be a priority, allowing participants to relate to one another's experiences while exploring the complexities of food safety representations in the Chinese context.

The implications of this research are profound, transcending academia to influence academia, government, and the food industry. By juxtaposing the social representations of food safety and risk harbored by enterprises and consumers in China, this study provides invaluable insights that can guide targeted strategies for fortifying food safety protocols and engendering consumer trust. Ultimately, this research lays the foundation for a systematic and dynamic risk prediction and governance system, championing food safety and safeguarding public health in China.

**Keywords:** Food safety, Food risk, Social representations, Risk perception

**PGRC – 202**

**The Opportunity of Women in Workforce: The Transformation of Food Habits in  
Gunung Kidul, Indonesia**

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**Extended 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. In 1968, Soeharto built a new department to control fertility, namely National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) that succeeded in decreasing the fertility rate by 5.1 in 1950 to 2.1 in 2022 (data.un.org). At the same time, under Pelita I-VI, he also improved welfare through employment opportunities, including giving women a chance to participate in the workforce. Those combinations, according to Goeltom and Juhro (2013) succeed to accelerate demographic transition faster than or at least the same level as economic development.

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 1987 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. The popularity of having domestic servants was also increasing. Nowadays, women's labor-force participation contributes to transforming from extended to nuclear family structures. Maids are still hired by women in middle-class and wealthy families, but the majority still 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 peasant women who earn a living in the region's main industry, tobacco. 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 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 study employs a mixed method with sequential explanatory design and the findings will be put into perspective with secondary analyses of existing data, mainly those of the IFB. First step is a quantitative approach (N=+370) to exploring transformations of food habits as Tepus district has different cultural and geographical characteristics with selected areas in IFB. Data collection is done through modified questionnaire capturing practices and representations adapted to situations in South East Asia (Poulain et al., 2014) and implemented in the IFB (Khusun et al., 2022). 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 will be added to those already existing. SPSS will be used to analyze these data, with occasional comparative tests. Second step is the qualitative approach based on semi-structured interview (N=25) to further investigate cultural, sociological and economic determinants of food habits. Last step is to merge explanation and interpretation approaches in order to open discussion with existing literature of study. The understanding of modernization consequences on food habits to the construction of social identities and gender roles will contribute to theoretical issues, as it contributes to the debate on food modernization. Second, this research will give empirical contribution through the identification of whether increasing systematic disparities in modernization will increase gender inequality, especially in Southeast Asia context.

**Keywords:** food habits, food modernization, food-related work, gender, inequality

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PGRC – 203

**Influences of Modernization on Sociality, Temporality, Spatiality and Commensality of Eating Habits and Their implications on Body Weight Status: A Study Based on the Malaysian Food Barometer**

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Malaysia has undergone rapid economic development over the years. Due to affluence, there have been changes in lifestyles, occupational patterns, dietary habits and dietary trends amongst Malaysians. Dietary change is one of the main changes due to a rise in living standards. This dietary change is addressed as a nutrition transition, which is frequently associated with a rise in obesity during the transitional phase. To complement the understanding of the risk of obesity from a nutritional standpoint, this study sheds light on the social dimensions of eating habits resulting from food modernisation such as individualization as well as de-synchronisation of the food day amongst Malaysians.

The Malaysian Food Barometer is a cross-sectional and nationally representative survey that collects data on socio-cultural aspects of food such as food norms and practices. Using a comparison of the data sets of Malaysian Food Barometer 1 (2013) and Malaysian Food Barometer 2 (2018), we measure the changes occurring between the two data collections; specifically in norms and practices related to the sociality, temporality, spatiality and commensality of intakes.

From the temporal aspect, we observe a consistent norm and practice of three meals per day and synchronized meal times for these three meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) for both, Malaysian Food Barometer 1 and 2. Taking into consideration the spatial dimension, we found that intakes were sourced from home for Malaysian Barometer 1, which is opposite of the observation from Malaysian Food Barometer 2 where intakes were mostly out-sourced. The intakes for both the data sets were mostly consumed at home, but we notice a slight increase (about 6%) in intake consumption outside for Malaysian Food Barometer 2. Intakes were taken in company for Malaysian Food Barometer 1 whereas they were taken alone for Malaysian Food Barometer 2. While Breakfast and Lunch were seen to be individual meals; Dinner for both the data sets, was taken as a collective meal. There is a positive correlation between Modernization and Body Mass Index ( $P=0.01$ ). An increase in the overweight category among respondents from the low-modernized group leads us to the assumption where people gain weight due to a situation of stress where they are falling into a poorer category.

This study compares the impact of modernization on Malaysian eating habits between Malaysian Food Barometer 1 and Malaysian Food Barometer 2, with the goal of producing useful data for the various entities. First and foremost, these findings will aid the food (service) industry in understanding the dynamics of the food market, as well as public health policymakers in developing policies centred on food habits. Furthermore, academics from various disciplines interested in food consumption and food cultures, encompassing from anthropology and food sociology to medical science and nutrition.

**Keywords:** Malaysia, Obesity, Modernization, Eating habits, Te

**PGRC – 204**

**Feeding the future of the modernizing Nation: kindergarten gatekeepers in the food socialization of children aged 3-6 years in Changsha City, China**

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According to data from the World Obesity Federation, the number of obese children in China has reached 39 million, topping the world list. By 2030, the number of obese children in China is expected to exceed 62 million. In China, about 30% to 60% of obese patients regain their baseline weight within 1 year after treatment, and the rebound rate at 5 years is even close to 100%. 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. An unprecedented level of importance on medical sciences, leading to a medicalization of food habits is observed. However, so far these initiatives have not reversed the increasing prevalence of obesity in Chinese children in children.

In China, almost all children between the ages of 3 and 6 attend kindergartens, where they also have daily lunch. Therefore, the food system in the kindergarten contributes to the daily balance of children's nutritional intake. 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 gates. The kindergarten food system is mainly controlled by kindergarten's food gatekeepers, who function as layers of control over the kindergarten food channel. They are child-care-workers, chefs, and food designers. Models of the transition (Poulain, 2009, 2021) are hermeneutic and posits that the energy intake is primarily determined by dietary patterns, which are determined by socio cultural norms and values. 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 has three objectives: to identify the gap between the social norms of gatekeepers and the actual behaviours of kindergarten children's diets for lunchtime; to 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; to explore the barriers of the kindergarten food gatekeepers in implementing all levels of government on policies health.

This study used a qualitative research approach to study kindergartens in Changsha City, Hunan

Province, China. For the selection of the study sample, the researcher mainly considered the classification and size of kindergartens in Changsha and finally selected 12 kindergartens as the study sample. These study samples covered public kindergartens, model kindergartens, ordinary kindergarten, kindergartens in inner-city districts and out-of-city districts. This study uses the structure of kindergarten children's lunches as an example to study the food gatekeepers and children's lunch diets. The gatekeepers involved in these tasks are included in the study, including caregivers, cooks and food designers. To complete the data collection for this study, the researcher used face-to-face interview and diet photograph method. The Diet photograph method was invented primarily to reduce the error of the "24h dietary recall for estimating method". As this study is qualitative in nature, the researcher has refined this approach. Firstly, the method only photographed the kindergarten food twice times and didn't care about the calorie and nutrient content. The first photograph focuses on the usual state of children's food. The second photograph 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. Secondly, this exercise is carried out the day before the interview. The photographers are pre-school undergraduates who are practising and studying in kindergartens. Finally, there are two uses of this method in this study. The first aspect is that the actual diet structure and quantity of kindergarten food will be collecting. The second aspect will help the gatekeepers to review their actual behaviours in order to obtain more information for the interviews. It is worth mentioning that in addition, during the interview, the interviewees will also identify and evaluate different children's body images to further collect social norms.

In the context of the medicalization of food, these sociological theories and methods are expected to contribute to the identification of the obstacles faced by kindergartens' food system gatekeepers in implementing the Dietary Guidelines for Chinese School-age Children (2022), the Regulations on the Administration of Food Safety and Nutritional Health in Schools, the Measures for the Management of Health Care in Nursery Schools, and the Working Regulations for Kindergartens, the implementing the Measures for the Management of Health Care in Nursery Schools in Hunan Province. In terms of knowledge contribution, 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 will be a purely sociological food study. This kind of research has very few precedents in China. In terms of methods, 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. In terms of indirect contribution, the goal of this study is to help eliminate obesity, which will both make parents more satisfied and children healthier.

**Keywords:** Early childhood nutrition; Kindergarten catering; Gatekeeper theory; Food patterns.



**PGRC – 205**

**University Canteen Food And Student Trust: A Socio-cultural Approach In Shandong**

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University students spend numerous hours a day in the university campus, and many students usually have their three meals a day in the university canteens. However, despite the fact that eating in the university canteen is very convenient and relatively cheap, there are still many students who would never go to the canteen or have chosen not to go to the canteen for meals. Canteens at universities are essential to campus communities since food is a medium through which people can express their cultures and communicate. Cafeterias on university campuses serve a vital role beyond just providing food for students; in addition to cultivating a sense of community and guiding students toward healthy decision-making, they also provide a necessary service. Sallee and Cox (2019) emphasized that campus cafeterias can go above and beyond their traditional role in several ways better to accommodate the changing requirements of today's students. This research project aims to bring to light the students' trust towards the university canteens in Shandong, to promote a better understanding of the quality and safety concerns from the university canteens. Additionally, the purpose of this project is to identify the cultural norms, traditions, and culinary preferences specific to Shandong province that influence students' trust in the food provided by the universities' canteens. This research also intends to identify the level of transparency in terms of information about food sourcing, preparation methods, and food ingredients quality provided by the universities' canteen that affects the trust of the students. The following research questions and hypotheses will be answered based on the finding and the results to evaluate this study: 1. What are the students' level of trust and confidence on the quality and safety concern of the universities' canteen food? Hypotheses: a) Students demonstrate trust in universities canteens' food quality and safety. b) Positive experiences with local food options significantly enhance student trust in canteen food. c) Exposure to diverse local food options has a significant impact on increasing student trust in canteen food. 2. What are the cultural norms, traditions, and culinary preferences specific to Shandong province that influence students' trust and confidence in universities' canteen food? Hypotheses: a) Implementing specific dietary restrictions significantly positively impacts student trust in canteen food. b) Lack of nutritious food choices significantly negatively impacts student trust in canteen food. c) Offering a wide range of options to cater to diverse dietary habits has a significant positive influence on student trust in canteen food. 3. What is the level of transparency in terms of information about food sourcing, preparation methods, and food ingredients quality provided by the university's canteen that affects the trust and confidence of the students? Hypotheses: a) Strong beliefs in food safety systems significantly influence student trust in canteen food. b) Negative experiences regarding food safety issues have a significant negative impact on student trust in canteen food. c) Limited awareness of food safety practices significantly affects student trust in canteen food. The following research objectives are used to answer the research questions and the research aims of this research project: 1. To investigate the students' level of trust on the food quality and safety concern in the universities' canteen food. This objective focuses on examining how Student Trust interacts

with the relationship between individual's beliefs about food safety and the broader societal context. The research evaluates whether differing levels of trust among students contribute to shaping the societal consequences of diverse food safety perceptions. 2. To investigate whether certain cultural foods are expected or preferred by the university students, as well as to examine how the food choices availability affects the students' trust. This objective aims to investigate the role of Student Trust in shaping the relationship between people's preferences for local foods and their effects on society. The objective explores whether variations in trust levels among students impact the societal outcomes of favoring locally sourced food products. 3. To evaluate the extent of which the level of information transparency such as food sourcing, preparation methods, and ingredient quality is given by the university canteens to the students which influences their trust. This objective seeks to determine how the level of information transparency affects the Student Trust on the university canteen and the organization. The objective investigates whether the food sourcing, preparation methods, and ingredient quality influences the Student Trust. In this research project, the research methodology will utilize mixed methods, which are both quantitative and qualitative research methods, in order to answer the research questions and to fulfill the research objectives. A qualitative research approach will enable a platform to gather and analyze the detailed experience and insight into the perspective of students' trust towards the university canteens. The study covers an under research topic in this field of study and it is exploratory in nature which finds the parameters of qualitative research approach to be most fit. A semi-structured interview format and questionnaire surveys have been chosen for data collection for this research. Students from year 1 to year 4 in university and canteen operators are selected to participate in this study. The data analysis approach used for the semi-structured interviews is thematic analysis, which is the usual analysis method for qualitative studies. The data analysis in this dissertation was guided by the six steps approach to thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006), which simplifies organization and description of data concisely in great detail often interpreting various aspects of this research topic. The questionnaire surveys will be using descriptive analysis as it is the most suitable method for large amounts of data to be narrowed down to smaller groups. This study will add to the existing reservoir of knowledge by adopting a socio-cultural perspective to examine the relationship between the foodstuff served in Shandong University cafeterias and students' trust levels. Most studies have been conducted in Western nations. However, China-specific research is scarce. By analyzing the correlation between canteen food and student trust in the Shandong region, significant findings can be derived about the influence of cultural elements on students' cognitive processes and perspectives towards food.

**Keywords:** University canteen, university students, trust, socio-cultural approach

**PGRC – 206**

**Understanding Food Safety Standards Amongst Food Manufacturers in Malaysia: A Socio-Anthropological Perspective**

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**ABSTRACT**

Reports have shown that junk food and processed foods gained popularity amongst Malaysians, with 87% of Malaysians dine out in fast food joints, street food stalls, diners, and cafes, while 76% of Malaysians orders fast food via food delivery platforms. According to Eng. CW., et.al (2022), 68.1% of Malaysian B40 adults are consuming sugar-sweetened beverages at least once a week, including commercially packed ready-to-drink beverages, sugar-added self-prepared drinks, and premixed drinks. Another common processed food – bread and baked goods recorded 52.9% of survey respondents consuming them at least once a week. Malaysia's food manufacturers have a significant contribution to the country's economy by showing an increasing growth in the number of food manufacturers in the food market throughout the years. Malaysia is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and ranked the second trading partner with Asia, and 23rd largest trading partner with the European Union. Malaysia is also the 6th largest exporter in the globe for pepper and its related products. In Malaysia, the main regulators and enforcers in food safety monitoring are Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, the local authorities, and the customs department. The enforcement of the Food Act 1983 and the Food Regulations 1985 started on 1st October 1985, with the aim to protect the public health from food related hazards and fraud, and to promote safety in handling and distribution of high-quality food.

The importance of food safety issues is not to be neglected as it directly affects the public's health, reassurance of consumers' confidence, and the recognition of the food industry and its products internationally. Being a developing country and emerging as a renowned food exporter in the global level, Malaysia still faces challenges and improving its implementation of food safety standards amongst its food manufacturers. The objective of this research is to understand the current food safety regulatory compliance status amongst the food manufacturers in Malaysia and the role and involvement of international organizations such as WHO, FAO, WTO in food safety policies and standards in Malaysia. The socio-anthropological aspects and factors influencing food safety practices in the food manufacturing sector in Malaysia are also examined and being recognized in this research project.

This research project critically links the contemporary issue with the food safety standards in Malaysia, as well as the relevant literature reviews to support the research areas, and the qualitative research methodology to assist in meeting the research questions and research objectives. The theoretical framework related to the food safety standards in this essay is anthropology and sociology, where we look deeper into the cultural and social dimensions of food practices and beliefs in societies, as well as the social dynamics of food, as an example, the food production, distribution, and consumption of processed foods in Malaysia. Transnationalism and food mobility are also the paradigms related to the topic as the researcher aims to look into the research topic on food safety in Malaysian manufacturers.

In this research project, a mixed method study which consists of qualitative and quantitative research methods are being utilized. There are 4 categories that have been categorized through the mixed methods research: 1) Literature Review, 2) Ethnographic Method, 3) Questionnaire Surveys, and 4) Analysis of Documents. The qualitative research method consists of semi-structured interview sessions with the selected participants from selected food manufacturing companies in Malaysia. The selected participants will be from different hierarchical levels in the company in order to get data from different perspectives in an organization. For the data analysis section, thematic analysis will be utilized for the research methods on literature review, ethnographic method, and analysis of documents, whereas the descriptive analysis method will be used for analyzing data gathered from the questionnaire surveys. The Literature Review section consists of the researcher scanning through the food safety standards and policies that have been presented both in Malaysia and in the global market. Currently, the widely implemented food safety standards in Malaysia amongst the food manufacturing companies are MeSTI, HACCP, GMP, and HALAL certification. These certifications and its bodies will be deeply studied by the researcher in order to gain insights on the protocols and practices before proceeding to creating questions for questionnaire surveys and semi-structured interviews. As for Ethnographic Method, the researcher will perform some fieldwork observation in the food manufacturers' plants, as well as selecting candidates from these plants to participate in semi-structured interviews. The Ethnographic research method has its root deeply planted in the sociology and anthropology field of studies as it often generates new insights for the research by engaging in interactive and be close to the participants in its natural setting. The questionnaire surveys will be utilized in the quantitative research methods in order to gain insights from a larger sampling group of their perception about the food safety standards and practices in food manufacturing companies in Malaysia. As questionnaire is one of the most widely used tools in quantitative data collection method, it is designed to obtain relevant information from the targeted group of participants and to analyze the trend of the research subject. Lastly, it is essential and significant to analyze and review the documents on food safety regulations and policies implemented by the government and to relate its relevance to the manufacturing procedures and processes, as well as to relate to the international level's food safety policies and standards. As the researcher aims to explore the food safety standards and policies amongst Malaysian food manufacturers, it is crucial to analyze the relevant documentation in depth in order to understand the protocols and the hierarchies involved in the decision-making process.

In a nutshell, this research project outlined the current situation of the issues faced by Malaysia in the field of food safety, and the importance of the researcher studying the current implementation of the food safety practices amongst the food manufacturers in the country. Transnationalism and food mobility in the country is being studied and examined, with its relevance to food safety systems in Malaysia such as HACCP, GMP, MeSTI, and HALAL. This research project will shed light on the socio-anthropological factors and aspects that are influencing or dominating the food safety practices in Malaysia food manufacturing industries.

**KEYWORDS:** Food Safety, Transnationalism, Food Mobility, HACCP, HALAL, Ma

**PGRC – 207**

**The Impact of Geographical Indications (GI) on Risk Perception in Malaysia  
According to Ethnicities and Identities**

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**Extended Abstract**

Modernisation has brought many changes to the eating habits of Malaysia. Shifts from under nutrition to 'overnutrition', changes in eating structures such as individualisation and changes in food production and preparation have appeared in a short span of time (J. P. Poulain, 2018a; J. P. Poulain et al., 2022). The multicultural society in Malaysia is unique due to its history and diverse ethnic composition. From the Nusantara era to colonialisation to post-colonialism and independence, Malaysia has already received many different influences in its food and way of life. Yet, as the people from varying ethnic backgrounds live together mostly in peace, there is separation due to policies that started in the British colonial period that created visible borders and boundaries between the different ethnicities, especially the three main groups; Malay, Chinese and Indian. As such, ethnic background is a huge marker for identity.

However a unique phenomenon can be seen where individuals engage in 'ethnic oscillation'; the self-identification towards different ethnic groups depending on which would benefit them for the moment (Nagata, 1974). Food and food habits are a strong marker of group membership and identity other than language and religion (Perry, 2017; Sua & Ngah, 2013). Malaysians still choose their food from an ethnic lens (Lee, 2017).

Sociologists Beck and Giddens talk about risk society that is a society increasingly preoccupied with the future, and also with safety, which generates the notion of risk, and a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself (Beck, 1992), (Giddens, 1991). Indeed, in recent years in Malaysia, the perception of risk towards food has evolved; not only the increased awareness of physical contamination such as ingredients but also symbolic risk such as not allowing certain words in the names of food that has halal certification. People now consider more factors than previous generations in the process of selecting food.

Other than the traditional food safety and food security concerns, more controversial issues have emerged such as the use of "genetically modified products", animal "cruelty", as well as junk food and its purported connections with obesity development (J. P. Poulain, 2018b). Hence, other than the already complex ethnic cultural backgrounds to consider in their food choices and aversions, these factors are added into the mix. Modernisation has a major impact on the evolution of food habits; globalisation, the overabundance of food, technological advances, change in eating practices such as destructuralisation and many more have brought about its own set of new perceived risks. The modern eater faces fluctuating and contradictory dietetic discourses (J.-P. Poulain, 2017).

Amid this modernised state, the 'slow food movement' started gaining traction in some parts of the world to encourage going back to sustainable traditional methods of growing and producing food, and to protect culturally significant food (Jones et al., 2003).

It is suggested that a certification which guarantees a product's place of origin, production process for example adherence to traditional methods, may reduce this perception of risk.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the effects of Geographical Indications (GI) certification in the alleviation of risk perception towards food.

**Keywords:** modernisation, ethnicity, identity, food choices, food risk

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**PGRC – 209**

**The Feasibility of Substituting White Rice with Red Rice in the Malaysian Diet: A  
Socio-cultural Perspective**

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**Introduction**

In Malaysia, the prevalence of diabetes has risen significantly in recent years (Institute of Public Health, 2020). White rice is consumed by 84.2% Malaysians daily (Poulain et al., 2014), and it has been the main carbohydrate source in the Malaysian diet. Despite that, a dose-response relationship between white rice intake and diabetes risk was reported, with a stronger association observed among Asian populations compared to their Western counterparts (Hu et al., 2012; Ren et al., 2021).

Unlike white rice, the unmilled red rice possesses anti-inflammatory and anti-diabetic characteristics, suggesting its therapeutic properties for chronic diseases (Meera et al., 2019; Se et al., 2016). While the substitution of white rice with red rice may be a plausible solution, there is a lack of population-level red rice intervention studies to study its feasibility among Malaysians. Previous studies have reported low consumer acceptance of red rice among Asians due to its undesirable sensory properties (Juemanee et al., 2018; Sudha et al., 2013). The habituation and strong cultural preference to white rice due to long-standing traditions were also regarded as major barriers to the substitution among rice-eaters (Adebamowo et al., 2017; Gyawali et al., 2022; Helmyati et al., 2020).

Research exploring the influence of socio-cultural norms related to rice consumption, and one's involvement in household rice gatekeeper activities are essential to understand the feasibility of red rice substitution in the Malaysian diet. This study therefore aims to explore Malaysians' consumption practices related to rice, the socio-cultural determinants of Malaysian's rice consumption (RC) practices and household rice gatekeeper (HRG) involvement, and the facilitators and barriers to the substitution of white rice (WR) with red rice (RR) as a staple food in the Malaysian diet.

**Methodology**

The research framework used is a combination of concepts from the theories of practice (Warde, 2005; 2014; 2016), the Health Belief Model (Hochbaum et al., 1952), Berlyne's two-factor model (1970), the gatekeeping theory (Lewin, 1947a; 1947b; 1951), and the Omnivore's Paradox (Fischler, 1988; Rozin, 1976). Embedded in a six-month intervention trial, this study utilized a sequential mixed-methods design: quantitative data (sociodemographic and household characteristics, RC practices, and HRG involvement) were collected during screening for the trial, followed by qualitative focus group discussion (FGD) conducted at the end of the intervention. The intervention subjects were randomised into either the WR or RR treatment. Based on the subjects' socio-demographic characteristics, and consumption of



RR throughout the intervention period, selected RR subjects were invited to join the FGD. Data saturation was assessed using Guest et al.'s approach (2020).

The quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires. The HRG involvement index was created to demonstrate the subjects' involvement in rice purchase (RP) and meal preparation (MP). Subjects' RC practices were collected using an extended 3-day diet record (3DDR). Descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses (chi-square test and one-way ANOVA) were performed. Statistical significance was defined as  $p < 0.05$  and  $SR > +1.7$  or  $SR < -1.7$  for standardised residuals (SR). All FGDs were audio- and video-recorded, the recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated (if conducted in Malay). The transcripts were analysed using the open coding method, and emerging themes were identified using the theoretical thematic analysis approach. The diet transition from WR to RR was understood through the application of Desjeux (1996)'s four levels of observation (psychosensorial, individual, microsocial and macrosocial).

## Results

455 subjects (186 diabetic, 269 healthy) were included for data analysis. Majority of them were females (65.9%), aged between 40 to 49 (31.0%), Malays (68.6%). Most of them consume polished white rice (PWR) at home (51.2%), followed by specialty white rice (SWR) (31.2%), mixed rice (MR) (24.9%) and lastly, unmilled rice (UR) (2.6%). 91.2% of the subjects shared rice with their household members. From the diet record, majority of the RCs was PWR (72.5%) and the least was UR (2.7%). 50.1% of the recruited subjects were involved in both RP and MP for their households.

Age group and ethnicity have significant association with most RC variables. An over-representation of subjects aged between 50 to 60 was observed among subjects who abstain from eating PWR ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $SR = +3.3$ ) and subjects who consume UR exclusively ( $p = 0.047$ ,  $SR = +2.3$ ) in a day. Malay subjects preferred PWR ( $SR = +1.9$ ), Chinese subjects preferred UR ( $SR = +3.1$ ) or MR ( $SR = +3.4$ ), and Indians preferred SWR ( $SR = +2.2$ ) in their households ( $p < 0.001$ ). Findings from daily RC showed that Malay subjects who do not consume PWR at all were under-represented ( $p = 0.004$ ,  $SR = -1.8$ ), and Chinese subjects who consume UR only were over-represented ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $SR = +4.6$ ). This shows that older or Chinese subjects are more likely to substitute PWR with RR in their diet. An under-representation of subjects who consume a different type of rice or do not share their rice with other household members was observed among those who were diabetic ( $p = 0.013$ ,  $SR = -1.8$ ), Malays ( $p = 0.002$ ,  $SR = -1.8$ ), married ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $SR = -3.7$ ), staying with their spouse and/or children ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $SR = -4.1$ ) or family, parents and/or relatives ( $p = 0.001$ ,  $SR = -3.2$ ), and residing in a household with four or more members ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $SR = -3.1$ ). These subjects may be more susceptible to the influence of socio-cultural norms related to rice within the household. Subjects who were males ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $SR = +1.8$ ), Indians ( $p = 0.009$ ,  $SR = +2.4$ ), aged between 18 to 29 ( $p = 0.011$ ,  $SR = +2.8$ ), single ( $p = 0.032$ ,  $SR = +1.9$ ), or living with their family, parents, or relatives ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $SR = +2.8$ ), were over-represented among subjects who were not involved in HRG activities. These subjects rely more on other household members for RC decisions. Subjects with higher HRG involvement might be better suited to lead a change from consuming PWR to RR in the household.

For the qualitative study, eight FGDs were conducted: four with 20 healthy participants, four with 17 diabetic participants. 24 participants were females and 13 were males, with majority of them aged between 40 to 49 (32.5%). Most of them are Malays (64.9%), followed by Chinese (21.6%) and Indians (13.5%). 51.4% of these participants were involved in both RG and MP for the household. 17 themes emerged based on the four distinct levels of observation (Desjeux, 1996). Themes observed at the psychosensorial level included: 1.'acceptance of sensory properties', 2.'previous experience', 3.'curiosity to try', 4.'pairing with favourite side dishes', 5.'satisfaction' and 6.'repeated exposure'. At the individual level, participants expressed that their 1.'nutrition knowledge', 2.'personal experience', and 3.'self-efficacy', has affected their dietary shift from WR to RR. At the microsocial level, participants' 1.'family dynamics', 2.'peer support', 3.'rice gatekeeper' and 4.'dining partners' reactions' played a role in influencing their acceptance of RR as a staple food. Finally, from a macrosocial perspective, 1.'age', 2.'culture', 3.'habituation' and 4.'social representation of rice', were regarded as prominent influences to the diet transition.

### Conclusion

At present, the substitution of polished white rice with unmilled red rice as a staple food in the Malaysian diet remains a challenge. This study has observed significant associations between age group and ethnicity, RC practices as well as HRG involvement. Findings from FGDs further emphasized the importance of consuming the same type of rice with household members to facilitate the dietary shift from white rice to red rice in the household.

### Implications

Interventions that target people with greater HRG involvement may be effective to encourage a shift towards RR consumption at the household level. Upon successful dietary shift, healthier dietary habits may be instilled, halting the rise in diabetes prevalence in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** red rice, dietary short, socio-cultural norms, diabetes

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# Media and Communication

**PGRC – 301**

**Decoding Feminine Roles: A Thematic Analysis of Gender Archetypes in  
Female-Oriented Magazine Advertisements**

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In an era where media's omnipresence is undeniable, the role of advertisements as agents of socialization has become an exigent topic warranting immediate attention. Advertisements, the ubiquitous companions of modern life, are far more than mere tools for selling products as they serve as cultural blueprints, subtly imparting societal norms, and values (Maheshwari et al., 2014). The portrayal of women in media, particularly through advertisements in female-oriented magazines, has ramifications that extend from individual self-perception to collective social attitudes (Barthel, 1989). The urgency of understanding this nexus is amplified by the slow pace of change in dismantling archaic gender roles, even amidst significant feminist activism and societal shifts towards gender equality (Bettany et al., 2010). This study aims to dissect this intricate web, focusing on the portrayal of feminine roles in advertisements featured in four widely read female-oriented magazines.

The research utilizes the method of thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data, by categorically studying recurring themes present in a set of text. Thematic analyses help a researcher understand their selected data from various angles and determine which angle to pursue. Any data set can be shown to exhibit patterns, but to find significant information, these patterns must be further studied on their relation to the objective of the research. For this study, promotional advertisements across four different women's magazines were examined, to identify commonality and contradictions in themes between these publications. Hence, the objectives of the steps followed, were to associate themes to data by finding common and contrasting themes of topics, ideas, and patterns used in advertisements across four different women's lifestyle magazines. Data collected comprises a total of 67 print advertisements from four different consumer magazine publications, all primarily targeted towards female audiences. To make comparative analysis of the media and societal state, magazines sampled were from the February 2020 edition, from four different foreign publications, on the genre of women's lifestyle. The magazines in concern are First for Women, Woman and Home, Her World and Good Housekeeping, all revolving around female-oriented topics, ranging from cooking to beauty and health, representing lifestyle ideals of the 21st century female audience. The selection of the February 2020 data is motivated by several key factors that make it an intriguing choice. This month traditionally features content related to love, self-care, and beauty due to Valentine's Day, offering an opportunity to study how advertisers strategically engage with these themes. Additionally, the data from diverse foreign publications provides a cross-cultural perspective on women's lifestyle ideals. This choice also serves as a valuable baseline for comparing how societal norms and media portrayals may have evolved over time, especially right before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings unearthed four distinctive categories of products being advertised: Clothing and Cosmetic Products, Business and Travel Products, Household and Leisure Products, and Healthcare Products. The prevalence of Clothing and Cosmetic Products is especially telling. While these ads often steer clear of overtly objectifying women, they set formidable standards around beauty and physical appearance. The insidious message here is the

perpetuation of an 'ideal type' of womanhood, often rooted in unattainable beauty standards like slim figures and youthful skin. Business and Travel Products, on the other hand, reveal an interesting dynamic. They seem to recognize and celebrate the increasing financial prowess of women, albeit targeting a specific socio-economic demographic. Household and Leisure Products often portray women as the caretakers of the home, subtly reinforcing traditional roles. Healthcare Products generally serve as the outlier, presenting a more neutral stance. The archetypes emerging from these ads are equally revealing. The 'social companion' archetype represents a positive shift away from hypersexualized portrayals, but also perpetuates beauty standards. The 'employer/consumer' archetype paints a picture of a financially independent woman, but perhaps represents an unrealistic ideal for many. The 'housewife/mother' archetype, which has seen little evolution over the years, continues to dominate the domestic sphere, raising questions about societal expectations. The 'outlier' archetype, mainly in Healthcare Products, presents a more gender-neutral approach but misses the opportunity to address women-specific health issues. Furthermore, this study serves as a mirror reflecting the complex landscape of gender roles as portrayed in media. Advertisements, while adapting to evolving social norms influenced by feminism and economic shifts, inadvertently solidify certain gender roles. The implications are manifold: on the one hand, they provide insight into the slow pace of change in societal attitudes, and on the other, they serve as a catalyst for conversations around gender equality. Therefore, the study holds significant value not just as an academic endeavour but as a crucial societal critique. By dissecting the nuanced ways in which advertisements both reflect and shape gender roles, the research bridges the gap between commercial interests and societal impact. In doing so, it adds a vital layer of understanding to the ongoing discourse around gender roles, societal norms, and media's role in shaping them, making it an indispensable contribution to the field.

The study, while comprehensive, has its limitations. For instance, the focus on female-oriented magazines may not capture the full spectrum of feminine roles portrayed across various media platforms. Moreover, the demographic reach of these magazines tends to skew towards middle to upper-middle-class women, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope to include diverse media forms and audiences to provide a more holistic view. Ethical considerations form an integral part of this discourse. Media stakeholders, including advertisers and publishers, bear a moral responsibility to portray gender roles in a balanced manner. The study serves as a call to action for these stakeholders to evaluate and reconsider how their content contributes to shaping societal norms. They should be cautious not to perpetuate harmful stereotypes, and instead, strive to reflect the diversity and complexity of modern gender roles. In conclusion, this study not only contributes to the academic discourse on gender roles in media but also has far-reaching societal implications. It exposes the nuanced ways in which advertisements perpetuate certain norms while challenging others, thus serving as both a reflection and a shaper of societal values. In dissecting these complexities, the research bridges the divide between commercial interests and societal impact, emerging as an indispensable asset in the quest for a more equitable society.

**Keywords:** Gender roles; media portrayal; advertisements; societal norms; media representation

**PGRC – 302**

**A Framing Perspective: A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Visual Elements and Dimensions in Memes**

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**Abstract:**

This study examines how framing and visual aspects affect students' meme perception and response. A phenomenological technique was used to interview nine Mapúa University students. Meme elements were identified and categorized using Erving Goffman's Framing theory (1974). The results show how Mapúa University students responded to school-related memes based on framing and visuals. Memes were relatable, creating a sense of community. According to the study, a meme's humor comes from the audience's ability to relate to its context, image, or message. The memes' framing affected emotions. Images and text in memes had different effects. Images produced humor, while text grabbed attention. According to the study, the messenger/content creator-audience interaction is crucial to meme context and meaning. Additionally, meme-framing elements can spread misleading information through pictures, text, messenger, and context manipulation. This study shows how meme framing and visual aspects affect students' responses, stressing relatability, comedy production, and meme construction hazards.

**Keywords:** Framing, visual elements, perception, memes, students' responses



**PGRC – 303**

**Exploring Motivation of Social Media Influencer (SMI) As A Profession**

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**Abstract:** Limited research has been conducted to comprehensively understand the motivational factors that drive individuals to pursue a career as social media influencers (SMIs). While some studies have explored external motivational factors influencing this choice, a conspicuous gap exists in the literature regarding internal motivational factors specific to the realm of social media influencing. Despite the burgeoning popularity of social media as a platform for personal branding and content creation, the intrinsic motivations underpinning individuals' decisions to become SMIs remain relatively unexplored. This research addresses this gap by delving into the deeper psychological and personal drivers propelling the aspirations of those who choose SMI as a profession. Thus, there is a pressing need for a more nuanced examination of the internal motivations that underlie the decision to become a social media influencer.

To address the research objectives, a mixed-methods approach was employed. Qualitative research was conducted through a thorough literature review and the use of semi-structured questionnaires administered to 11 social media influencers, allowing for in-depth exploration of intrinsic motivational factors. Concurrently, external motivational factors were identified. Subsequently, a quantitative approach was adopted to statistically validate the two-dimensional SMI motivational construct using a population-based survey of 150 individuals. Data analysis involved multiple regression, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess the validity of the constructed model and test hypotheses related to motivational factors influencing SMIs.

The findings of this study reveal a multifaceted landscape of intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors driving individuals to pursue careers as social media influencers. Internal motivations, such as passion for content creation, desire for self-expression, and the need for creative freedom, emerged as strong determinants of this career choice. External motivations, including monetary gains, fame, and social validation, also played a significant role. The statistical validation of the two-dimensional SMI motivational construct confirms the complexity of influencers' motivations.

**Keywords:** *Intrinsic Motivations, Extrinsic Motivations, Social Media influencers Motivations and Social Media Influencer as a Job*

**Introduction**

In the digital age, the rise of social media influencers has revolutionised the way brands connect with their target audiences (Nurhandayani, Syarief and Najib, 2019). With the ever-growing popularity of platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter, these individuals wield significant power in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions (Goel and Diwan, 2022). Social media influencers have become the modern-day trendsetters, capable of catapulting brands to unprecedented heights or,

conversely, causing detrimental damage to their reputations. This paradigm shift in marketing has given rise to a dynamic and symbiotic relationship between influencers and brands, where authenticity, relatability, and engagement reign supreme. In this context, exploring how social media influencers are impacting brands becomes an imperative task in understanding the intricacies of contemporary consumer culture and the evolving landscape of digital advertising.

In today's digitally connected world, social media influencers have become a powerful and influential force. These modern-day professionals have carved out a distinct niche in the digital landscape, leveraging their online presence to sway opinions, spark trends, and forge powerful connections with their followers (Brian J. Taillon *et al.*, 2020). Social media influencers are individuals who have established a significant and loyal audience through their expertise, charisma, creativity, or relatability. They are not just ordinary users; they have mastered the art of leveraging social media to captivate and engage their followers. There are many extrinsic and intrinsic motivations behind social media influencers. Extrinsic motivations include monetary benefits, rewards, and inauthenticity is thought to result from extrinsic reasons. While authenticity is thought to result from internal motivations including passion, doing it because they enjoy it and motivation of Content Creation Behaviour of Young Adults in Anxiety Disorder Online Communities (Jingfang Liu and Yafei Liu, 2021). Consumers actively seek out authenticity since it is seen as a crucial prerequisite to a successful endorsement. This reinforces favourable brand perception, loyalty, and purchase intention. Influencer marketing is a movement that revolves around social media influencers.

Social media influencers have emerged as a dominant force in the modern economy (Author, 2022), wielding significant influence over consumer behaviour and shaping the way businesses engage with their target audiences. In (Xia, 2020) an era dominated by digital communication and social networking, these individuals possess the ability to sway opinions, generate brand awareness, and drive purchasing decisions like never before. The impact of influencers on consumer decision-making processes is undeniable, as their authentic and relatable content fosters trust and loyalty among followers (Stefan Zak and Maria Hasprova, 2020). This article delves into the importance of social media influencers in the economy, exploring their role as powerful marketing agents and analysing the ways in which their recommendations and endorsements significantly influence consumers' choices.

## Literature Review

### Self-Determination Theory:

Self-determination theory (SDT) is a widely recognized framework in psychology that explores human motivation and behavior. It posits that individuals are driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, which influence their actions and decisions (Deci and Ryan, 2008). Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in activities for the sheer enjoyment and satisfaction they bring, while extrinsic motivation involves pursuing goals for external rewards or avoiding punishment (Ryan and Deci, 2019). Recent research has emphasized the significance of intrinsic motivation in fostering long-term engagement and psychological well-being. SDT also highlights the role of autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential psychological needs that contribute to intrinsic motivation (Niemi and Ryan, 2009). Balancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is vital, as an excessive focus on extrinsic rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation (Vansteenkiste, Lens and Deci, 2006).

## **Theoretical Background and Research Hypotheses**

### **3.1 Intrinsic Motivations**

Intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in the success and sustainability of social media influencers' careers. Research has shown that influencers who are primarily driven by intrinsic motivation are more likely to thrive in the digital landscape (Deng et al., 2019). These individuals are genuinely passionate about their content creation, deriving satisfaction from the creative process itself (Khan et al., 2020).

Moreover, intrinsic motivation fosters authenticity in influencers' content, as they are less likely to compromise their values or engage in deceptive practices for monetary gains (Ahn et al., 2019). Influencers with intrinsic motivation also exhibit higher levels of dedication and perseverance, ensuring the longevity of their online presence (Hsiao et al., 2018). This intrinsic drive empowers influencers to maintain meaningful connections with their audience, fostering trust and loyalty (Hollebeek et al., 2021).

### **3.2 Extrinsic Motivations**

Extrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in driving social media influencers' behaviour, as evidenced by recent research. These influencers are often motivated by external rewards, such as fame, monetary compensation, and product endorsements (Hou et al., 2019). This motivation is rooted in the desire for social validation and recognition, as influencers seek to gain more followers and likes (Hoffman and Fodor, 2018). Additionally, they are incentivized by the prospect of lucrative brand partnerships, emphasizing the economic aspect of extrinsic motivation (Jin et al., 2020).

Furthermore, influencers' extrinsic motivation is closely tied to the tangible benefits they receive, including access to exclusive events and free products (Peters et al., 2019). These incentives act as powerful drivers for influencers to maintain and grow their online presence (Mintel, 2021). However, this form of motivation can lead to ethical dilemmas, as influencers may prioritize financial gain over authenticity and audience trust (Liang and Li, 2020).

### **3.3 Hypothesis:**

Objective 3:

H0: There is no relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation)

H1: There exists relationship between observed variables and their underlying latent constructs (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation)

## **Materials and Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Methodology for study 1: This qualitative research employs a purposive sampling strategy to investigate the intrinsic motivations of social media influencers. The study will conduct in-depth interviews with a sample of 11 social media influencers, selected based on their diverse backgrounds and follower counts, to gain a comprehensive understanding of their motivations. Thematic content analysis will be employed to extract and analyse recurring themes and patterns from the interview transcripts. This methodological approach allows for a nuanced exploration of influencers' intrinsic motivations, shedding light on the factors that drive their activities on social media platforms, and contributing to a deeper comprehension of the influencer phenomenon in contemporary digital culture.

Study 2: This quantitative research employs a survey-based research design to investigate the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations driving social media influencers. The study will involve a sample of 150 social media influencers who will respond to a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will be designed to capture a comprehensive range of factors related to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, including factors such as personal passion, creativity, social recognition, financial incentives, and brand collaborations. Through systematic data collection and statistical analysis, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the complex motivations influencing social media influencers and contribute to a deeper understanding of this dynamic and rapidly evolving field.

Objective No.	Statement of the Objective	Method/ Methodology
1	To understand the intrinsic motivations for social media influencers.	Qualitative research. Literature review. Instrument- semi structured Questionnaire. Data collection method - Interview (social media influencers)
2	To identify the external motivations factors of social media influencers.	Sample - convenient sample (sample size 11) Data analysis - Thematic content analysis
3	To statistically validate the	Quantitative research.

two-dimensional SMI Population  
 motivational  
 construct.

sample size - 150

Data collection method - Survey Structure.

Data collection instrument - Questionnaire.

Data analysis - Multiple Regression (EFA & CFA)

Hypothesis testing

**Results**

**Objective 1**

**Phase 1: Familiarizing Yourself with the Data**

On the first phase of the Braun and Clarke model it involves immersing into the data to become familiar with it. In this interview with 11 social media influencers, Started by transcribing the interviews and reviewing them multiple times. This initial immersion helped in gaining a broad understanding of the internal motivations of SMI's and how they started their content generation.

During this phase, Pays attention to the influencers' discussions on topics such as their Personal experiences, Hobbies, Passion, what are the internal factors that drives in the realm of social media influencing. By carefully reviewing the transcripts and taking detailed notes, I prepared for the subsequent phases of analysis.

<b>Intrinsic Motivational Factors collected from the Interactions with SMI's:</b>				
<b>SL.NO</b>	<b>SMI</b>	<b>Followers</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Intrinsic Motivational Factors</b>

1	Aryan D Nair	50.9k	Digital Art, Video Creation, Fashion	Doing it for fun.
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2	Abhinav	13.4k	Fashion	Doing content generation to be more consistent.
3	Mayy Abulijebain	9223	Digital Art	Celebrating her art and find happiness through her content generation.
4	Kunwoo	50.1k	Digital Art, Video Creation	Loves and enjoys creating art.
5	Khaythi	2492	Skincare	Personality and opportunity to learn new things
6	Rishikesh	1168	Athletic	Consistency.
7	Rachana	1066	Lifestyle, Fashion	Loves to share contents.
8	Jahanvi	926	Art, Digital Art	Passion for creating art.
9	Vridhi	1800	Video creation	Creating things through inspiration.

10	Safwan	1189	Cinematic Video Creation	Gives Satisfaction.
11	Shakki	7043	Fashion	Fashion is a hobby and frames his personality. Also enjoys to be in the fashion industry.

**Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

The second phase, which involves generating initial codes. Codes are short labels or tags that capture key ideas, concepts, or phrases within the data. In the case of interviews with social media influencers, initial codes might include labels like Pleasure, passion, Motivations, Satisfaction, Sharing, Inspiration, Satisfaction and Connections.

During this phase, systematically go through the transcripts, identifying relevant sections and assigning codes to them. This process involves highlighting or annotating text passages that encapsulate specific themes or topics. As the analysis progresses, a list of initial codes is created.

**Thematical Content Analysis**

**Phase 3: Searching for Themes**

In the third phase, begin to search for themes within the coded data. Themes are patterns or recurring ideas that emerge from the initial codes. These themes should capture the essence of what the social media influencers are conveying in their interviews.

<b>Pleasure</b>	<b>Passion</b>	<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Inspiration</b>
-Joy	-Creation	-Fulfilment	-Positive feedback from followers
-Enjoyment		-Personal accomplishment	-Positive impacts
-Fun			

Sharing	Connections	Motivations
-Expressing creativity	-Strong bond with followers	-Happiness
-Idea Sharing		-Personal growth
-Sharing Personal Experiences	-Opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals	-Improvement in content creation skills
		-Creative challenges

#### Phase 4: Reviewing Themes

In this phase, it reviews and refines the identified themes. It involves checking whether the themes accurately represent the data and if there are any overlaps or inconsistencies.

#### Phase 5: Defining Themes

**1. Pleasure:** Creating content and engaging with their audience often brings creators a profound sense of joy and fulfilment, an intrinsic reward that fuels their passion. Additionally, receiving positive feedback in the form of likes, comments, and shares can be undeniably pleasurable, serving as a powerful motivator that further encourages them to persist in their creative endeavours. This combination of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction intertwines to drive content creators in their relentless pursuit of crafting meaningful and captivating content for their audience.

**2. Passion:** Influencers typically possess a profound passion for their chosen niche or content domain, serving as a driving force behind their unwavering motivation. Creating content within their area of expertise not only aligns with their intrinsic interests but also bestows a sense of intrinsic gratification. This intrinsic reward system forms the cornerstone of their dedication to consistently delivering engaging and valuable content to their audience, ultimately contributing to their success as influencers.

**3. Satisfaction:** Achieving personal and professional goals in the influencer sphere, such as reaching follower milestones or mastering specific content formats, offers a profound sense of accomplishment. This satisfaction of witnessing their content resonate with others and create a meaningful impact serves as a powerful motivator for influencers.

**4. Inspiration:** Influencers often find deep motivation in their ability to inspire and uplift their followers. The act of doing so serves as a potent intrinsic motivator, driving them to create content that resonates with their audience. Additionally, when they receive stories and feedback about how their content has positively impacted someone's life, it serves as a powerful source of inspiration, reinforcing their dedication to their work and fuelling their commitment to making a difference in the lives of their followers.



**5. Sharing:** Sharing experiences, knowledge, or creativity with a broad audience can be immensely gratifying for content creators. The sense of fulfilment derived from this act is amplified when they recognize that their content serves as a unifying force, bringing people together and nurturing a strong sense of community. This dual satisfaction, derived from both personal expression and community-building, serves as a potent motivator for those who create content.

**6. Connections:** Building connections with followers, fellow influencers, and brands can serve as a potent wellspring of motivation for influencers. The bonds forged within the social media community foster a profound sense of belonging, propelling influencers to sustain their engagement efforts. These relationships, whether with their audience or industry peers, become a driving force, igniting their passion and dedication to consistently produce compelling content and maintain their online presence.

**7. Motivations:** Influencers are driven by a multitude of motivations, including their desire to create a positive impact, educate their audience, provide entertainment, or advocate for causes close to their hearts. When they align their content with these underlying motivations, it fuels a powerful intrinsic drive that propels them forward in their influencer journey.

## Objective 2

### External Motivational factors identified from literature review:

**Paper 1 (Jingfang Liu and Yafei Liu, 2021) :** In the context of young adults' content creation behaviour within Anxiety Disorder Online Communities (ADOCs), external motivational factors have been extensively examined in the literature. The findings from the study "Motivation Research on the Content Creation Behaviour of Young Adults in Anxiety Disorder Online Communities" reveal several significant factors that drive content creation intention among this demographic. First and foremost, reward motivation emerges as a robust influencer, indicating that the prospect of tangible or intangible rewards motivates young adults to engage in content creation within ADOCs. Furthermore, anxiety information acquisition is found to be positively associated with content creation intention, suggesting that the desire to acquire and share knowledge about anxiety disorders fuels their creative contributions. Social motivation is another prominent driver, indicating that the need for social validation, recognition, and belonging within these online communities significantly influences their content creation intention. Lastly, reciprocity motivation, whereby young adults engage in content creation expecting mutual support and engagement from the community, is identified as a crucial external motivating factor. Collectively, these findings shed light on the multifaceted motivations that compel young adults to actively participate in content creation within ADOCs, offering valuable insights for both researchers and platform administrators aiming to support and harness this engagement.

**Paper 2 (Xiang Bi and Cunchen Tang, 2020):** In the literature review of "Research on the Motives Affecting the Behaviour of Short Video's Creators," external motivational factors for social media influencers, particularly professional creators, were identified. These creators, characterized by their long-term commitment to short video platforms and the pursuit of high profits through high-volume content creation, popularity, and the creation of high-value content, are driven by a combination of external incentives. These factors include financial rewards, such as lucrative sponsorships and ad revenues, which serve as powerful motivators.

Additionally, the desire for recognition and fame within the digital realm, coupled with the potential for networking opportunities and collaborations, further fuels their motivation to persistently produce content that captivates and engages their audience. This study underscores the significant role of external incentives in shaping the behaviour of professional creators in the realm of short video media.

**Paper 3 (Chongmi An and Jony Oktavian Haryanto, 2021):** In the realm of social media influencer marketing, external motivational factors play a pivotal role in driving influencers' pursuit of success and influence. As revealed in the literature review of "Exploring motivations of social media influencers as an emerging job market," several key factors stand out. Firstly, the exponential growth of the influencer industry itself acts as a potent motivator. With each passing day, this industry expands, offering influencers boundless opportunities for fame, financial gain, and recognition. Additionally, the systematic segmentation of influencers based on the number of their followers and the focus area of their content serves as another motivating force. This categorization not only provides influencers with a clear path to measure their progress but also sets benchmarks for their aspirational goals. However, one of the most significant external motivational factors identified is the desire to elicit reactions from their followers on shared content. The genuine engagement and responses from their audience not only validate an influencer's efforts but also contribute significantly to their overall success and influence in the digital landscape. Thus, influencers are inherently driven by these external factors as they navigate the dynamic and ever-evolving world of social media influence.

Author(s), Year	External Motivational Factors
Jingfang Liu and Yafei Liu, 2021	Reward motivation is positively associated with young adults' content creation intention in ADOCs.
	Anxiety information acquisition is positively associated with young adults' content creation intention in ADOCs.
	Social motivation is positively associated with young adults' content creation intention in ADOCs.
	Reciprocity motivation is positively associated with young adults' content creation intention in ADOCs.

<p>Xiang Bi and Cunchen Tang, 2020</p>	<p>Article defines professional creators as a group that uses short video media for a long time to earn high profits with high-volume creation, high popularity, high-value works.</p>
<p>Chongmi An and Jony Oktavian Haryanto, 2021</p>	<p>The exponential growth of influencer industry, the segmentation is becoming more and more systematic, mainly categorized by number of their followers and focus area of their content. This motivates SMI to obtain reactions from followers on shared contents has been identified as one of the important factors to SMI's success and influence.</p>

### Objective-3

#### Exploratory Factor Analysis

The **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** (Table 8) tests the adequacy of the correlation matrix, and yielded a value of 2616.163 and an associated level of significance smaller than 0.000. Thus, the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix can be rejected, i.e., the correlation matrix has significant correlations among at least some of the variables

#### KMO and Bartlett's Test

<p>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</p>	<p>.911</p>
<p>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</p>	<p>Approx. Chi-Square 2616.163</p>
	<p>df 253</p>
	<p>Sig. .000</p>

Table 8

The **Total Variance Explained** section presents the number of common factors extracted, the eigenvalues associated with these factors, the percentage of total variance accounted for by each factor, and the cumulative percentage of total variance accounted for by the factors. Using the criterion of retaining only factors with eigenvalues of 1 or greater, seven factors were retained for rotation. These two factors accounted for 31.262% and 61.487% of the total variance, respectively, for a total of 40.218%. The scree plot, however, suggests a three-factor solution.

The **Rotated Component Matrix** presents the two factors after varimax rotation. To identify what these factors represent, it would be necessary to consider what items loaded on each of the two factors. The clustering of the items in each factor and their wording offers the best clue as to the meaning of that factor. For example, eight items loaded on Factor 1. An inspection of these items (Table 9) clearly shows that most of these items reflect Intrinsic motivation for content creation (e.g., doing content creation for fun, Content generation is passion, creating impact on others' lives, Happiness in doing content generation, etc). Factor 2 clearly reflect the **Extrinsic Motivations** for doing Social Media Influencing (e.g., Doing Influencing for Fame, Money Wealth, etc). The combination of factors is purely a subjective decision, aimed at reducing the number of extracted factors to a smaller, more manageable, and ultimately more meaningful set of factors.

#### Rotated Component Matrix

Dimensions(Chronbach Alpha)	factor-1 (.945)	factor (.945)	communalities
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IN1 .833 .732

IN2 .871 .762

IN3 .852 .727

IN4 .780 .648

IN5 .806 .654

IN6 .806 .664

IN7 .766 .588

IN8 .716 .605

IN9 .807 .671

IN10 .738 .598

IN11 .761 .585

EX1 .761 .600

EX2 .728 .547

EX3 .802 .658

EX4 .838 .704

EX5 .804 .651

EX6 .665 .448

EX7 .763 .586

EX8	.798	.655
EX9	.672	.490
EX10	.672	.484
EX11	.664	.498
EX12	.755	.587
Eigen Value	7.190	6.952
% of variance	31.262	30.224
% of cumulative	31.262	61.487

**Conclusion and Contribution**The research on "EXPLORING MOTIVATION of SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER(SMI) as a PROFESSION" has yielded valuable insights into the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive individuals to pursue a career as social media influencers, contributing significantly to our understanding of this emerging profession. One primary contribution is the identification and exploration of intrinsic motivations among social media influencers, revealing their genuine passion for niche content creation and self-expression, enhancing their authenticity and credibility. Additionally, this research has illuminated extrinsic factors, such as financial incentives and fame, shaping the influencer profession, highlighting its economic appeal and the external pressures that influence content and behavior. Moreover, it has contributed to the discourse on the societal impact of influencer culture, informing discussions on authenticity, ethics, and influencer responsibility. In conclusion, this study underscores the multifaceted nature of influencer motivations, emphasizing the importance of understanding and respecting these diverse drivers for a more sustainable and authentic influencer ecosystem. Future research can further explore the evolving dynamics of SMI motivations in the ever-changing social media landscape.

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**PGRC – 305**

**Examining The Role Of Colorism In TikTok Among Filipino Content Creators**

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With the exponential growth of social media, the shade of colorism seems to become darker than ever. Despite viral campaigns and calls for equality of various online personalities including Black content creators, people with darker skin tone still experience discrimination in various life aspects such as education, relationships, and career opportunities. TikTok, in particular, has been criticized for alleged racial bias with claims that Black influencers experience account removals and demonetization. It was also found out that the platform's algorithm may actually be perpetuating discrimination in that if the user is White and it follows White content creators, it will expose to the same content creators or users of the same features. While TikTok labelled this as "collaborative filtering," it is still impacting the opportunities of the content creators from the marginalized groups, as it will make them underrepresented and will receive lesser recommendations. The visibility of TikTok creators directly impacts their economic opportunity, and a lack of visibility for creators of color can lead to fewer earnings opportunities (Asare, 2020).

The discrimination against people of color online is a reflection of the discrimination offline. A lighter complexion is often associated with advantages, affecting income and opportunities. Studies, mostly concerning African Americans and Latinos, have found that the lighter skinned individuals tend to fare better economically. In many countries, fair-skinned people are considered as "beautiful, worthy, intelligent, and competent while darker skinned people are judged as dirty, lazy, and ignorant," (Hunter, 2008; Sims, 2009).

Skin tone bias is not limited to the Westerners as lighter skin is seen as a form of social capital, particularly among women, influencing career opportunities, income, education and relationships (Hunter, 2008). In Asia, the preference for a lighter skin complexion has been found to be socially accepted and linked to societal attitudes and discrimination, as noted by Asia Jackson, a Filipino-American vlogger.

Furthermore, the pursuit to a fairer skin has fueled a profitable global skin whitening market. The industry boosted by colorism was valued at \$10 billion in 2021 with women as the main target market. The Asia-Pacific

region, particularly China, is seen as a market leader in this category. With the exponential growth of the market amidst the increasing social awareness against racism and colorism, big brands in the industry have made changes in their marketing strategies. L'Oreal, Hindustan Unilever, and Johnson & Johnson eliminated terms like "whitening" and "fair" from their products, to support inclusivity. However, it was revealed that there were inconsistencies in these companies' promises as some of the products in their markets still carry the label "whitening" and lighter-skinned models are still visible in their campaigns. The companies, on the other hand, cited manufacturing challenges and stock availabilities as reasons for these inconsistencies.

In existing research on colorism, racial discrimination narratives are mainly examined among different racial groups (Hall, 2018; Hunter, 2008; Strmic-Pawl et al., 2021), however, there is little inquiry done on colorism in online settings, particularly among influencers and content creators. While the booming social media has been empowering common people to become enterprising content creators, it has also provided spaces where colorism dims opportunities for those with darker skin tone.

Using Critical Race Theory as a lens, this qualitative research intends to investigate colorism and how it operates online, particularly in TikTok. Critical Race Theory was conceptualized by legal scholars Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in 1989 as an urgent call to action on the recognition of the ill effects of racism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). It is a systematic way of thinking and looking at social systems and groups incorporating the role of race and power. CRT's argument states that race is a social construct, and a complex system of power relations that impacts social, economic and political discourse. It is considered as a conceptual framework and also an intellectual movement which seeks to transform relationships between race, racism and power (Delgado et al., 2012). In the present study, CRT will be used as a framework through the use of its tenets, particularly the use of narratives and the interdisciplinarity of race, in this study's case, skin color and power.

Specifically the research the objectives are as follows (1) To identify the perception and understanding of the Filipino content creators on colorism; (2) To discover the experiences of the Filipino content creators on colorism; (3) To understand the role of skin color among the Filipino content creators in the work that they do; (4) To analyze the power of skin color in the profession of content creators in TikTok and (5) To investigate how the content creators use TikTok as a platform to discuss colorism. By way of narrative inquiry, it will specifically study the role of skin color among Filipino content creators in a third-world setting where almost half of the population

practice skin whitening.

The participants of the study will be Filipina content creators, specifically those considered as micro-influencers in TikTok whose content is into categories such as lifestyle, travel, science and gaming. To select the participants, snowball sampling technique will be used. To identify content creators who are Filipino micro-influencers, a marketing expert employing influencers will be consulted.

The lived experiences of selected Filipino content creators will be explored by way of in-depth interviews. Aside from the narratives, selected TikTok content related to the topic will be analyzed including comments from the other users. Thematic analysis will be the primary method of data interpretation.

The current study aims to promote and continue scholarship on present-day colorism for the awareness and education of content creators and the brands, including the digital citizens. The lack of discourse on the topic of colorism perpetuates passiveness and inaction (Sims & Hirudayaraj, 2015). Hochschild (2006) earlier pointed about the long-standing and widely acknowledged hierarchy based on skin tone. Thus, the current study seeks to promote and continue scholarship on present-day colorism with the ultimate aim to combat this societal ill. The study will also add to the growing literature of colorism and will contribute particularly to how it operates in an online setting among content creators. Furthermore,

gaining an understanding of the social media creators' experiences with platform discrimination is critical due to its role in reconstructing processes and products of cultural production (Poell et al., 2021).

**Keywords:** colorism, TikTok, content creators, narrative inquiry

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**PGRC – 306:** Trust as The Mediating Variable Between The Relationship of Influencer Marketing Factors and Purchase Intention in Live Streaming Marketing.

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## **PURPOSE/AIM & BACKGROUND**

The Covid-19 pandemic has left a significance impact on the way of lives. Many were confined to stay indoors as much as possible due to the pandemic. Due to the situation, many were also going online for both work and entertainment. The condition has also introduced the market to a new technology called live streaming and this has become one of the latest technologies that can be applied into the marketing strategy especially during the pandemic. In line with that, this study will be conducted with the aim of examining the relationships between the factors of influencer marketing, trust and purchase intention in live streaming marketing. Specifically the study will examine i) the relationships between factors of influencer marketing (Quality of Service, Quality of Product, Perceived Cost, Perceived Value, Emotional Value, Social value, Functional Value, Online Influencer) Purchase Intention, and ii) the most contributing factors of influencer marketing to that of purchase intention iii) the relationships between trust to that of the relationships between factors of influencer marketing and purchase intention.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study will utilize the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) that suggested in deciding to purchase products, consumers have the tendency to use certain cue or symbol to help them purchase. Thus, the theoretical assumption of the study is that consumers decide to purchase base on the factors of the influencer marketing. A quantitative research approach will be used to obtain data for the study. A set of questionnaires will be used as the instrument for data collection that will be distributed online to 784 respondents that will be randomly sampled from young adults in the Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province in China.

## **FINDINGS/RESULTS**

The expected results explain the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable as well as the mediation effect in the former relationships quantitatively. The hypotheses listed previously will be examined correspondingly as the result of the thesis.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The researcher has specified eight different factors that potentially have influence on the purchase intention of the consumer in the context of the live streaming merchandized activities. The factors include the Quality of the Service, Quality of the Product, Perceived Cost, Perceived Value, Emotional Value, Social Value, Functional Value and influencer, The researcher will utilize the Elaboration Likelihood Model to construct the model and will conduct the SPSS to examine the relationship analysis between each Independent, Dependent and mediating variable. The mediation test on the proposed model will further explains the effect of "trust" on the determined relationships so as to explain the in-depth reasons to the trustworthiness in the commercialization retail context. Also, this research used quantitative research methodology rather than the qualitative one to look into the purchase behaviour of Chinese young customers on live streaming consumption. The results of the research quantitatively explained how the mentioned factors (Quality of the Service, Quality of the Product, Perceived Cost, Perceived Value, Emotional Value, Social Value, Functional Value and Influencer) impact on the performance of the influencers and sales performances on live streaming platforms in the context of China.

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**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing, Trust, Purchase Intention, Live Streaming Marketing, Elaboration Likelihood Model..

**PGRC – 309**

**Unveiling Generation Z's Health Information Avoidance Behavior: A Qualitative Study**

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For Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012), information and technology have become an important part of their lives. As digital natives, they actively utilize various information sources to obtain health information. However, they have limited life experience and a relatively limited ability to absorb information (He & Liu, 2021). As Robb and Shellenbarger (2014) noted, college students are able to obtain health information on their own but lack the confidence to make individual decisions about health choices. When health risks arise, young people often feel fear and stress, which can lead to stronger reactions such as avoiding information about the risk (Liu et al., 2021) or even withdrawing from social media (He & Liu, 2021).

Information avoidance refers to "any behavior designed to prevent or delay the acquisition of available but potentially unwanted information" (Sweeny et al., 2010, p. 341). Distinct from the state of not actively seeking information, information avoidance is a deliberate act of avoiding or delaying available but unwanted information (Howell et al., 2020). Information avoidance in the health context can occur in a variety of ways, such as selective access to information from intermediary sources (Chae, 2016), diverting attention (Link et al., 2023), biased interpretation of information, and selective forgetting (Golman et al., 2017).

Information management is an important part of coping with uncertainty in the face of possible future risks (Brashers et al., 2002). The exploration for how and why individuals seek health and risk information has long been a focal point in health and risk communication research. However, relatively less attention has been paid to the phenomenon of information avoidance, particularly within specific population groups. Considering the increasing utilization of the Internet in health and risk information management, information avoidance exerts both positive and negative influences on individuals' processing of health risks and crisis management. This study employs a qualitative approach to fill in the gaps and draws on the PRIA model as a theoretical guide to reveal how Generation Z perceives the factors that influence their engagement in information avoidance.

The PRIA model emphasizes the behavioral as-intended nature of risk information avoidance and explains the socio-cultural, cognitive, and affective factors that underpin the behavior. The social factors in PRIA focus on social norms, which are one of the most relevant factors guiding an individual's health behaviors, including health information behaviors (Link et al., 2023; McEachan et al., 2011).

Cognitive factors relate to how people perceive risk, how much they know about risk, and how these factors drive information avoidance (Deline & Kahlor, 2019). In particular, risk perception refers to an individual's perception of the hazardous situation associated with a particular risk encountered. It is determined through subjective evaluations of the severity and susceptibility of potential risks (Griffin et al., 1999; Yang et al., 2014). Moreover, risk perception



may be altered by cognitive load, that is, the stress placed on an individual's information processing resources while performing a cognitive task. Limited cognitive capacity makes it difficult for people to effectively handle more than one cognitive task at a time (Lang, 2006). The tension between excessive information exposure and an individual's limited information processing capacity can lead to cognitive conflict (Song et al., 2021). Information overload occurs when individuals believe they must process too much information, which can lead to information avoidance behaviors.

Emotional factors are one of the main drivers of behavioral decision making, always lurking in the realm of information behavior (Lerner et al., 2015). Avoidance of health information is an emotionally driven maladaptive defense response (Howell & Shepperd, 2013; Sweeny et al.) Yang and Kahlor (2013) argued that the more negative emotional risk responses individuals perceive, the less likely they are to avoid information. However, recent research has provided evidence that both negative and positive emotional responses can be motivators for information avoidance (J. Li, 2023). The PRIA model has been widely used to study information avoidance behavior in different domains, including health and risk (e.g., Adolphs, 2021; Costello & Veinot, 2020). Therefore, in this study, we followed PRIA as a theoretical framework and coding justification for exploring health information avoidance behaviors in Generation Z.

To gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing information avoidance behaviors among Generation Z, this study employed a qualitative research approach, collecting data through focus group discussions. A total of 38 participants aged between 16 and 25 were recruited, as this age group is considered the primary cohort of Generation Z. Focus groups are a form of collective discussion designed to facilitate communication and exchange of viewpoints among participants (Krueger & Casey, 2015). During the focus group discussions, researchers guided participants in exploring topics related to health information avoidance and recorded their opinions, perspectives, and experiences. The data analysis process utilized content analysis methods (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Researchers transcribed the audio recordings of the focus group discussions verbatim and conducted coding and thematic extraction. Through iterative examination and discussion of the data, the researchers identified themes and patterns relevant to information avoidance behaviors among Generation Z and synthesized and summarized their findings.

The results of the study revealed that peer group identity and social norms were found to be important sociocultural factors influencing information avoidance behaviors among Generation Z. The results of the study revealed that the participants were more likely to avoid information seeking than to avoid looking different or being considered "uncool" among their peers. Participants generally agreed that health information was not a major topic of conversation between them and their friends and therefore chose to avoid these topics. In terms of cognition, participants cited several factors as influencing their information avoidance behavior. There was an inverted U-shaped relationship between the level of risk perception and health information avoidance behavior in Generation Z. The relationship between the level of risk perception and health information avoidance behavior in Generation Z was found to be significant. In addition, conflict with individual values, information overload, and low credibility of information sources were identified as factors contributing to information avoidance behavior. In terms of emotions, the findings show that emotional factors also have a significant impact on information avoidance behaviors of Generation Z. Anxiety and fear were identified as the main emotions that contribute to

information avoidance. Participants indicated that they may avoid information related to health issues because they may cause anxiety and fear. They feared that knowing the details of a health issue might cause them to worry about their health and increase their psychological burden.

Based on the results of the study, Generation Z's decision to engage in information avoidance behavior is a complex process influenced by multiple factors. Socio-cultural, cognitive, and emotional factors interact with each other to shape their avoidance behavior toward health information. This study provides several important implications. Specifically, most studies have focused on Generation Z's seeking of health information rather than their avoidance behavior (e.g., Basch et al., 2018; Zhou & Roberto, 2022). Our findings break through the stereotype of Generation Z as digital natives in complete control of social media and highlight their negative behaviors when processing risky information. Based on the PRIA model, we explored the relationship between social norms, cognitive load, emotions, and health information avoidance behaviors among Generation Z, which complements the existing research on information management. Furthermore, our study provided practical implications for social media users and platforms to consider. For Generation Z users, we suggest engaging in self-monitoring of information processing and self-assessing their psychological state related to risk and health information, thereby promoting healthy information usage habits, and maintaining psychological well-being. For social media platforms, we offered new insights into the underlying reasons behind Generation Z users' avoidance of health information. It is crucial for platforms to provide personalized services to Generation Z users by developing content filtering and credibility feedback functions, catering to their information consumption needs and preferences.

### **Keywords**

Information avoidance; Health information; Generation Z; Information overload; Planned Risk Information

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**PGRC – 313**

**Gratifying the AI Features of Chatgpt and Ernie Bot by Chinese Students in Malaysia and China**

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**ABSTRACT**

The rise of artificial intelligence has changed the audience's usage orientation and preferences, such as the emergence of artificial intelligent chatbots, significantly improving the audience experience and interactivity of human-computer interaction. Among the numerous AI chatbots, ChatGPT and Ernie Bot were used as the primary research carriers for this study to compare the satisfaction of Chinese college students in different regions of China and Malaysia and to study their tendency toward sustainable use of such software. The emergence and use of chatbots have driven educational reform and innovation, but for student audiences, behaviors such as academic fraud, the dissemination of false media information, and pseudoscientific creation are difficult to contain in a short period. Regrettably, due to China's strict ban on foreign software for information browsing and software usage, few studies have confirmed the purpose and satisfaction feedback analysis of Chinese students' use of AI chatbots. This has led to the need for a hypothetical comparison group for comparative research in China, such as Ernie Bot. The most popular AI chatbots have become a temporary gap in China's research field. This study uses the Use and Gratification theory to update and modify the framework based on the conceptual model set by Cheng and Jiang in 2020, aiming to evaluate and analyze the audience's use and satisfaction feedback. This study used quantitative analysis to conduct a sampling survey on Chinese college students using ChatGPT and Ernie Bot software in Malaysia and China and distributed 400 questionnaires for comparative analysis.

**PGRC – 314**

**The Impact of Tik Tok Opinion Leaders' Characteristics on Consumers' Purchase Intentions - A Case Study of Li Jiaqi Huaxizi Incident**

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**Abstract**

Short-video social media (e.g., Tik Tok) are developing rapidly, and many companies choose opinion leaders to promote their products. The words and behaviors of opinion leaders are also widely scrutinized. Recently, China's opinion leader Li Jiaqi's disrespectful comments about consumers caused a furor, with many netizens stating that they would not buy products from his live stream. The article explores the relationship between opinion leaders' characteristics (professionalism, interactivity, reputation, and attractiveness) and consumer trust, consumer engagement, and purchase intention. Reference is made to studies on live e-commerce, consumer purchase intention, and electronic word-of-mouth. Combined with the Exhaustive Likelihood Model (ELM) in persuasion theory, and the SOR model, i.e., "Stimulus-Organism-Response". This study creates a new modeling framework to explore the relationship between opinion leader characteristics, consumer trust, engagement, and purchase intention. We found that opinion leaders' professionalism, interactivity, reputation, and attractiveness have a positive impact on consumer trust and engagement, and that these characteristics can influence consumers' purchase intention through trust and engagement as mediators. With our clear targeting and positioning of opinion leaders, companies will be more efficient in choosing who to work with. At the same time, we can also apply these results to the targeted training and selection of opinion leaders to mold opinion leaders that meet users' needs. (Ao et al., 2023) In addition, opinion leaders should learn from the lessons of Li Jiaqi's case, reflect on themselves in time, and take care of their own "feathers"

# **Social Sciences**

**PGRC – 401**

**An Empirical Investigation of Antecedents of Innovative Business Model**

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**Abstract:**

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, innovation is a critical driver of competitiveness and sustainability for organizations. Innovative business models have become essential to adapt to changing market dynamics, technological advancements, and evolving customer expectations. As businesses strive to remain relevant and thrive in this dynamic environment, understanding the factors that influence the development of innovative business models becomes paramount.

The need for this study arises from the recognition that while innovation is widely acknowledged as a key driver of success, there is still a limited understanding of the specific antecedents that contribute to the formation of innovative business models. It is imperative to investigate and identify these antecedents to provide organizations with actionable insights that can guide their strategic decisions. By doing so, this research can contribute to enhancing the overall innovative capacity of businesses, ultimately fostering economic growth and competitiveness.

In this empirical investigation, the independent variables under scrutiny are knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness, which are being examined for their potential impacts on the dependent variable, the Business Innovative Model.

Knowledge commitment refers to the degree to which individuals and organizations are willing to invest in and apply new knowledge. Knowledge commitment is important for innovative business models because it allows companies to develop and implement new ideas more effectively.

Shared vision refers to the degree to which individuals and organizations have a common understanding of their goals and objectives. Shared vision is important for innovative business models because it helps to coordinate and align the efforts of different stakeholders.

Open-mindedness refers to the willingness to consider new ideas and perspectives. Open-mindedness is important for innovative business models because it allows companies to identify and capitalize on new opportunities.

In light of the aforementioned need, this research aims to address the following problem statement: "Despite the acknowledged importance of innovative business models, there is a gap in our understanding of the specific antecedents that influence their development. This study seeks to empirically investigate the impact of three critical antecedents - knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness - on the formation of innovative business models within contemporary organizations. The objective is to provide empirical evidence and insights that can guide businesses in fostering a culture of innovation and effectively adapting their business models to the dynamic and competitive landscape"



This problem statement highlights the primary research focus of this study, which is to examine how knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness impact the development of innovative business models. By addressing this gap in the literature and providing empirical evidence, this research aims to offer valuable insights that can inform both academia and practitioners in their pursuit of innovation and sustainable growth.

The objective of the study is to empirically investigate the antecedents of innovative business models, with a specific focus on three key factors: knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness. The study aims to Assess the extent to which knowledge commitment within an organization influences the development and implementation of innovative business models. It examines the impact of a shared vision among stakeholders on the creation and adoption of innovative business models. It Investigates the role of open-mindedness, both at the individual and organizational levels, in facilitating the emergence and sustainability of innovative business models. It explores potential interrelationships and synergies among these three factors in the context of driving innovative business models. It provides empirical evidence and insights that can inform businesses and decision-makers on how to enhance their innovative business model strategies by understanding the influence of knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness. By achieving these objectives, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to the field of business innovation and help organizations develop more effective strategies for creating and implementing innovative business models.

The research study follows a descriptive research design. In this empirical investigation of the antecedents of innovative business models, a data collection methodology was employed based on non-probability convenience sampling. This approach was chosen to efficiently gather data from participants who were readily accessible and willing to participate in the study. The target population consisted of individuals engaged in various business contexts. The surveys were distributed to collect data on the key factors of knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness, as perceived by the participants. The collected data will be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis and qualitative coding to explore the relationships and influences of these factors on innovative business models. This methodology enables us to gain valuable insights into the impact of knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness on the development and implementation of innovative business models.

Based on the Correlation Result, there exists some significant and positive relationship between knowledge commitment and innovative business model, shared vision and innovative business model & open-mindedness and innovative business model. Based on Regression Analysis, there exists a significant and positive impact of knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness on innovative business models.

Open-mindedness, shared vision, and knowledge commitment explain 75.4% variance in innovative business models.

The results of the empirical investigation have illuminated crucial insights into the factors influencing the development of innovative business models. The study underscores the significant and positive relationships between knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness with the success of innovative business models. This highlights the importance of fostering a culture within organizations that prioritizes these factors.

Specifically, it was found that knowledge commitment positively impacts innovation in business models, emphasizing the need for organizations to invest in acquiring and sharing new knowledge. Additionally, a shared vision among stakeholders greatly enhances the coordination and alignment required for driving innovation in business models. Furthermore, open-mindedness, both at the individual and organizational levels, is a pivotal driver in facilitating the emergence and sustainability of innovative business models, allowing companies to identify and seize new opportunities. The exploration of the interrelationships among these factors reveals their mutual reinforcement in cultivating a culture of innovation.

The practical implications of the study are significant for organizations aiming to bolster their innovative capacity and adapt to dynamic business landscapes. The findings underscore the importance of prioritizing knowledge commitment, nurturing a shared vision, and promoting open-mindedness among employees and stakeholders. Decision-makers should incorporate these antecedents into their strategic planning, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping innovative business model strategies. Organizations can consider implementing training programs and initiatives to foster open-mindedness and encourage collaboration and communication. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will help identify areas for improvement in their innovation efforts. Additionally, further research should delve into the specific mechanisms through which knowledge commitment, shared vision, and open-mindedness influence innovative business models, enabling more targeted strategies for fostering innovation. Ultimately, by understanding and harnessing these antecedents, organizations can position themselves to innovate effectively, maintain competitiveness, and achieve sustainable growth in today's ever-evolving business landscape.

**Knowledge Commitment;** Shared Vision; Open-Mindedness; Innovative Business Model

**PGRC – 402**

**Measuring the intention to donate tissue in the state of Karnataka**

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**Keywords:** tissue donation, organ donation, public awareness, intention to donate, survey

**Abstract:**

This research endeavors to comprehensively evaluate the intention to donate tissue in the state of Karnataka, India. The study focuses on various determinants including public awareness, attitudes towards donation, cultural beliefs, and the impact of health education initiatives. Through a systematic survey and analysis, we aim to elucidate the factors influencing individuals' willingness to participate in tissue donation. This investigation holds significant implications for enhancing organ and tissue transplantation efforts in the region, ultimately contributing to the advancement of public health and medical ethics.

**Conclusion:**

The study highlights a positive correlation between increased public awareness and a higher intention to donate tissue in the state of Karnataka.

Attitudes towards tissue donation were found to be largely favorable, indicating a potential receptiveness to initiatives aimed at encouraging donation.

Cultural beliefs play a significant role in shaping individuals' perspectives on tissue donation. Understanding and respecting these beliefs are crucial in developing effective outreach and education programs.

**PGRC – 403**

**Does Digital Empowerment, Structural Empowerment and Psychological Empowerment Enhance Individual Innovation Behaviour? Exploring The Role of Creative Work Environment: Employee Creativity as A Mediation Study**

Ruthvik Bm

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**Abstract**

Research investigates the authority of Digital empowerment; structural empowerment & psychological empowerment enhances individual innovation behavior practices towards the role of creative work environment of Telecom employees in Pakistan. Similarly, it examines the intermediating outcome of Operative creativity. The aim of populace entailed of personnel of Telecommunication companies in Pakistan. Statistics composed consuming a review survey from 200 workers was exposed to Smart PLS analysis. The results discovered digital empowerment, structural empowerment and psychological empowerment enhances individual innovative behavior that remain substantial interpreters for creative work environment additional completely input to employee creativity. Results correspondingly showed that an employee plays an important part to develop the individual innovative behavior. Moreover, it is shown that Digital, structural and psychological practices indirectly contribute to creative work environment through Employee creativity and individual innovation behavior. This research is one of the rare efforts to take part the Digital, structural and psychological Empowerment practices with creative work environment and individual innovation behavior in the field of employee creativity. It clearly subsidizes to a novel link of study to know the vital part of Digital, structural and psychological empowerment practices to improve the individual innovation behavior of Telecommunication companies. The research results take suggested Empowerment (Structural, Digital besides Psychological) as a substantial workout to form individual innovative behavior and employee creativity. It can support the administrators in their determination to create the creative work environment that enables to create individual innovative behavior and employee creativity. In order to handle through the expanding ecological fears of the telecommunication business, the current research proposes that officials must sustain structural and Digital empowerment for employees for betterment and employee creativity.

**Keywords:** Creativity, Empowerment, Innovative Behavior, self-efficacy, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership

**PGRC – 404**

**Cultural Contrasts in Consumer Choices: Urban and Rural Bangladesh**  
**tural Contrasts in Consumer Choices: Urban and Rural Bangladesh**

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Based on a national lifestyle survey, this study investigated consumer lifestyle differences between urban and rural families. It has been found that people are satisfied with their lives in both urban and rural areas. Most are the people happy with their families. People in urban and rural areas fear for their future. The respondents like to live in a group or family which is why they think they are impulse buyers and they are also unplanned buyers. They always give importance to their group or family. It has been also found that respondents think children are the most important thing in a marriage and they like to have family breakfast on weekends. They also worry about the effects of environmental pollution on their family's health. Most of the respondents think their family life is not disordered. Rural families think men are smarter than women but urban families' people think women are smarter than men. In both urban and rural areas people think men are naturally better leaders than women. Also, the father should be the superior in the house. They also give importance to security in the job sector. They do not think routine change is not disturbing them. When they are investing maximum safety is more important than high interest rates.

Bangladesh's socio-cultural landscape is characterized by a rich tapestry of traditions set against the backdrop of rapid urbanization. While urban areas have experienced significant growth, rural communities often uphold deep-rooted traditions. It is of paramount importance to scrutinize disparities in consumer preferences between urban and rural contexts, given that these cultural nuances exert a substantial influence on consumer behavior. The values of individuals may transform in response to the influence of their social milieu, mirroring changes in their lifestyles. Several factors, including income, personal values, and necessities, can alter people's lifestyles. However, among these, values and preferences, particularly in the realm of consumer behavior, hold particular significance.

As individuals are exposed to an expanding array of brand choices in the market, they tend to exercise greater discernment in their purchasing decisions. This heightened selectivity is, in part, a manifestation of their evolving values and lifestyles, both of which wield considerable influence over their consumer choices. Therefore, it becomes imperative to delve into the intricate interplay of cultural dynamics, urbanization, and evolving values to comprehend the multifaceted landscape of consumer behavior in Bangladesh.

The primary objective of this study is to explore and analyze the interplay between the dynamics of urban and rural families and the evolving values and lifestyles of individuals. This investigation seeks to uncover how urban and rural settings influence and intersect with the changing preferences, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals, shedding light on the social and cultural factors shaping contemporary family life.

In this study conducted in Dhaka city, rural families were defined as those living at least 100 miles away from the city for a minimum of 10 years, while urban families resided in Dhaka city for at least a decade. The questionnaire covered various domains, including consumer

attitudes, interests, opinions, and activities, as well as demographic variables. Responses were recorded on scales ranging from "definitely disagree" to "definitely agree" for attitude-related questions and from "none in the past year" to "52+ times" for activity-related questions. Data entry included a 100% verification process. The survey was conducted between January 1st and February 15th, 2022, using a random door-to-door approach in both urban and rural areas. To analyze lifestyle differences, the original four-point scale was transformed into a dichotomous scale distinguishing between agreement and disagreement.

According to the study, urban consumers generally express high levels of satisfaction with their current lifestyles, with 66.67% reporting contentment, although 33.33% remain less satisfied. Urban residents tend to harbor concerns about the future, with majority expressing anxieties related to societal and personal uncertainties. In terms of financial attitudes, 50% of urban consumers believe their family income can meet basic needs, while the remaining half moderately agree. Urban consumers also tend to be more impulsive buyers, with 83.67% admitting to such behavior. When it comes to career aspirations, most of urban respondents express a desire for significant life changes if given the opportunity. Meanwhile, both urban and rural consumers prioritize family values and children's welfare, with approximately all agreeing that children are the most crucial aspect of a marriage. Additionally, both groups hold conservative views on gender roles. Lastly, both urban and rural consumers display risk-averse tendencies, emphasizing job security over monetary gains and prioritizing safety in investments over higher interest rates.

Despite the limitations of using secondary data, Dutta-Bergman and Wells (2002) demonstrated that the rural and urban families theory remains robust in explaining aspects of consumer lifestyles across diverse cultures. However, it may not cover all facets of consumer behavior, necessitating the consideration of supplementary dimensions rooted in cultural values. The interplay of these values contributes to a comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural disparities in consumer lifestyles. In the information and globalization-driven society, De Mooij and Hofstede (2002) argued that technology and economic convergence do not necessarily lead to uniform consumer behavior. Instead, exposure to fresh cultural differences in the global economy may result in more diverse consumer behavior. Understanding the values ingrained in national cultures is crucial for comprehending their impact on consumer behavior.

In the realm of international marketing, it is imperative to recognize that cross-cultural value orientations wield a profound impact on how products are consumed within a particular culture (McCarty, 1994). Therefore, possessing knowledge and understanding of cultural values is indispensable for the successful execution of international marketing endeavors (McCarty, 1994). This study aims to equip marketers engaged in international trade with insights into the intricate relationship between cross-cultural values and specific consumer behaviors, offering valuable guidance for their marketing strategies.

**Keywords:** *Urban, Rural, Lifestyle, Cultural Contrast*

**PGRC – 405**

**Decoding and Deciphering Gender Dynamics: The Transformative Power of IPA in Unraveling Higher Education Narratives**

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**Background and Problem Statement:**

The landscape of higher education has witnessed significant transformations over the past few decades. As institutions of learning and knowledge dissemination, universities and colleges play a pivotal role in shaping societal norms, values, and beliefs. One of the most pressing and debated issues in this realm is the dynamics of gender. Gender, as a social construct, intersects with various facets of higher education, influencing academic experiences, professional trajectories, and personal identities. From classroom interactions to leadership roles, from curriculum design to research priorities, gender dynamics permeate every layer of the academic world. The increasing awareness and discourse around gender equity, diversity, and inclusion have brought these dynamics to the forefront of academic and policy discussions.

However, understanding these intricate dynamics requires more than just statistical analyses or surface-level observations. It demands a deep, qualitative exploration into the lived experiences of those within the academic community. This is where Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) comes into play. As a qualitative research approach, IPA offers a lens to delve deep into individual experiences, providing rich, nuanced insights into the complexities of gender dynamics in higher education.

Despite the growing discourse and the potential of IPA, there exists a gap in consolidating and synthesizing the vast body of literature on this topic. This gap hinders a comprehensive understanding of gender narratives and their influence on various facets of higher education. Furthermore, while IPA has been employed in various studies to explore these dynamics, there is a lack of a cohesive review that brings together the insights derived from IPA across different studies. This absence of a comprehensive literature review limits the academic community's ability to identify patterns, best practices, and areas needing further exploration in the realm of gender dynamics within higher education. This research seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on this topic, aiming to consolidate knowledge, identify gaps, and offer a methodological guide for future researchers.

**Introduction:**

Higher education, reflecting society at large, has been a significant player in the ongoing discourse about gender struggles. Gender narratives, whether overt biases or subtle discriminations, deeply influence student trajectories. These narratives demand a thorough examination through existing literature to be fully understood. In the evolving landscape of higher education, gender dynamics have emerged as a pivotal area of sociological inquiry. Navigating gender dynamics within higher educational institutions has become a

groundwork of contemporary pedagogical and sociological discourse which is rife with discussions on gender equity and identity. Amidst these unfolding dialogues, the need for robust methodological frameworks becomes evident. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), anchored in interpretivism and constructivism, served as the cornerstone of this research. It stands out as a tool that can delve deep into these multifaceted phenomena, offering a nuanced understanding of the intricate gender-related challenges students face in higher education settings. Our exploration stands out as it reframes gender struggles not just as challenges but as catalysts for growth and transformation. This research aims to review and synthesize existing studies on the topic, emphasizing the role of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in understanding these dynamics.

### **Objective:**

This study aims to traverse the realm of gender experiences in higher education. It underscores the prowess of IPA in elucidating students' gender narratives as reflected in existing studies, aligning them with broader theoretical perspectives rooted in sociological paradigms. The transition from student life to adulthood is a crucial time for university students as they face and become aware of gender inequalities in society, especially in the context of intercultural experiences.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

Guided by the principles of Gender Theory, this work contends that gender is not just biologically determined but socially constructed, with educational institutions playing a critical role in this construct. Educational institutions, as microcosms of society, play a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing gender constructs. The multifaceted nature of gender experiences, perceptions, and dynamics in academia calls for a meticulous approach, and IPA emerges as the methodological tool par excellence for this purpose.

### **Methodology:**

Drawing from the foundational principles of Gender Theory, this work posits that gender is not merely a biological construct but is intricately woven into the social fabric. The methodology hinges on a combination of in-depth literature reviews, underscoring IPA's merits in addressing gender discourses. This research is grounded in a secondary analysis of existing literature. By systematically reviewing and synthesizing studies related to gender dynamics in higher education that employ IPA, this work aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on the topic. The methodology hinges on a thorough literature review, emphasizing the merits of IPA in addressing gender discourses as reflected in previous studies.

### **Key Themes and Methodological Choices:**

**Identity and Perceptions:** The literature reveals that the confluence of gender theory and IPA provides insights into how students perceive and sometimes challenge their gender identities within higher education settings. These identities are invariably influenced by societal and institutional norms, reflecting broader sociological patterns. Also, its distinct focus on individual perceptions, lived experiences, and the subjective nature of gender identities offers an unparalleled depth to our understanding.



**Contextual Resonance:** Existing studies emphasize the socio-cultural contexts within which gender narratives in higher education are embedded. IPA, as highlighted in the literature, offers a deep dive into this interplay, mapping out the symbiotic relationship between individual experiences and their wider context. IPA's methodology offers a journey into this relationship, capturing the intricate ties between individual experiences and the overarching societal structures. This attribute aids in discerning the multifaceted influences molding students' gender-related experiences.

**Power Relations and Resilience:** The literature underscores narratives of resilience and empowerment within higher education settings, with IPA emerging as a favored method to explore these dynamics. The interplay of IPA and gender theory brings to the fore narratives of resilience, empowerment, and the myriad forces that shape students' gender experiences in academia. The dynamics within recruitment processes, especially when executive search firms are involved, also play a significant role in shaping gender diversity in higher education leadership.

### **Implications and Practical Application:**

This literature review has dual implications: theoretical enrichment and practical impact. It provides academia with a renewed appreciation for IPA's depth, urging scholars to harness its transformative potential in similar research domains. Beyond the confines of academia, this synthesis has far-reaching implications in the real world. By understanding gender dynamics in such depth, stakeholders are better positioned to create truly inclusive academic environments, reflecting the broader goals of societal equity and representation to illuminate the paths towards creating educational environments where gender equity isn't just an aspiration but a lived reality.

### **Conclusion:**

In summation, this literature review emphasizes the role of IPA in deepening our understanding of gender dynamics in academia. This paper endeavors to emphasize the symbiotic relationship between the methodological rigor of IPA and the intricate world of gender dynamics in higher education. Echoing this sentiment, we champion IPA's capacity to shed unparalleled light on gender dynamics, advocating for its widespread adoption.

**Keywords:** Higher Education; Gender Dynamics; Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA); Gender Equity

**PGRC – 406**

**How does academic activism work as a bridge between research and society in troubled times?**

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This article discusses the importance of research beyond traditional goals such as quantity of publications, grants, or academic reputation but also epistemic legacy and moral responsibilities. Research should contribute to the development of society, disrupt oppression, and ignite transformative change. To bridge the gap between research and society, we propose the concept of academic activism as praxis, which combines research and activism—using critical qualitative methods, with library research and lessons learned in the global south region. Our research debunked the existence of "ivory tower" research disconnected from society. We found awareness issues (anti- and pseudo-intellectual or oppressive and anti-oppressive), academic culture (The Academic-Industrial Complex), socio-political ecosystem (intervention and politicization), and results orientation (value-free or value-laden) are the leading cause of the existence of "ivory tower" research. Connected activism with research makes research more accessible at the grassroots, enlightens understanding based on praxis, prioritizes transformation and ethics, and consistency in impact for the benefit of society. Academic activism works in eight ways: (1). scholars must strive to overcome the artificially created borders between academia and societal needs ; (2). Researchers must exposed to people and their problems as sources (academic or non-academic) outside or inside their discipline; (3). do reflection based on the meaning-making process; (4). Researchers must have faith in humanity; (5). Be an organic intellectual embedded with society through a particular social movement or vulnerable communities;(6) making research processes and results as material for agitation;(7). Practicing critical pedagogy; and (8). Do initiatives that promote the exchange and collaboration between research and practice. Our research aims to open more discourse about the link between activism and research (outside or within the formal academic world), which still needs to be studied in Malaysia and Indonesia. Even though many protests, movements, and changes have occurred in society amid troubled times due to the link between the two. Research diagnoses reality; activism ascertains expectations of what reality should be.

**Keyword:** academic activism, research, trouble times

**PGRC – 408**

**Structural Empowerment and Co-Operative Performance: A Case of Women  
Co-Operatives in Malaysia**

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**Abstract**

The study on women's empowerment has gained more interest among researchers in the past decade. One of the tools that has proved to empower women is co-operative. However, despite the potential benefits of women co-operatives, they face numerous challenges that hinder their performance and sustainability. Furthermore, past studies revealed that there were many factors of women's empowerment, but few studies were done to identify the factors of women's empowerment from the resource-based point of view and further explain the co-operatives' performance from the perspective of board members in women co-operatives. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between empowerment and women co-operatives. Quantitative research will be conducted which covers experts' validated questionnaires to be distributed to the purposely selected 7 board members from 256 women's co-operatives in Malaysia. Further analysis will be conducted to examine the influence of structural empowerment and co-operatives' performance. The findings of this study shed light on the challenges that women face in accessing economic resources, opportunities, and decision-making. It highlights the importance of addressing these challenges and creating an enabling environment for women's empowerment.

**Keywords: women's empowerment, government effectiveness, co-operatives, performance**

**Introduction**

Structural empowerment is an important aspect of women's empowerment that needs to be considered in the co-operative movements, especially women co-operatives. In the context of co-operatives, structural empowerment involves providing women co-operatives with access to credit, markets, and training (Rohaya, Idris & Kunci, 2019; Saha & Sangwan, 2019; Waithera Kiaritha, 2015). In Malaysia, co-operatives are formed to help businesses sustain the economy and survive in the long run (Jelani, Shafiai & Mohd Noor, 2021). It was reported that as of 31 December 2022, out of the 15,315 co-operatives registered, 256 of them were women co-operatives which equivalent to 29,455 membership and RM17 million in turnover, which is only 0.03% of the overall turnover of RM45 billion for co-operatives in Malaysia (Utusan Malaysia, 2023). Therefore, promoting co-operatives is an effective way of achieving women's economic empowerment, which is a key driver of sustainable development, poverty reduction, and economic growth (Pathania, 2017).

**Problem Statement**

Despite efforts to foster women's participation in entrepreneurship, these programs have predominantly concentrated on the startup phase, offering limited support for women to thrive and sustain their presence in the industry. A study by International Labour Organization

in 2021 identified a critical gap in providing targeted support or empowerment effort by the government for women to progress into higher value-added sectors and to facilitate business expansion, despite equal access to government support services and training programs. This raised the question as whether these efforts were effective or inadequate to support women. Recent statistics from Utusan Malaysia (2023) indicate that, out of the 256 registered women's cooperatives in Malaysia last year, 30% were inactive. The contribution of women's cooperatives as of December 31, 2020, amounted to only RM5.6 million, representing a mere 0.03 percent of the total turnover of cooperatives, which stood at RM21.2 billion (Bernama, 2021). This underscores not only the scarcity of women-owned enterprises but also the deficiency in the establishment of women's cooperatives, resulting in a negligible contribution to the economy. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between structural empowerment and the performance of women's cooperatives in Malaysia and to identify the specific structural factors that contribute to the challenges faced by women co-operatives.

## **Literature Review**

### **Underpinning Theories**

Kanter (1977) developed the structural empowerment theory which proposed that the perceived level of empowerment is determined by the organization's structure and the ways in which power is distributed within it. This theory identifies four (4) factors of structural empowerment: access to information, access to resources, support from leaders and colleagues, and learning and growth opportunities. To support further Kanter (1977) claims that the internal capacity of any organization could be factors of empowerment and contribute to organizational performance, resource-based view (RBV) theory by Barney (1991) classified resources as physical capital, human capital and organizational and have been extended to include other resources such as financial capital, technological and reputational capital (Grant, 1991). Scholars in areas of big data predictive analysis explained organizational capability can be created by combining strategic resources such information sharing and human skills which if leveraged well enough can increase operational performance and competitive advantages (Srinivasan & Swink, 2018; Gunasekaran et al., 2016).

### **Co-operatives' Performance**

Co-operatives have traditionally been seen as an economic entity with significant social duty to its members and society. As a result, its performance is measured in their success or failure to contribute to society. According to Ishak, Omar, Sum, Othman and Jaafar (2020), there are two (2) dimensions of performance in a business setting which are effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness determines how well a company achieves its goals (i.e., doing the right things), while efficiency is determined by a company's ability to use its resources to achieve its goals (i.e., doing the right things) (Mayo, 2011; Omar et al., 2022). While effectiveness focuses on the outcomes and impact of the cooperatives decisions and actions, efficiency involves evaluating the cooperative's ability to minimize wasted resources, reduce operating costs and improve productivity (Ishak et al., 2020).

### **Structural Empowerment**

Structural empowerment, as initially conceptualized by Kanter (1977), is a multifaceted framework that highlights the significance of organizational structures and resources in enhancing employees' abilities to make meaningful contributions to their work. This empowerment occurs when employees have access to four key dimensions: information, resources, learning and development opportunities, and support. Access to information entails the privilege of accessing pertinent data and technical knowledge to facilitate efficient functioning within an organization (Kanter, 1993; Taibah & Ho, 2023). Resources encompass materials, equipment, time, and financial support necessary for achieving organizational goals (Kanter, 1977). Another vital dimension of structural empowerment is providing employees with opportunities for learning and development. As Kanter (1977) emphasized, these opportunities enable employees to enhance their skills and knowledge, which in turn promotes career advancement within the organization. Finally, support, which includes feedback and guidance from colleagues, subordinates, and supervisors, plays a pivotal role in structural empowerment (Kanter, 1993). In summary, structural empowerment is a comprehensive framework that encompasses access to information, resources, learning and development opportunities, and support.

### **Structural Empowerment and Co-operative Performance**

Aggarwal, Dhaliwal and Nobi (2018) found that structural empowerment has positive effect towards organizational commitment which confirmed Kanter's theory about the importance of structural factors in any organizations. In a study conducted by Mundia, Nkonde, Simui, and Imasiku (2022), they found that the poor performance of agriculture co-operatives was due to lack of trainings, lack of monitoring from their government, shortage of staff, lack of logistical support, and limited assistance of resources in the form of money. Additionally, while Proenca, Torres and Sampaio (2016) found that structural empowerment results in higher levels of perceived customer satisfaction, Fragkos, Makrykosta and Frangos (2021) found that structural empowerment has a strong relationship with firm performance. In conclusion, strong empowerment results in better organizational performance. Based on the problems and gaps mentioned above, there are two (2) research questions of this study:

**RQ1:** Is there any relationship between structural empowerment and co-operative performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia?

**RQ2:** Does structural empowerment influence co-operatives performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia?

Based on the research questions, this study aims to achieve the following research objectives:

**RO1:** To investigate the relationship between structural empowerment and co-operative performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia.

**RO2:** To study the influence of structural empowerment and co-operative performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework that will be used in this study.

**Conceptual Framework**

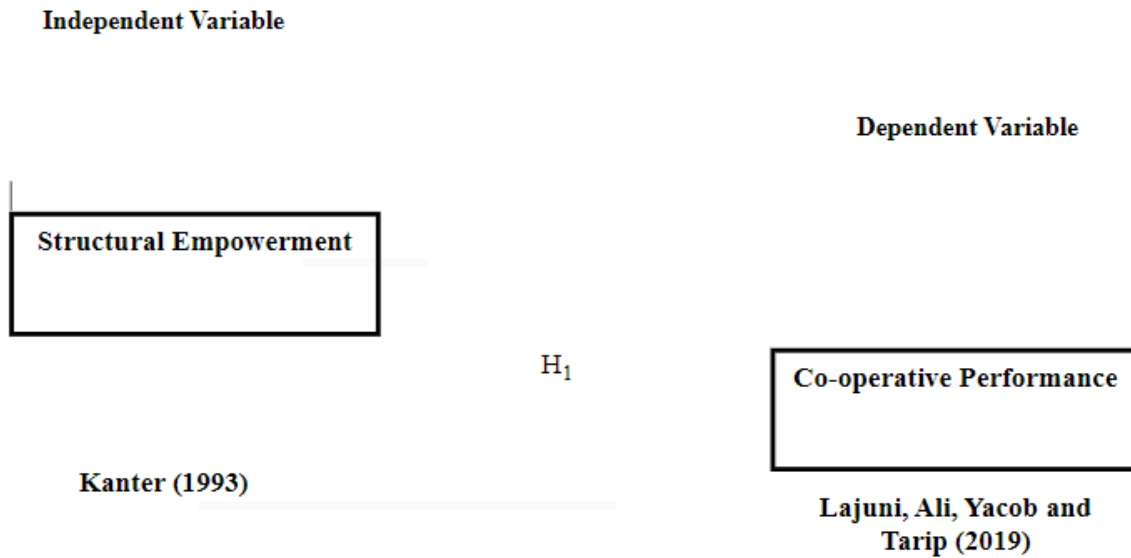


Figure 1: **Conceptual Framework adapted from Kanter (1993), Dubey, Bryde, Dwivedi,**

**ham, Foropon & Papadopoulus, 2023, and Lajuni, Ali, Yacob and Tarip (2019)**

Based on the literature reviews, the following hypotheses were developed:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between structural empowerment and co-operative performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia.

H<sub>2</sub>: Structural empowerment influences the co-operative performance among women co-operatives in Malaysia.

This framework is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge by confirming the relationship between structural empowerment and co-operative performance gathering insights specifically from the women co-operatives in Malaysia. Currently, although co-operative performance has been extensively studied by previous studies, the literature review on structural empowerment in the co-operative context has not been extensively researched.

**Methods**

This study will embark on quantitative approach and correlational in nature. Data will be collected through questionnaire distribution. A 7-point Likert scale indicating “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7) is used as the measurement of all variables. The population of this study will be the board members of the 256 women co-operatives in Malaysia. For each co-operative, the researchers will ask the chairperson to choose 7 board members (actively involved in co-operative’s management activities) and the co-operative’s

managers could also be selected as respondents for this study. The minimum sample suggestion will be done through G-Power analysis software. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Version 27 (SPSS V29) and Smart Partial Least Square Version 4 for Windows will be used as primary tools for data analyses. The analyses include descriptive analysis, factor analysis, correlation analysis, standard regression analysis, and hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this research examines the factors of structural empowerment and cooperative performance among women's cooperatives in Malaysia. It serves as a bridge, integrating women's empowerment theory, structural empowerment theory, resource-based view theory, and institutional theory, offering practical insights into the challenges and opportunities that women's cooperatives will face in the real world. Our investigation acts as a bridge, connecting various theoretical perspectives and offering valuable practical insights. It not only contributes to scholarly discourse but also furnishes practical insights into how cooperatives can serve as potent tools for advancing women's economic empowerment.

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**PGRC – 409**

**Factors Influencing Social Media Dependency (SMD) And Social Media Intelligence Quotients (SMIQ) Effects Among Gen Z In Sarawak**

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**Abstract**

The worldwide use of smartphones and social media has become massive with serious implications for mental health, resulting in a state of addiction called social media dependency (SMD). The term social media dependency (SMD) indicates a loss of control over an individual's social media use, resulting in impairments in aspects of daily life. SMD has become a social problem among young people in many areas of the world and researchers worldwide have attempted to assess how pervasive the issue is. Studies have concluded that SMD is associated with technostress, exhaustion, and poor academic performance among university students. However, the link among these constructs has not been satisfactorily determined as the current research is still inconclusive. Some studies have found that the use of mobile devices for academic purposes results in better academic performance of university students and it is even regarded as a source of social support that helps relieve exhaustion.

Many entrepreneurial studies recognized that social media and entrepreneurial opportunity are linked. In return, SMD will likely stem into some effects such as social media literacy, online business literacy and social intelligence. These effects are categorized as social media intelligence quotients (SMIQ). The current study examined the roles of social system, social media system, personality system, entrepreneurial system among Gen Z in Sarawak by taking into account their social media usage in regard to social media intelligence quotients (SMIQ) effects. Family, peers, universities and lecturers and social media influencers are the components of social system. Then, social media system suggests social networking sites (SNS), online photo sharing in Facebook and Instagram, and online video sharing in YouTube or WhatsApp. For personality system, increased use of social media is associated with neuroticism, extraversion and openness. Entrepreneurial system is the newly proposed system in this study with the aid of underpinning theory; media system dependency (MSD) theory. Potential entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurial education are proposed to be the components of this new factor.

Depression symptoms are lower in individuals who report higher social support than in those with lower social support. Thus, social system is found to play a big role in determining SMD of Gen Z. Social media system has a wide range of potential impacts on both application and research perspectives, for example, promoting sales for profit business, recruiting prospects for marketing, facilitating creativity, providing interaction and learning of individual users for information consumption and in return, Gen Z is frequently found online. Personality traits are related to both depression and patterns of consuming media and hence, it determines heavy usage of social media among Gen Z. Entrepreneurial system consists of many actors (eg., potential entrepreneurs) who play many different roles (eg., entrepreneurial intention), and it is stimulated and restricted by several environmental factors (eg., education) and

these are argued to contribute to SMD if frequently acted on. For students, the presence of sophisticated technology and digitalization opens wider opportunities to start digital businesses while they are studying at the university, and this has changed the landscape of business field. Given that, this entrepreneurial system will be determined among Gen Z students who are currently pursuing studies in Business related programs.

Media system dependency (MSD) theory was developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur in 1976, with the key concept that individual's media use is determined by the interrelations among society, media, and audience. In this research, MSD theory is adopted because it explains people's dependency level on a media system, which can be compulsive, such that it can lead them to be addicted to it, even though being online does not ensure they would get satisfaction or they would get any good results from it. Ball-Rokeach, the founder of this theory says that, "The media system dependency theorist is predisposed to an evolutionary, not revolutionary, perspective vis-à-vis new communication and information technologies". Producer–consumer dependency relations are likely to undergo changes as a result of the development of social media dependency relations. Changes are more likely to affect the scope of reach of the merged system into personal and social life rather than to alter the structure of producer–consumer relations. This means that social media not only changes the role of e-commerce in marketing industry, but also modifies the personal and social life of the users, which will ultimately affect the development of SMIQ among Gen Zers.

MSD theory comprises two levels of media dependency, that is, structural dependency and individual media system dependency. Structural dependency is in the macro-level analysis because it requires dependency relationship between media system and social system. It is an interaction of the social system with media system and other systems, which makes it ecological in nature. In contrast, individual media system dependency is microscopic, which is conducted at the most micro-level of analysis in this theory. In short, it analyses the individual who uses the media system. Individual media system dependency focuses on the relationship between personal goals and media resources. Social system, social media system, personality system and entrepreneurial system are proposed to be the independent variables, analysed in the macro-level stage. The mediator is SMD and the dependent variables are SMIQ which consists of social media literacy, online business literacy and social intelligence and these are at micro-level of analysis.

Participants are proposed to be university students from the age of 20 to 24 and they are currently doing business related programs. There are five universities selected in this study; Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Sarawak, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Curtin University Malaysia and University of Technology Sarawak (UTS). All these five universities represent each main cities in Sarawak such as Kota Samarahan, Bintulu, Miri and Sibul. The objectives of the study are: (1) To examine the influence of social system, media system, personality system and entrepreneurial system on the formation of social media dependency (SMD) among Gen Zers in Sarawak; (2) To determine the effects of social media dependency (SM) on SMIQ (i.e. social media literacy, online business literacy and social intelligence) among Gen Zers in Sarawak. SmartPLS software will be utilized to perform partial least squares – structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analyses to verify our proposed model. These findings provide guidance for prevention and intervention related to Gen Z social media usage and dependency. The study hopes to have a significant impact on social media and entrepreneurial development.

**Keywords:** Social Media Dependency; Social Media Intelligence Quotients; Media System Dependency.

# Psychology

**PGRC – 501**

**Behind the Mask: Exploring Impostor Phenomenon among Final Year Female Psychology Students at IIUM**

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According to research, 70% of people have experienced impostor phenomenon (Haney, Birkholz, & Rutledge, 2018). Clance and Imes (1978) are the authors of the inaugural use of the phrase "impostor phenomenon", referring to the experience in which high achievers struggle to internalize their objective successes and are frequently plagued by feelings of being an impostor and anxiety of being exposed as such (Kolligian & Sternberg, 1991). The topic of impostor phenomenon is increasingly emerging in academic and popular settings. Two in five university students may suffer from impostor phenomenon (Study Hub, 2022). Perfectionism trait that is prevalent in female students (Neumeister, 2017) was found to be an efficient predictor of the impostor phenomenon (Pannhausen et al., 2020).

The present research aimed to study the experiences of impostor phenomenon among female final year psychology undergraduate students in Malaysia. This study addressed one primary research question: "What are the experiences of impostor phenomenon among female final year psychology undergraduate students in Malaysia?". Imposter Cycle Model (Clance, 1985) is used as the theoretical framework for research guidance. According to the model, an individual who faces achievement-related tasks could experience anxiety, self-doubt, and worry, leading to over-preparation, procrastination, or both. Female students are chosen as participants as the perfectionism trait that is prevalent in female students (Neumeister, 2017) has been found to be an efficient predictor of the impostor phenomenon (Pannhausen et al., 2020). Psychology students are chosen for this study as psychology students have remarkably high major-related life experiences (MRLE), that is, experiences that are reflected in the contents of their studies, such as psychological disorders or phenomenon, for example impostor phenomenon (Werz et al., 2017). Final year undergraduate students were deemed fit to the impostor phenomenon model as they must complete complex achievement-related tasks such as passing more challenging classes, undergoing industrial training, and completing final-year projects, which is related to the Impostor Syndrome. The prior research's findings showed that people going through a transitional stage of life experience are prone to experience impostor phenomenon, such as final year undergraduate students transitioning from being a student in university to an adult in the working industry and or starting their new family (Lane, 2015). However, there are limited findings about impostor phenomenon experiences among final year psychology students.

Previous studies that discussed impostor phenomenon employed quantitative methods. This study is qualitative exploratory research that employs the method of semi-structured interviews with female final year psychology students who are experiencing impostor phenomenon. The qualitative approach is chosen to garner a more detailed description and interpretation of the individual experiences by investigating the process and the reason

behind a phenomenon, which is the impostor phenomenon experience in the present study (Tenny et al., 2017). Five participants were recruited through purposive sampling to strategically approach the target participants by sharing the information about participant recruitment to final year psychology students batch WhatsApp groups and personal messages to final year psychology student WhatsApp contacts. The present study uses two scales to screen participant candidates: Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS; Clance, 1985) and Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (CIPS; Clance, 1985). Participant candidates who get at least the cutoff score on both scales are eligible to undergo in-depth interviews. The selected participants are assigned pseudonyms throughout this study.

The present study yielded five main themes, which were i) general experience, ii) goal setting and perception of success, iii) family background and dynamic, iv) university environment, and v) coping. General experience consists of experience in family, experience in the university environment, and coping experience, each of them indicating unique and critical experiences that vary in their nature, as well as their effect. Next, goal setting and perception of success. In terms of the frequency of setting goals, two participants set their goals daily, one participant set goals both daily and annually, and two other participants do not set their goals regularly. Then next theme is family background and dynamic. Interestingly, the findings of this present study showed that most of the participants are children of parents who are supportive in times of both achievements and failure.

Moreover, all participants agree that they usually set higher goals compared to their parents, showing that their parents give them autonomy and independence to plan their own future. This finding shows that family dynamics do not significantly contribute to impostor phenomenon, as the participants still experience impostor phenomenon despite having supportive families at home. Furthermore, university environment. Two participants believe that peer relationships could contribute to the impostor experience when people start comparing themselves with their peers' achievements, for instance, when working with high-performing group mates in a group assignment. The other possibility is that people have the need to downplay their achievements to respect their peers, or not to appear arrogant in a university classroom environment that does not support students to connect to each other. The last theme to emerge is coping. The participants admitted procrastinating doing difficult tasks by doing the leisure activities. This could be explained by referring to the Impostor Cycle Model (Clance, 1985), that explained that a person could feel anxious, self-conscious, and worried, which could result in excessive preparation or procrastination when faced with achievement-related duties. It was concluded that although there are universal experiences for people with impostor phenomenon in general, each participants' personal differences play a role in creating experiences that are relatively unique.

Limitations and implications of the current study are discussed in relation to past literature. This study's implications are manifold. Firstly, the research offers a novel perspective on the lived experiences of a specific yet underrepresented group, extending the current understanding of impostor phenomenon. Secondly, by providing a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to impostor phenomenon, the study serves as a catalyst for educational and societal change. Educational institutions can leverage these insights to create more inclusive and supportive environments, thus enhancing student well-being and academic performance. Mental health practitioners can also benefit from these findings, tailoring interventions that are culturally and contextually relevant. Ultimately, the research

serves as a foundation for future studies aiming to translate psychological research into meaningful societal impacts.

**Keywords:** Impostor phenomenon; undergraduate students; higher education; mental health; female students

**PGRC – 502**

**An Empirical Study on the Impact of Mindfulness on Employee Job Performance in the Health Sector**

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**Abstract:**

In the rapidly evolving and challenging healthcare industry, employee job performance plays a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of patient care and overall organizational effectiveness. Amidst the challenges and stressors inherent in healthcare settings, mindfulness has gained attention as a potential intervention to enhance employee well-being and performance. This research paper presents an empirical study aimed at investigating the relationship between mindfulness, organizational culture, ethical practices and employee job performance within the context of the health sector.

Drawing upon a random sampling approach, this study conducted surveys with a diverse sample of healthcare professionals like doctors, nurses across different roles and levels of experience. Quantitative data were analyzed using correlation, reliability, validity, factor analysis, multi-collinearity and regression analysis. The qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to extract insights into the lived experiences of employees practicing mindfulness.

The findings of this study reveal a statistically significant positive correlation between mindfulness and employee job performance in the health sector. The quantitative analysis demonstrates that employees who engage in regular mindfulness practices tend to exhibit higher levels of job performance, as rated by their supervisors and colleagues. Moreover, the qualitative analysis uncovers various mechanisms through which mindfulness influences job performance, including enhanced emotional regulation, improved focus, and better interpersonal communication. However, the study also uncovers individual differences in the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions, suggesting that factors such as personal disposition and experience with mindfulness may moderate its impact on job performance.

The implications of these findings are significant for healthcare organizations striving to optimize employee performance and well-being. Integrating mindfulness programs into employee development strategies could offer a promising avenue for cultivating a more resilient and effective healthcare workforce. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge at the intersection of mindfulness and organizational behavior, particularly within the unique context of the health sector. Further longitudinal research and controlled interventions are recommended to deepen the understanding of the causal mechanisms underlying the observed relationship between mindfulness and employee job performance.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Organization Culture, Ethical practices, Employee performance, Job performance, Mindful practices.



**PGRC – 503**

**Ten-Item Internet Gaming Disorders Test-10 (IGDT-10): Malay Translation and Validation**

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Play is an innate human drive that allows individuals to learn and enjoy it since early childhood. Ever since the development of the first video game in 1972, gaming became more accessible and affordable after smartphones and computers were manufactured (Davidovici-Nora, 2013). Several studies found that gaming behaviors can be associated with negative outcomes such as compromised physical and mental health, a drop in academic or career performance, a lack of social relationships, and problems related to finances (Puolitaival et al., 2020; von der Heiden et al., 2019; Eickhoff et al., 2015).

In a study by the World Health Organization, it was found that 1.20-57.50% of the Western Pacific Region population, which includes Malaysia, play Internet games, while 4-69% of them belong to a clinical population (WHO, 2023). A Malaysian government organisation also found that 42.8% of Malaysian Internet users played online games in 2020 (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2020).

The World Health Organization's (WHO, 2022) 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) officially included Gaming Disorder (GD) as a type of mental, behavioural or neurodevelopmental disorder. This was the first mental disorder related to gaming behaviours to be officially recognized. GD is defined as a pattern of gaming behaviors with impaired control in gaming, increased priority given to gaming, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences. In addition, the behaviors must result in significant impairment in a few important areas of functioning for at least a year.

To date, only limited studies targeting gaming disorders are available, and no test regarding Gaming Disorder is currently available in the Malay language (Sharifat & Suppiah, 2021). Hence, the current study aimed to validate a Malay translated test that covers both the nine criteria of Internet Gaming Disorder in DSM-5TR and three criteria of Gaming Disorder in ICD-11 to be used amongst Malaysian population.

The current study employed a quantitative online survey design (Google Forms) via cross-sectional approach and convenience sampling. The inclusion criteria for the participants were Malaysian gamers aged 18 years and above, with a minimum of one year experience of gaming, and who had a B2 Malay proficiency. Professional gamers were excluded from the study to reduce the possibility of unclear boundaries between the game purposes. Gamers who had not played games in the past week were excluded in order to target individuals who were still involved in gaming.

The instruments used in the current study were Internet Gaming Disorders Test-10 (IGDT-10; Kiraly et al., 2017) and Malay Version Internet Addiction Test (MVIAT; Guan et al, 2015). A

back-to-back translation method was used to translate the Internet Gaming Disorders Test-10 into the Malay language. The English-to-Malay translation was done by a native speaker with a psychology background and C2 Malay proficiency level. The back translation was completed by a professional translator with a C2 Malay proficiency level.

The data of the current study was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and IBM Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 24. Five types of analyses were performed: descriptive analyses, internal consistency reliability test using Cronbach Alpha, Pearson's correlation test for discriminant validity and concurrent validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

A total of 248 participants (134 males and 114 females) aged between 18 to 45 years ( $M=25.80$ ,  $SD=5.18$ ) were recruited. All participants were Malaysians, with majority of them originated from Sarawak (19.8%), Selangor (19.4%), and Sabah (14.9%). In terms of ethnicity, a total of 79 participants were Malays (31.9%), 102 were Chinese (41.1%), 12 were Indians (4.8%), 30 were Bumiputera Sabahans (12.1%), and 25 were Bumiputera Sarawakians (10.1%).

For reliability, the Malay-translated IGDT-10 ( $\alpha = 0.830$ ) showed a good internal consistency, while MVIAT ( $\alpha = 0.922$ ) showed excellent internal consistency amongst Malaysian population.

The result showed a significant correlation between the Malay-translated IGDT-10 and MVIAT ( $r = .751$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, there is no discriminant validity between the two tests. Nevertheless, there were significant correlations between gaming frequency and the Malay-translated IGDT-10 ( $r = .176$ ,  $p < .01$ ) as well as between gaming duration and the Malay-translated IGDT-10 ( $r = .219$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This indicated that there were concurrent validities for Malay-translated IGDT-10.

To explore the factorial structure of Malay-translated IGDT-10, all 10 items of the instrument were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) via principal axis factoring with varimax rotation. The maximum likelihood factor analysis with Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 yielded a two-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 50.35% of the variance. For the factor loading for EFA, Items 10,9,6,7, and 4 loaded toward Factor 1 (Impaired Functioning) with the factor loading range between 0.427 to 0.731, while items 1,2,3,5, and 8 loaded toward Factor 2 (Addiction Symptoms) with the factor loading range between 0.260 to 0.630.

A two-factor Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) has been performed. The chi-square assumption of fitness had a value of 38.829 ( $p=.224$ ), indicating a good fit ( $p > .05$ ). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) had a value of 0.991, which indicates that it had a good fit ( $CFI \geq 0.95$ ). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.027, indicating a good fit ( $RMSEA < 0.05$ ). (Standard) Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) has a value of 0.0392, indicating a good fit ( $SRMR < 0.05$ ). It indicated that the two-factor model had a good model fit. Furthermore, the two-factor CFA shows acceptable factor loading  $>.50$  between all items (range= .54 - .64) except item 8 shows minimal factor loading which is 0.35 by following the guidelines of Brown. A very strong correlation was observed between these two factors ( $r=.80$ ).

In conclusion, the Malay-translated Ten-item Internet Gaming Disorder Test demonstrated good reliability and concurrent validities with gaming frequency and gaming duration. It also showed an excellent model fit within a two-factor model which portrays the uniqueness of Malaysian population perceiving Gaming Disorder. Moreover, this study enhances the understanding of the Online Video Game Addiction Framework amongst Malaysian population. This validated test will be useful for psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, counsellors, individuals, schools, and workplaces across Malaysia to screen and identify gaming addiction.

**Keywords:** Gaming Disorder; Malay; Internet Gaming; Offline Gaming; Malaysia; Gaming Addiction

**PGRC – 504**

**Predictive Role of Positive Orientation on Psychological Distress: Based on Malaysia**

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**Background:**

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) (2015), one in every three Malaysians suffers from mental health concerns. In this era of rapid development, everyone's life may be affected by stress, depression, and anxiety at some point or other, and the rhythm of an individual's life might be disrupted. Therefore, it is necessary to understand psychological distress, level of positive orientation, and the ability to predict psychological distress based on positive orientation. Psychological distress is defined by Cuijpers et al. (2009) as a non-specific symptom of stress, anxiety, and depression.

Empirical evidence showed that self-esteem (Moafian & Ghanizadeh, 2009; Orth et al., 2009; Matinnia et al., 2018; Reilly et al., 2014; Henriksen et al., 2017), life satisfaction (Tsitsas et al., 2019; Holinka, 2015; Beutel et al., 2009) and optimism (Jahanara, 2017; Yildirim & Cicek, 2022) are negatively associated with psychological distress (stress, anxiety, and depression). Each of these were analysed or studied from an individual aspect. However, these three - Self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction are closely associated, and found to be the sub-constructs of the new psychological construct known as "Positive orientation" (PO) (Alessandri et al., 2012). According to the positive orientation theory, having a positive outlook on life makes an individual psychologically more resilient (Caprara, 2009; Caprara et al., 2009), and it is thus being associated with a lack of depressive symptoms (Heikamp et al., 2014). However, based on the current literature, Malaysia does not have any study conducted to assess the predictive role of positive orientation on psychological distress in totality manner.

Previous studies on positive orientation mainly investigated in social adjustment (Caprara et al., 2016), health (Alessandri et al., 2015; Caprara et al., 2015), and job satisfaction and performance (Alessandri et al., 2012; Livi et al., 2015). There is just one study that looked at positive orientation in Malaysia; It explored the concept of positive orientation in mental health practitioners in Malaysia and the function of positive orientation (Park et al., 2021). Study by Park et al (2021) and others in regard to Malaysia were limited to one of the sub-construct or positive orientation alone. Hence this current study that is unique and useful in expanding existing knowledge, tie-up positive orientation and physiological distress especially by examining the predictive role of positive orientation in total manner.

**Objective:**

To examine the predicting role of positive orientation (self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism) on psychological distress (stress, anxiety, and depression) amongst Malaysians.

**Method:**

This research is a quantitative research study with a cross-sectional design. The purposive sampling method is used in this research study and participants who are selected in this study had to fulfill certain criteria to participate in this study. The inclusion criteria for this study are Malaysian citizens, aged 18 or above, residing in Klang Valley, and have never received a formal diagnosis of psychological disorder in the past. The participants in this study consisted of 323 Malaysian citizens. The forms, demographic information section, and all other instruments were distributed in three languages (English, Malay, and Chinese).

Demographic information was collected, for descriptive purposes. Positive orientation (PO) was measured using three instruments. The first questionnaire was Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965), which is a scale widely used to measure global self-esteem. The second instrument was the Life Satisfaction Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985), a five-item scale that examines an individual's life satisfaction. The last instrument used to measure positive orientation was the Life Orientation Test Revision (LOT-R; Scheier et al., 1994), which evaluates individuals' optimism level. In this study, SES's Cronbach's alpha value was 0.79, SWLS was 0.87, and Cronbach's alpha value of LOT-R was 0.69. Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale - 21 items (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995) was used to measure psychological distress. DASS-21 consists of three self-report scales that measure the emotional states of depression, anxiety, and stress. The Cronbach's alpha value of DASS21 was 0.88 for anxiety, 0.91 for depression, and 0.87 for stress in this study.

Linear regression analysis was conducted to test the predictive role of positive orientation, self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction on psychological distress (anxiety, depression, and stress). The measured self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction were used separately to run the analyses and summed up to form an index of positive orientation.

### **Results:**

The participants had higher levels of positive orientation, with an average of 2.93 for self-esteem, 4.47 for life satisfaction, an average score of 1.85 for optimism, and 3.08 for positive orientation, the optimism mean score was slightly lower. On the other hand, psychological distress was lower, with an average of 0.76 for anxiety, 0.66 for depression, and 0.92 for stress. The regression analysis results show that positive orientation, self-esteem, optimism, and life satisfaction significantly predicts psychological distress (anxiety, depression, and stress) negatively. The results showed that positive orientation predicted 26% of anxiety variance, 32% of depression variance, and 22% of stress variance. Individuals' self-esteem predicted the greatest variance in psychological distress, with 33% in anxiety, 43% in depression, and 30% in stress. For life satisfaction, it predicted an anxiety variance of 20%, depression variance of 26%, and stress variance of 17%. Optimistic predictions had the lowest variance in psychological distress, such as anxiety (19%), depression (20%), and stress (15%).

### **Conclusion:**

Positive orientation (self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism) had a significant negative predictive role towards psychological distress (stress, anxiety, and depression) amongst Malaysians. As positive orientations have a predicting role towards psychological distress, hence should be developed as a preventive measure and to be utilized in future psychological interventions and mental health practices.

### Implications:

From the conceptual perspective, this study determined the predictive role of positive orientation on psychological distress, contributing to the understanding of the theoretical construct of positive orientation besides filling the existing research gap. As it is significantly evident that positive orientation negatively predicts psychological distress, appropriate interventions can be developed to reduce psychological distress. Further to this, positive orientation can be emphasized to all as a preventive measure of psychological distress.

**Keywords:** *Positive Orientation, Psychological Distress, Well-being, Psychological, Malaysia*

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**PGRC – 505**

**Study on the Factors Affecting Employing Engagement**

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Employees are the backbone of any industry. Any industry's success is determined on its engaged staff. Employee engagement is determined by the interaction that exists between an organisation and its employees. It is critical to attaining organisational objectives. Employee engagement results in leading to a sense of belonging and, eventually, contentment. Modern businesses think about their staff to be enthusiastic, excited, and to take initiative at work, care for their own growth, strive for excellent quality and performance, and be tenacious and committed to what they do, and in other words, businesses require their staff to be engaged. It has become critical to implement several HR strategies that assist each employee and make them feel valued.

Employee engagement, defined as the emotional commitment and dedication of employees towards their work and organization, is of paramount importance. Engaged employees are more likely to be productive, contribute to a safer work environment, and stay committed to their organizations.

Despite the significance of employee engagement, the shipbuilding industry faces unique challenges that may impact it differently compared to other sectors. Factors such as workplace safety, job satisfaction, leadership styles, and opportunities for career growth may have distinct effects on employee engagement within this industry. Understanding these factors and their impact on employee engagement is vital for both organizational success and the well-being of the workforce.

Employee engagement has been identified as a vital aspect in achieving high levels of productivity, job satisfaction, and staff retention. Engagement levels usually affect overall performance, team cooperation, and employee morale. As a result, it is critical to identify and address the underlying reasons that contribute to the organization's employee engagement.

The research will focus on the essential components that lead to employee engagement. The study highlights significant consequences for shipbuilding company administration in terms of efficiently retaining personnel, minimising costs associated with recruiting and training new human resources owing to employee turnover, and facilitating employees' professional development within the sector.

The research will help understanding the employee engagement in order to increase performance, retain brilliant workers, boost job happiness, promote well-being, provide outstanding customer experiences, develop a good organisational culture, and adapt to the changing dynamics of the modern workplace.

Organisations will gain a competitive edge and establish a vibrant and sustainable work environment by investing in employee engagement.

The research will assist to minimise attrition while also increasing production and profit.

It will investigate and focus on how to increase employee engagement and commitment to organisational progress with the following objectives:

To study the employee engagement at a private company belonging to Shipbuilding Industry

To study whether proactive personality, perceived organizational support and employee engagement differ in terms of the demographic variables (Gender, Age, Work experience, Marital status, Family Type) of the employees.

To identify the impact of proactive personality on Employee engagement in the company.

To identify the impact of perceived organizational support on Employee engagement in the company.

The design of the research is Descriptive and it adopts a quantitative data collection technique to provide a comprehensive analysis of factors affecting employee engagement in the shipbuilding industry.

Quantitative Phase: A structured questionnaire has been distributed to a sample of employees across various levels of the organization. The questionnaire included standardized scales to measure employee engagement and demographic information. The various attributes that are collected in the data collection phase are Perceived organizational support, proactive personality, gender, age, marital status, type of family, etc, of the respondents.

The sample has been drawn using non-probabilistic/ convenience sampling to ensure representation across different departments.

Quantitative data has been analysed using statistical tools such as SPSS, T-Test, ANOVA with correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify significant factors affecting employee engagement.

The study has been conducted with various statistical methods such as T-Test, ANOVA, Regression and Correlation Analysis. With respect to T-Test, there is no significant difference in gender, marital status and family type in terms of perceived organizational support and proactive personality of the respondents. And with respect to ANOVA also, there is no significant difference in age of the respondents. There is a significant and positive relationship between proactive personality and employee engagement. Also, there is a significant relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement.

Perceived organizational support has a positive and significant impact on employee engagement. And proactive personality has a positive and significant impact on employee engagement. It is also found that Perceived organizational support is the strong predictor.

Based on the experiments conducted, it is inferred that proactive personality, perceived organizational support are identified as predictors or independent variables. There they play a crucial role in predicting the magnitude of Employee Engagement in an organization.

This research underscores the significance of employee engagement in the shipbuilding industry and identifies various factors affecting it. Proactive personality and perceived organizational support emerged as crucial determinants of employee engagement. Additionally, we collected various attributes of the employees such as goals and values, well-being, general satisfaction, accomplishments, etc through well framed questionnaires. Then we study the relationship between these attributes and employee engagement to highlight the importance of various HR policies that can be put in place.

Research indicating a strong link between employee engagement and organizational performance underscores the importance of fostering engagement. Organizations can focus on strategies to improve engagement to drive productivity, profitability, and customer satisfaction. Studies showing that engaged employees are more likely to stay with an organization and are more open to learning and growth opportunities highlight the importance of career development programs. Great employee engagement activities will help any employee with a proactive personality and the correct amount of organisational

support. Employee engagement increases when the proactive personality is activated among employees, in conjunction with organisational support.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Perceived Organisational Support, Proactive Personality, Shipbuilding Industry