



FSH-PH Publication

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the contributing authors whose insightful research and scholarly work have made this publication possible. Their dedication to exploring the intersection of emerging technologies and the social sciences has significantly enriched this volume.

As the **Editor**, I am honored to have collaborated with such a distinguished group of researchers from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. Their collective contributions have provided valuable perspectives on the opportunities and challenges brought about by technological advancements in the field of social sciences.

Special thanks to **FSH-PH Publication** for their support in the realization of this work. This book serves as a testament to our shared commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and the continuous pursuit of knowledge in a rapidly evolving digital world.

Sincerely,

PROF. FROILAN D. MOBO, DPA, Ph.D.

Editor

Emerging Technologies in Social Sciences: Opportunities and Challenges

Preface

In recent years, the rapid development of emerging technologies has profoundly impacted every facet of human life, including the field of social sciences. The integration of artificial intelligence, big data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, and other digital innovations has transformed the way we conduct research, interact with communities, analyze societal trends, and develop policy. This book, *Emerging Technologies in Social Sciences: Opportunities and Challenges*, was conceived to explore these dynamic intersections and provide a timely and comprehensive discourse on how technology is reshaping the landscape of the social sciences.

The chapters included in this volume are contributions from a diverse group of international scholars, researchers, and practitioners. Each chapter offers a unique lens through which to understand the opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technologies in fields such as sociology, psychology, political science, education, economics, and communication. These contributions reflect both theoretical insights and practical applications, making this book a valuable resource for academics, professionals, students, and policymakers.

Our aim is not only to showcase the transformative power of technology in the social sciences but also to provoke thoughtful dialogue about ethical, cultural, and structural implications. While innovation offers great promise for development and progress, it also necessitates a careful and critical evaluation of its consequences.

As the editor, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the authors for their commitment, scholarly rigor, and vision. I am also deeply thankful to FSH-PH Publication for their unwavering support and dedication to academic excellence.

May this book inspire new conversations, collaborative efforts, and innovative research that bridge the gap between technological advancement and human-centered inquiry in the social sciences.

Sincerely,

PROF. FROILAN D. MOBO, DPA, Ph.D.

Editor

Emerging Technologies in Social Sciences: Opportunities and Challenges

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CHAPTER 1

ADMINISTRATIVE CAPABILITY OF SCHOOL HEADS IN URBAN AND RURAL AREA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

It needs stronger, skillful heads with technical expertise to achieve excellence in teaching and learning. The study was conducted to compare the administrative capability of School Heads in Urban and Rural areas. The study utilized descriptive-comparative and mixed methods of research. It was also conducted at selected schools in the urban Cotabato city division and schools in the Rural, Maguindanao-1 division. There were 56 total teachers, both in urban and rural areas. Respondents determined using total complete enumeration from 1 to 6 English teachers and the principal of each school. A self-made survey questionnaire was used to gather data. Random interviews and observations were done to validate respondents' answers. The study utilized mean as one of the statistical tools to describe administrative capability and a T-test of independent means to determine the difference. The extent of the administrative capability of school heads in urban in terms of supervisory was rated very satisfactory, and in rural rated satisfactory. The implementation of financial support in urban rated satisfactory while rural rated Fair. The difference between the administrative capability of school heads in urban and rural areas was not significant. It is concluded that the school heads in both urban and rural areas were performing well, although there is little difference in the implementation of tasks as their administrative capabilities. It is recommended that school heads, both in urban and rural areas, should strengthen their capabilities to lead their subordinates and spend the MOOE of the schools wisely.

Keywords: Administrative Capability of School Heads, Supervisory and Financial Support

INTRODUCTION

Administrators occupy a strategic position in the educational system, one whose significance derives from the fact that it is concerned with the school's overall operation. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a successful school is that effective leadership begins with a healthy mind. School administrators must possess several fundamental qualities to provide effective leadership.

According to Lydia and Nasongo (2009), the role of the administrator is to encourage academic achievement. The success of the school's activities is credited to the principal. He or she is the pivot around which many parts of the school spin, as the person responsible for every area of academic and administrative school operations.

Similarly, the development of new educational initiatives and programs results in increasing organizational and managerial constraints on the part of school administrators. These demands necessitate every administrator to improve their managerial skills, roles, and functions to achieve the aims and objectives brought about by new developments in education. According to Whang (2021), effective school leadership provides supportive learning environments that help children develop and flourish. To build such an atmosphere, school leaders must manage and foster collaboration across a network of stakeholders that is frequently complex: education authorities, instructors, students, parents, and local communities. School administrators are, in a sense, the glue that ties everyone together.

Objectives of the Study

Generally, this study aimed to compare the administrative capability of school heads in urban and rural areas. Specifically, this study sought to find answers to (1) the extent of the administrative capability of school heads in urban and rural areas in terms of supervisory and financial support; (2) the significant difference between the school heads administrative capability in the urban and rural areas.

Theoretical Framework

The study is founded on one of the educational theories and administrative methods, the first humanistic or Individual Fulfillment theory. It can give a framework that helps the administrator to combine the various components of his or her theory and, as a result, develop and communicate a more solid foundation for school-based activities. Such men like Carl Rogers and the late Abraham Maslow are its proponents. Rogers and Maslow highlight the learner's role as the originator and director of his or her education. It is believed that the student learns most effectively when allowed to explore a world full of options with minimal direction or predetermination from others. The instructor remains in the background, ready to offer aid but unwilling to interfere with the student's natural unfolding of intrinsic interest.

The teacher's role is to foster initiative in each kid and encourage each student to embrace responsibility for his or her learning. Knowledge is believed to be intrinsically personal; it does not exist independently of the real knower and cannot be arbitrarily separated into handy logical categories or fields. The emphasis is on self-actualization, creating a rich and loving environment,

and having faith that the student knows what is best for him or her better than anybody else (Newton, 1980).

Conceptual Framework

The study is based on the concept of comparing the administrative capability of School Heads in Urban and Rural areas in terms of supervisory and financial support.

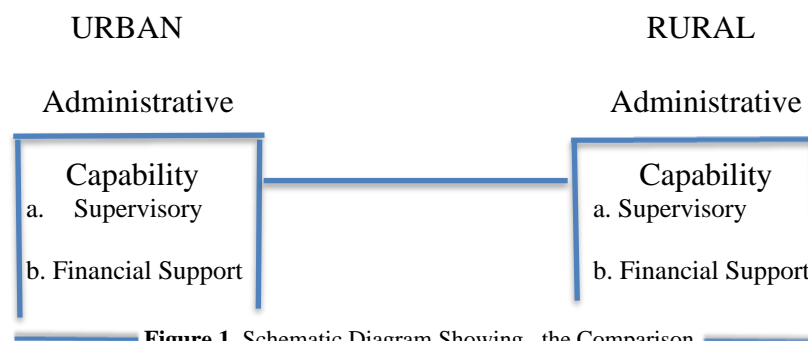


Figure 1. Schematic Diagram Showing the Comparison in administrative Capability of School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas.

Methodology

The study utilized the descriptive-comparative and mixed methods of research, and it is appropriate in this study because this determined the extent of the administrative capability of school heads in urban and rural areas in terms of supervisory and financial support; the significant difference between the school heads administrative capability in the urban and rural area.

It was conducted at four selected central schools in the urban Cotabato city division and four central schools in the Rural, Maguindanao-1 division. There were only 56 teachers in the urban and rural areas. They were determined using complete enumeration since the respondents were only from 1 to 6 English teachers and principals of each school.

A survey questionnaire was used to gather data. A random interview was done to validate the respondents' perceptions, and observation was conducted. This instrument was a self-made survey questionnaire formulated by the researcher with the assistance of her adviser. Mean was used to describe the administrative capability, and the T-test of independent means was used to determine the difference in the administrative capability of school heads in urban and rural areas.

Results and Discussion

Results on the Administrative Capability of School Heads in Urban and Rural Areas

Table 1. Means Rating of the Supervisory Implementation of School Heads Under Urban area in four Schools of Cotabato City Division

Supervisory	Mean	Description
1. Disseminate & discuss SIP With the teacher	3.50	Very Satisfactory
2. Establish supervisory mechanisms	3.46	Satisfactory
3. Conducts classroom observation	3.93	Very Satisfactory
4. Involve teachers & pupils in evaluation	3.25	Satisfactory
5. Inform teachers of evaluation results	3.71	Very Satisfactory
6. Conduct in-service trainings & seminars	3.86	Very Satisfactory
7. Conduct mentoring among teachers	3.68	Very Satisfactory
8. Encourage teachers to join professional Organizations	3.57	Very Satisfactory
9. Provides a systematic program to Enhance teaching effectiveness	3.39	Very Satisfactory
10. Organize teachers' schedules to allow Them to work other related activities	3.50	Very Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.58	Very Satisfactory
Range Means		
1.0– 1.49	Poor	(1%-24 % of the condition is manifested)
1.50 – 2.49	Fair	(25%-49% of the condition is manifested)
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory	(50%-74% of the condition is manifested)
3.50 – 4.00	Very Satisfactory	(75%-100% of the condition is manifested)

Table 1. Administrative capability in terms of Supervisory Implementation of School Heads under Urban Area in four Schools of Cotabato City Division

Table 1 shows data on the supervisory implementation of school heads under the urban area in four schools in the Cotabato City Division. As shown in the table, school heads of urban areas rated themselves very satisfactory on items disseminated & discuss SIP with the teachers (3.50). When the researcher asked the teachers, they gave only the same answer their school heads discussed and collected ideas for the improvement of SIP, and an item, supervisory mechanisms (3.46), Involving teachers and pupils in evaluation (3.25), rated themselves as satisfactory. This means that they were satisfied.

Likewise, on the following items, they rated themselves as very satisfactory on conducts classroom observation (3.93), Inform teachers of evaluation results (3.71), Conduct in-service training and seminars (3.86), Conduct mentoring among teachers (3.68), Encourage teachers to join Professional organization (3.93), Organize teachers schedule to allow them to work other related activities (3.50). The result indicated that the respondents were adequately doing their jobs. Moreover, when the researcher asked teachers of the said schools, they gave the same answers, and the said matters are always realized.

The Total mean rating of the supervisory capability of school heads in the urban area to lead their subordinate was 3.58, which were interpreted as very satisfactory. The result implied that school heads in urban areas manage their teachers, schools, and pupils.

According to Salendab and Dapitan (2021), the role of the school head or administrator is to encourage academic achievement. The success of the school's activities is credited to the school administrator. He or she is the pivot around which many parts of the school spin, as the person

responsible for every area of academic and administrative school operations. Schools may make a difference in student progress, and principals' leadership is a component in deciding this success.

Table 2 Means Rating of the Financial Support Implementation of School Heads
Under Urban area in four Schools of Cotabato City Division

Financial Support	Mean	Description
1. Equip the campus with electricity and Water facilities	3.64	Very Satisfactory
2. Provides a conducive classroom For learning	3.68	Very Satisfactory
3. Provides canteen	3.68	Very Satisfactory
4. Provides medical and dental clinic	3.18	Satisfactory
5. Provides functional and well-equipped laboratory	3.00	Satisfactory
6. Provide facilities for teaching-learning	3.36	Satisfactory
7. Provides science and computer laboratories	3.18	Satisfactory
8. Provides well-equipped technology Shops	3.07	Satisfactory
9. Provides cover court/gymnasium for Different activities	3.29	Satisfactory
10. Provides offices with furniture and Computer units	3.18	Satisfactory
Grand Mean	3.32	Satisfactory
Range Means		
1.0– 1.49	Poor	(1%-24 % of the condition is manifested)
1.50 – 2.49	Fair	(25%-49% of the condition is manifested)
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory	(50%-74% of the condition is manifested)
3.50 – 4.00	Very Satisfactory	(75%-100% of the condition is manifested)

Table 2. Administrative capability in terms of Financial Support Implementation of School Heads
Under Urban Area in four Schools of Cotabato City Division

Table 2 shows data on the Financial Support Implementation of school heads in urban areas in four schools in the Cotabato City Division. The table shows that on items: Equip the campus with electricity and water facilities rated very satisfactory with the mean ratings 3.64, same with Provides classroom conducive for learning 3.68, Provides canteen 3.68. The result indicated that the respondents were contented. When the researcher visited their schools, she observed the completeness of the said facilities. In addition, items on Provides medical and dental clinic, provides functional and well-equipped laboratory rated satisfactory

with the mean ratings of 3.18 and 3.00. It means they are only satisfied but need more facilities for improvement when asked.

Similarly, items on Provide facilities for the teaching-learning process with the mean ratings of 3.36, Provide science and computer laboratories 3.18, Provides well-equipped arts and technology shops 3.07, Provides cover court/gymnasium for different activities 3.29, Provides offices with furniture and computer units 3.18. The findings indicated that they were all satisfied, but when asked, some expect to have more computers and complete apparatus needed in their laboratory for pupils and teachers.

The grand mean rating of financial resources is 3.32, which was rated satisfactory. These findings make clear that teachers and school heads were satisfied with the school facilities they had.

Republic Act (RA) 9155, also known as the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, provides the overall framework for principal empowerment by strengthening principal and leadership goals and local school-based management within the context of transparency and local accountability.

Table 3. Means Rating of the Supervisory Implementation of School Heads
Under Rural area in four Schools of Maguindanao-1 Division

Supervisory	Mean	Description
1. Disseminate & discuss SIP With the teachers	2.89	Satisfactory
2. Establish supervisory mechanisms	3.21	Satisfactory
3. Conducts classroom observation	3.11	Satisfactory
4. Involve teachers & pupils in evaluation	3.00	Satisfactory
5. Inform teachers of evaluation results	2.95	Satisfactory
6. Conduct in-service trainings & seminars	2.75	Satisfactory
7. Conduct mentoring among teachers	2.89	Satisfactory
8. Encourage teachers to join professionals. Organizations	2.89	Satisfactory
9. Provides a systematic program to Enhance teaching effectiveness	3.18	Satisfactory
10. Organize teachers' schedules to allow Them to work on other related activities	3.04	Satisfactory
Grand Mean	2.89	Satisfactory
Range Means		
1.0– 1.49	Poor	(1%-24 % of the condition is manifested)
1.50 – 2.49	Fair	(25%-49% of the condition is manifested)
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory	(50%-74% of the condition is manifested)

3.50 – 4.00 Very Satisfactory (75%-100% of the condition is manifested)

Table 3. Administrative capability in terms of Supervisory Implementation of School Heads under Rural Area in four Schools of Maguindanao 1 Division

Table 3 shows data on the supervisory implementation of school heads in the rural area in four schools of Maguindanao 1 Division. As shown in the table, school heads of rural areas rated themselves satisfactory on the following items: Disseminate & discuss SIP with the mean ratings of 2.89, Establish supervisory mechanisms 3.21, Conducts classroom observation 3.11, Involve teachers and pupils in evaluation 3.00, Inform teachers on evaluation results 2.96, Conduct in-service training and seminars 2.75, Conduct mentoring among teachers 2.89, Encourages teacher to join professional organizations 2.93, Provides a systematic program to enhance teaching effectiveness 3.18, Organize teachers schedule to allow them to work other related activities 3.04. The results indicated that they were all satisfied, but when the researcher asked about item no. 1, they only heard the word SIP but did not discuss it.

Likewise, on item no.5, when asked, most of them said they were not informed of the evaluation results. Further, on item no. 2, Establish supervisory mechanisms according to teachers, school heads were satisfactorily doing their responsibility on this matter, and they were updated with this due to different training they had. Furthermore, different school heads met, but sometimes they failed to re-echo those things to their subordinates.

Furthermore, item no.6 conducts in-service training and seminars when asked. According to teachers, the school heads and coordinators in the particular schools were not doing their re-echo because of the financial crisis. Likewise, teachers were not interested in attending training and seminars because they did not have money to spend on it. They added that school heads and teachers said that it is ok for them if the schools have their MOOE to finance their needs in the said matter, like in the urban schools or other schools in the rural that have MOOE to finance their activities.

However, administrative action has been conceived in various ways, of which Gulick's POSDCoRB conceptualization is but one Gulick and Lyndall, (2020). Gregg (1957) has proposed seven components of the administrative action process: decision-making, planning, organizing, communicating, influencing, coordinating, and evaluating. The grand mean was rated satisfactory with a rating of 2.89. This shows that the respondents were satisfied with school heads. However, when asked, one of the teachers said that the school head went to their school once or twice a week.

According to LeMahieu et al. (1997), as cited by Salendab and Dapitan (2022), the duty of the school administrator is to promote quality in practice without prescribing or dictating that practice. In other words, teachers must be granted good decision-making and planning authority over school objectives and rules.

Table 4 Means Rating of the Financial Support Implementation of School Heads Under Rural area in four Schools of Maguindanao-1 Division

Financial Support	Mean	Description
1. Equip the campus with electricity and Water facilities	2.75	Satisfactory
2. Provides a conducive classroom For learning	2.93	Satisfactory
3. Provides canteen	2.64	Satisfactory
4. Provides medical and dental clinic	2.29	Fair
5. Provides functional and well-equipped laboratory	2.04	Fair
6. Provide facilities for teaching-learning process	2.79	Satisfactory
7. Provides science and computer laboratories	1.89	Fair
8. Provides well-equipped arts and technology Shops	1.93	Fair
9. Provides cover court/gymnasium for Different activities	2.11	Fair
10. Provides offices with furniture and Computer units	2.25	Fair
Grand Mean	2.36	Fair
Range Means		
1.0– 1.49	Poor	(1%-24 % of the condition is manifested)
1.50 – 2.49	Fair	(25%-49% of the condition is manifested)
2.50 – 3.49	Satisfactory	(50%-74% of the condition is manifested)
3.50 – 4.00	Very Satisfactory	(75%-100% of the condition is manifested)

Table 4. Administrative capability in terms of Financial Support Implementation of School Heads

Under Rural Area in four Schools of Maguindanao-1 Division

Table 4 shows data on the implementation of Financial Resources in rural areas in four Schools in the Maguindanao-1 Division. As shown in the table, teachers and school heads rated themselves satisfactory on items: Equip the campus with electricity and Water facilities 2.75, 2. Provides a conducive classroom For learning 2.93, provides canteen 2.64. The results show that the respondents were satisfied, but when the researcher visited each school, only the central school had water and electrical facility inside their classrooms, and others just connected with the nearest house when they had programs and water was pitching water from the well. Most schools were crowded, lacked chairs, and very hot inside the classrooms. About the canteen, only one school has, but there were so many vendors around the school.

Likewise, it provides a functional medical and dental clinic with a mean of 2.29 and provides functional and well-equipped laboratories with a mean of 2.04, which were rated as fair this shows that the respondents were not so satisfied. When asked, they had only one answer and said they did not see it even in the shadow of the laboratory and dental clinic. In contrast, according to the heads, how can they produce this kind of materials that they do not have funds for it; because the MOOE they had is not enough to fully finance the needs of the schools.

It is desirable, therefore, that the administrator be a generalist who can utilize in his decision-making a range of conceptual tools drawn from the humanities and behavioral sciences and who is able, at the same time to handle the several aspects of the school's operation with technical skill Gibson and Hunt,(1965).

Results on the difference between Administrative capabilities of School Heads in Urban and Rural Area

Table 5. The difference between the Administrative capabilities of School Heads in Urban and Rural Area

	Mean	t	df	significant	Description
URBAN	3.45				
RURAL	2.65	1.091	27	.285	not significant
Difference	.80				

Table 5. The difference between the Administrative capabilities of School Heads in Urban and Rural Area

To ascertain the difference in the Administrative capability of school heads in Urban and Rural areas, a T-test of independent Means was used, as shown in Table 5. As gleaned in the table, there is no significant difference between the administrative capabilities of school heads in urban and rural areas, with a test value of 1.091 and a coefficient of .285 at .05 levels of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the administrative capability of school heads of both urban and rural areas with the significant value of .285 implied that the school heads of both urban and rural areas have is not enough; the .80 means negligible.

Satisfactory implementation, such as supervisory and financial support to their schools. Though the mean is different findings, no significant result explains that since both schools in the urban and rural were under public schools and they were the same path to be followed, and the same funds were got from the government and the implementation of it lies on the administrative capability of the said school heads.

According to Thakral (2015), supervision is one of the academic aims of school heads that includes the task of monitoring of instruction, guiding teachers to improve the teaching and learning process, assessment of students' learning outcomes, evaluating the goals of programs, and also the administrative goals of supervision aimed at the proper management of the school facilities and resources.

Conclusions

In light of the findings, it is concluded that the school heads, both in urban and rural areas, were performing well, although there is little difference in their administrative capability of implementation. The difference between the administrative capability of school heads both in urban and rural areas was not significant since they were under public schools and they were on the same path to be followed and received funds from the government, and the implementation of it lies on the administrative capability of the said school heads.

Therefore, it is recommended that all school heads, especially in rural areas, attend more training and seminars to strengthen their skills in managing schools and stakeholders. It is also recommended for school heads to seek full support from Dep-Ed leaders to improve their funds for the betterment of pupils' education and spend the MOOE of the schools into their proper allocation.

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CHAPTER 2

BALANCING TRADITION AND MODERNITY: VIETNAMESE EDUCATION IN THE GLOBAL FLOW

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ABSTRACT

This chapter analyzes the intersection between Eastern educational traditions and Western educational innovations in the Vietnamese education system under the influence of globalization. Vietnamese education is profoundly influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism, emphasizing a love of learning, respect for teachers, and social responsibility. However, since the late 19th century, and especially after the Doi Moi reforms (1986), Vietnamese education has incorporated many Western elements such as critical thinking, academic freedom, and modern teaching methods. Eastern educational traditions continue to play an important role through subjects like culture, history, and ethics in the curriculum. Meanwhile, Western educational methods such as project-based learning, experiential learning, and critical thinking have transformed the approach to education. At the elementary level, methods like Montessori and Reggio Emilia encourage learning through experience. At the secondary and tertiary levels, the focus is on developing critical thinking and self-learning abilities. However, the heavy emphasis on exams, performance pressures, and the culture of respect for teachers can limit creative thinking. This study analyzes literature, compares education policies, and interviews experts to clarify the combination of tradition and modernity. The results show that Vietnam has made progress in integrating both educational systems, but adjustments to the curriculum are still needed to maintain ethical values, promote experiential learning, and incorporate technology. Balancing tradition and modernity help Vietnamese education preserve its cultural identity while integrating internationally.

Keywords: *Critical thinking, Eastern educational traditions, Globalization, Vietnamese education system, Western innovations*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental foundation for the cultural and social development of every country, particularly Vietnam. Over thousands of years, education has not only transmitted knowledge but also shaped cultural values, ethics, and national identity. The history of Vietnamese education has been profoundly influenced by major cultures, such as Confucianism and Buddhism from the East, along with strong influences from Western culture, especially during the colonial period and the subsequent modernization and globalization phases.

Eastern educational traditions, especially Confucianism, have deeply embedded ethical values in the Vietnamese consciousness, promoting respect for learning, reverence for teachers, and the importance of family. This has created an educational culture that emphasizes discipline, respect for knowledge, and the role of teachers. The Eastern education system also stresses collectivism and social responsibility. From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, under the influence of colonization and globalization, Vietnam began to be exposed to the Western education system, bringing modern ideas about science, critical thinking, and individualization in learning. Since then, the Vietnamese education system has entered a phase of intense interaction between Eastern and Western educational cultures. The adoption of progressive Western elements has contributed to the modernization of teaching methods and curriculum content, integrating Vietnam into the global education stream.

Since the Doi Moi reforms (1986), Vietnam's education system has undergone numerous significant reforms to adapt to the demands of the era and the development of the country. This period not only marks economic opening but also extensive integration into global education. Western educational thinking, particularly in organization, management, and teaching methods, has gradually been integrated into the national education system from primary to tertiary levels.

Vietnam's education reform policy has consistently emphasized preserving traditional values while absorbing the essence of modern education to meet the needs of societal development and the labor market requirements in the context of globalization. The harmonious combination of Eastern and Western educational cultures has become an important issue in the process of educational reform in Vietnam. This requires a balance between preserving traditional values and embracing new elements, while maintaining national identity in the process of global integration.

In this context, this research paper will analyze how Vietnam balances Eastern educational traditions with Western influences in the national education system.

Table 1. The Intersection of Eastern and Western Education in the Vietnamese Education System

Content	Details
Cultural Influence on Vietnamese Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Western education systems. - Confucianism emphasizes ethics, respect for learning, reverence for teachers, discipline, and collectivism. - The West brings critical thinking, scientific methods, and individualization in learning.
The East-West Interaction Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late 19th - early 20th century: Exposure to Western education. - Doi Moi era (1986 - present): Education reforms for global integration. - Combining the preservation of traditional values with the adoption of modern educational excellence.
Impact on Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eastern traditions help students respect knowledge, value discipline, and family. - Western education promotes creativity, critical thinking, and active learning. - Creating a combination of collectivism and personal development.
Challenges and Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenges: Balancing national identity preservation and global educational integration.

- Opportunities: Learning from advanced educational models, enhancing training quality, and developing human resources to meet international needs.

The main goal of this book chapter is to analyze and clarify the balance between Eastern educational traditions and Western thinking influences in Vietnam's national education system. This study focuses on examining education from primary to university levels to understand how these two educational cultures interact, merge, and impact the development of Vietnamese education.

Specifically, this paper will explore:

1. The integration of traditional Eastern values and modern Western teaching methods: How Vietnam's education system preserves traditional values while adopting advanced educational methods.
2. The influence of Eastern and Western cultures on students: Evaluating how these two educational cultures affect behavior, thinking, and learning outcomes.
3. Challenges and opportunities in maintaining national identity during the global education integration process: Clarifying the difficulties and opportunities that integration brings.

Key research questions:

1. How can Vietnam balance Eastern educational traditions with Western innovations in the national education system?
2. What specific impacts do Eastern and Western cultures have on students from primary to university levels?
3. What approaches can help preserve national identity in Vietnamese education while integrating into globalization?

These questions will be addressed through the analysis of cultural, historical, and educational policy factors in Vietnam, primarily from the Doi Moi period (1986) to the present.

2. THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Eastern culture in Vietnamese education

Traditional Eastern education, especially in East Asian countries such as China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, has always been associated with profound cultural values, including ethics, family, filial piety, and respect for knowledge. These values are conveyed and emphasized through the classical works of Confucianism and Buddhism, two major ideologies that have strongly influenced education and the way of life of the Vietnamese people. According to Ho (2011) and Ha (2016), Eastern education does not only focus on transmitting knowledge but also aims to cultivate individuals with strong moral values, with particular attention to family and social relationships. Students are not only taught specialized knowledge but also educated in filial piety toward parents, respect for teachers, and love for fellow citizens. These core values help shape a person's character in society.

The importance of family and society in education is reflected in the traditional examination system, particularly the Confucian imperial examination, where knowledge was regarded as a pathway to social advancement. Education in Eastern traditions is not only a process of learning but also a journey of self-cultivation, family governance, state administration, and world peace (Tran, 1993; Giang, 1996; Nguyen, 2024). Education is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about moral development and contributing to the creation of a better society. Confucianism, which has deeply influenced Vietnamese society, upholds values such as "Ren, Li, Yi, Zhi, Xin" (Confucius, 2000), shaping ethical standards and social norms. Duong (1980), Ho (2006), and Ha (2014) argue that Confucian education not only emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge but also

requires students to develop moral character through respect for traditions and adherence to social norms.

Besides Confucianism, Buddhism also plays an important role in education, with its philosophy of compassion, tolerance, and mindfulness (Nguyen, 1998; Thich, 2008). Buddhist education focuses on developing inner peace and a deep understanding of cause and effect, fostering a learning environment based on equality and peace (Tran, 2016; Dao, 2020). However, both ideologies emphasize the importance of obedience and respect for elders, creating a learning environment where students must adhere to strict rules. Although the traditional Eastern education system has many positive values, it sometimes lacks encouragement for creative and individual thinking, instead favoring compliance and imitation (Tran, 2022).

2.2. The influence of Western thinking on Vietnamese education

While Eastern education emphasizes tradition, ethics, and social responsibility, Western education places more importance on the development of critical thinking, academic freedom, and individual creativity. According to Dewey (1938) and Nguyen (2012), Western educational philosophy focuses on encouraging students to freely explore, learn through practical experience, and develop critical thinking. These elements are essential in preparing students to become independent individuals capable of adapting to societal changes.

Academic freedom is one of the core values of Western education, allowing students to freely express their views, think critically, and develop personal skills (Barnett, 2018). Individual creativity is also a significant factor in Western education, encouraging students to cultivate innovation, problem-solving abilities, and the practical application of knowledge. This educational approach not only enables students to develop self-learning capabilities but also encourages them

to question and seek answers through experience. This is a major difference from traditional Eastern education, where knowledge is often transmitted by teachers and there is less encouragement for critical thinking or personal creativity (Tran, 2020; Tran, 2021).

Globalization and rapid technological advancements have significantly transformed education systems worldwide, including Vietnam. According to Altbach (2004b), Marginson & Van der Wende (2007), and Nguyen (2020), globalization has created an educational environment where cultural interactions are increasingly evident. Students are no longer limited to national education but also have access to global knowledge and teaching methodologies, expanding their perspectives and access to information.

The development of information and communication technology has changed the way teaching and learning are conducted. Many studies have shown that technology not only facilitates knowledge transmission but also fosters creativity and personal development in students (Jenkins, 2006). Technology enables students to access knowledge from around the world and engage in globally-oriented learning projects, enriching their learning experiences and enhancing their adaptability to the labor market in a globalized context (Lam, 2024).

In Vietnam, the combination of traditional education and Western influences has made the education system more diverse and flexible. Students are not only taught traditional moral values but also equipped with critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to integrate technology into learning (Nguyen, 2008; Nguyen, 2024).

Table 2. Influence of Eastern and Western Culture on Vietnamese Education

Content	Traditional Eastern Education	Western Education
Core Values	Ethics, family, filial piety, respect for knowledge	Critical thinking, academic freedom, individual creativity

Educational Philosophy	Self-cultivation, family governance, state administration, world peace	Learning through experience, personalized education
Impact on Students	Emphasizes discipline, respect for teachers, adherence to rules	Encourages creativity, questioning, independent thinking
Knowledge Acquisition	Learning through structured models, teacher-centered transmission	Self-learning, research, critical analysis, practical application
Learning Environment	Respects tradition, community-based learning	Open, flexible, promotes individual freedom
Challenges	Lacks creativity, weak critical thinking	Risk of losing traditional values
Impact of Globalization	Needs to preserve national identity in education	Integrates technology, expands global knowledge

2.3. Previous Studies on the East-West Cultural Interchange in Vietnamese Education

The interchange between Eastern and Western cultures in education has become a popular research topic in recent years. Many studies, both domestic and international, have addressed the opportunities and challenges that this integration brings to the education system in countries like Vietnam. Marginson (2011) pointed out that education in Asian countries is undergoing a significant transformation as it incorporates Western educational elements. This combination brings intellectual and skill-based benefits, particularly in developing students' critical thinking and creativity. However, the study also warns that excessive adoption of Western educational elements may lead to the loss of traditional cultural identity. In another study, Nguyen (1994) & Nguyen (2023) highlighted that the integration of traditional Eastern education with modern Western teaching methods in the Vietnamese education system has yielded positive outcomes. Students are

equipped not only with specialized knowledge but also with comprehensive thinking and life skills. However, the study also emphasizes that a reasonable balance must be maintained between preserving traditional values and embracing modern educational perspectives. International studies such as those by Watkins & Biggs (2001) have shown that students in Asian countries tend to adhere to traditional values such as respecting teachers and strictly following academic rules, whereas students in Western countries tend to have more freedom in exploration and creativity. This study suggests that integrating both approaches can yield optimal results for students' holistic development. According to Nguyen (2022), the application of Western educational methods in Vietnam is becoming increasingly popular, especially in international schools and joint education programs. However, the study also points out that preserving and promoting traditional cultural identity is a crucial factor in creating a distinctive Vietnamese education system. This, in turn, helps students develop national pride and a sense of community. Other studies by Pham & Pham (2012) & Nguyen (2020) also offer recommendations on balancing tradition and innovation in education. Pham & Pham emphasize that modern education must ensure comprehensive development, including both critical thinking and respect for traditional cultural values. Meanwhile, Nguyen argues that global educational integration should be based on mutual understanding and respect between different cultures. Overall, studies indicate that integrating traditional Eastern education with modern Western elements is essential for creating a well-rounded education system suited to globalization. However, this integration must be implemented in a balanced and selective manner to ensure that traditional values are preserved and developed amidst the process of integration and innovation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This chapter is designed using a descriptive and analytical research approach to clarify the cultural interplay between Eastern traditions and Western innovations in Vietnam's national education system, spanning from primary to tertiary education. This is a qualitative study that explores how cultural, social, and traditional educational elements of the East, particularly Confucianism and Buddhism, integrate and interact with Western innovations such as critical thinking, academic freedom, and individual creativity in Vietnam's educational curriculum. The study also aims to analyze how these changes occur at different educational levels, from primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school, to university. Consequently, the research provides an overview of the transformations in the national education system as it integrates into the globalized context, while identifying the challenges and opportunities that this cultural interplay brings. The descriptive research design helps to systematize the main characteristics and trends of East-West cultural integration in Vietnamese education. The description is carried out through the analysis of documents, textbooks, educational policies, and reports on national education. This helps to clarify the intersections between traditional and innovative elements in educational practices. Additionally, this study delves deeper into the differences in educational programs, teaching methods, and feedback from students, thereby comparing Eastern and Western elements in Vietnam's education system.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

To ensure the comprehensiveness and completeness of the collected data, the study employs various data collection tools and methods, including the analysis of documents, educational

policies, textbooks, and educational reports from primary to higher education levels. The selected materials include significant educational policies issued since the Doi Moi (1986) reform to the present, including the Education Law, the New General Education Program (2018), and other relevant guiding documents.

Textbooks are an essential data source as they directly reflect the teaching content and educational values transmitted to students. Analyzing textbooks from different educational levels helps to understand how Eastern cultural elements such as filial piety, respect for knowledge, and social ethics are integrated and transformed with Western educational elements such as critical thinking, individual creativity, and academic freedom. For example, textbooks in Ethics, History, Literature, and Civic Education are analyzed to examine the combination of traditional values and innovations. Furthermore, educational reports from the Ministry of Education and Training, international organizations such as UNESCO, and previous research on Vietnamese education provide extensive insights into how cultural integration occurs in education. Summary reports from schools, projects related to educational reform, and field studies from educational researchers are also crucial sources for analysis. Qualitative data is also collected through interviews with education experts, teachers, and students to gather opinions on changes in teaching content and learning methods, as well as the impacts of cultural interplay on learning and personal development.

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

Content analysis is the primary method used in this study. This method allows for the analysis of documents, policies, textbooks, and educational reports to identify Eastern and Western cultural elements in Vietnam's national education system. Content analysis focuses on comparing

the representation of traditional and modern values in educational texts and materials, thereby drawing conclusions about the integration of the two cultures. Specifically, content analysis is applied to examine cultural values such as filial piety, respect for knowledge, and ethical norms in Literature, History, and Ethics textbooks from primary to upper secondary education. Meanwhile, Western educational elements such as critical thinking, academic freedom, and individual creativity are analyzed through documents, policies, and textbooks in both social sciences and natural sciences, as well as in teaching methods at the university level. The comparative method is used to contrast Eastern traditional and Western modern elements in educational content. Differences in curricula across educational levels are analyzed to assess which cultural elements are being maintained, altered, or integrated. For instance, lessons about family and society in primary school textbooks are compared with lessons on personal freedom and social responsibility in secondary and university textbooks to examine shifts in educational perspectives. Educational policy analysis also helps to understand how traditional and modern elements are embedded in national education reform programs, particularly the New General Education Program introduced in 2018. This helps determine the extent of East-West cultural integration in Vietnamese education and assess the effectiveness of policies in balancing the preservation of traditions with the promotion of innovation. Finally, the study employs comparative analysis of reports from domestic and international educational organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of East-West educational integration in the context of globalization. Previous research and relevant statistical data will help clarify this trend and provide an overview of the future of Vietnamese education in a globalized context.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. The Influence of Eastern Culture on Vietnamese Education

The Vietnamese education system is deeply influenced by Eastern culture, particularly the values of Confucianism and Buddhism, which have been preserved and developed over many generations. These values not only shape educational methods but also provide a strong foundation for personal and social development. This influence is evident in three core aspects: the value of academic diligence, the principle of respect for teachers, and the important role of family and parents in education.

Table 3. The Influence of Eastern Culture on the Vietnamese Education System

Influencing Factor	Description	Evidence/Related Studies
Value of Studiousness	Learning is considered a crucial path to success. Students and parents invest heavily in education.	- Movement "Hoc tot, cham ngoan" (Tran, 2005; Thai, 2007) - 90% of students participate in extra classes (Bo GD&DT, 2018)
Respect for Teachers	Teachers not only impart knowledge but also guide students in ethics and values. Students show great respect for their teachers.	- Vietnamese Teachers' Day (November 20) (Nguyen, 1995; Nguyen, 2005) - Culture of greeting teachers and attentively listening to lessons (Nguyen, 2024; Tran, 2024)
Role of Family in Education	Families play a significant role in guiding and supervising their children's learning.	- Parents regularly attend meetings with teachers (Le, 2024; Thang, 2024) - Parents prepare for university entrance exams (Phan, 2024)

The value of academic diligence is a prominent feature of Eastern culture, and in Vietnam, it has become a key factor in the development of the education system. Confucian philosophy views education as the most important path for individuals to achieve success and advance in society. One of the key philosophies of Confucius emphasizes the importance of cultivating knowledge to develop one's character and contribute to society (Tran, 2005; Thai, 2007). Today, this value is still reflected in Vietnam's educational policies and learning culture. Primary, secondary, and university

education emphasize diligence and seriousness in studying, aiming not only to provide knowledge but also to help students develop holistically in both ethics and intellect.

A concrete example is the academic competition movements in schools, such as "Study Well, Behave Well" or "Excelling in School, Excelling at Home," which encourage students from primary to secondary levels not only to achieve high academic results but also to be diligent and virtuous. Furthermore, the widespread phenomenon of extra tutoring in Vietnam is evidence of the society's dedication to education. According to a report from the Ministry of Education and Training in 2018, more than 90% of secondary students in Vietnam attend extra classes outside of regular school hours to improve their knowledge and prepare for important exams (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018). This stems from the belief that education is the best path to success, prompting both students and parents to invest significantly in learning (Vu, 2019).

Another prominent aspect of the Vietnamese education system is the principle of respect for teachers, a value rooted in Confucian philosophy and deeply embedded in Vietnamese educational culture. Confucius emphasized the importance of the teacher-student relationship, in which the teacher not only imparts knowledge but also guides students in ethics and life principles (Nguyen, 1995). In Vietnam, this is clearly demonstrated through teacher appreciation ceremonies, such as Vietnamese Teachers' Day (November 20), which is an occasion for students and parents to express gratitude and respect for teachers.

Specifically, on this day, schools nationwide organize commemorative activities, including performances, gift-giving, and speeches honoring teachers' contributions. Students from primary to university levels prepare greeting cards, handwritten notes, and flowers to show their appreciation. This event not only serves as a celebration but also reinforces the cultural principle of respecting teachers in the Vietnamese education system, strengthening the bond between

teachers and students (Nguyen, 2005; Nguyen, 2024). Additionally, in everyday education, Vietnamese students are taught to respect and obey their teachers. The common practice of students standing up to greet teachers when they enter the classroom and attentively following their instructions exemplifies how the value of respect for teachers continues to be preserved and promoted in modern schools. At the university level, the teacher-student relationship extends beyond knowledge transmission to include career and life guidance after graduation (Nguyen, 2024; Tran, 2024).

The value of family plays an extremely important role in the Vietnamese education system, where the relationship between families and schools is considered a foundation for students' holistic development. Eastern traditions, particularly Confucianism, have always emphasized the role of the family in children's education, viewing the family as the "first school" for children (Le, 2024). This is reflected in the role of parents in shaping their children's education, from selecting schools and study methods to monitoring academic performance.

A specific example is the strong involvement of parents in regular parent-teacher meetings at Vietnamese schools. During these meetings, teachers share students' academic progress and behavior with parents, while also gathering feedback to collaborate on improving student performance. According to Thang, 2024; Phan, 2024, most parents actively participate in these meetings and believe they have a crucial responsibility in supporting their children's education. This highlights that the partnership between families and schools is a key factor in enhancing education quality.

Furthermore, recent studies indicate that the close relationship between schools and families plays a significant role in developing students' social skills and moral values. A real-world example is that schools in rural areas of Vietnam often have strong ties with the community and students'

families, where parents and teachers frequently cooperate to ensure that students not only excel academically but also develop ethically and personally (Phan, 2024). This close relationship extends beyond primary school to secondary and university levels, where parents actively oversee their children's studies and contribute opinions on educational processes. For example, during university entrance exams, parents not only worry about their children's test results but also make all necessary preparations, such as providing study materials and arranging accommodations during the exams. This demonstrates the high level of responsibility families take in supporting and ensuring that their children have the best learning environment (Thang, 2024).

In summary, the influence of Eastern culture on the Vietnamese education system is evident through traditional values such as academic diligence, respect for teachers, and the role of the family. These values not only shape Vietnam's modern education system but also create a unique identity where students are taught not only knowledge but also ethics and social responsibility. Although the education system is increasingly adopting new Western methods, the core values of Eastern traditions remain essential in fostering comprehensive education for Vietnamese students.

4.2. The Impact of Western Educational Methods on the Vietnamese Education System

In the context of globalization and international integration, the Vietnamese education system has absorbed many influences from Western educational methods. This has brought profound changes in teaching and learning approaches, particularly in aspects such as creative thinking, academic freedom, and fostering innovation in the learning environment.

Table 4. Influence of Western Educational Methods on the Vietnamese Education System

Influencing Factor	Key Characteristics	Illustrative Examples
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Creative Thinking and Self-Learning Ability	Encouraging students to ask questions, learn through practice and discussions	Montessori and Reggio Emilia methods in international schools in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Students engage in practical projects, developing teamwork skills	Vietnam National University, Hanoi implements research projects on technology and sustainable energy
Academic Freedom	Lecturers and students have flexibility in teaching and research	RMIT University Vietnam allows students to choose subjects and develop independent research projects
Encouraging Creativity	Applied in various fields, from arts to science and technology	"High School Scientific and Technical Innovation" competition, STEM programs at Hanoi - Amsterdam High School for the Gifted
International Educational Cooperation	Collaboration with foreign universities to enhance training quality	Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City collaborates with universities in Korea and Japan in research and education
Entrepreneurship and Innovation	Students develop business ideas and participate in startup competitions	"National Startup Competition" organized annually by the Ministry of Education and Training

These innovations not only improve education quality but also broaden students' perspectives, preparing them for challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing world. One of the key contributions of Western educational methods is the encouragement of creative thinking and self-learning ability. This approach focuses on stimulating curiosity, ensuring that students do not merely memorize knowledge but also ask questions and independently solve problems (Huang, 2007; Chen, 2015; Nguyen, 2024; Tran, 2024). This marks a significant difference from traditional teaching methods, which emphasize memorization and compliance. The new approach encourages students to learn through practice, discussion, and analysis, thereby developing critical thinking and the ability to apply knowledge to real-life situations (Nguyen, 2022).

In Vietnamese primary schools, the Montessori and Reggio Emilia methods are increasingly being adopted. These methods emphasize learning through real-world experiences and creative freedom. For example, in some international schools in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Montessori classes have been introduced with open learning environments, where children are free to choose activities and learn through hands-on experiences. This helps develop independent thinking skills from an early age (Alam, Alam, Chowdhury & Steiner, 2013).

At the university level, many institutions have adopted project-based learning (PBL). A prominent example is Vietnam National University, Hanoi, which has implemented project-based learning programs in its engineering and technology faculties. Students are required to undertake practical research projects, such as designing new technological products or addressing issues related to sustainable energy. This method enables students to acquire not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills and teamwork abilities, which are essential in modern work environments (Le, 2008; Le, 2011; Lam, 2024).

Academic freedom, a common concept in Western education, is also being increasingly applied in Vietnam, particularly at the university level. Academic freedom allows lecturers to be more flexible in their teaching methods and encourages students to freely choose research areas and develop personal ideas (To, 2019). This creates a flexible and creative learning environment where students can explore and develop fields they are truly passionate about. A typical example is RMIT University Vietnam, where students are encouraged to select subjects based on their interests and develop independent research projects. At RMIT, students can engage in research on blockchain technology, software development, or fashion design, providing them with opportunities to showcase their creative thinking and leadership skills (RMIT University, 2022).

Academic freedom also fosters international cooperation, particularly as many Vietnamese universities have established joint programs with foreign institutions. These programs not only provide students with access to advanced curricula but also expose them to international education standards. For example, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City has developed partnerships with universities in Korea and Japan, allowing students to participate in exchange programs and joint research, thereby expanding their academic and career opportunities (Nguyen, 2017; Nguyen, 2022).

Encouraging creativity is one of the greatest strengths of the Western education system. Creativity is promoted not only in the arts but also in science, engineering, and management. In Vietnam, creativity is becoming increasingly important in education, especially in international schools and bilingual programs. A concrete example is scientific and technical innovation competitions for high school students, such as the "High School Scientific and Technical Innovation" competition organized annually by the Ministry of Education and Training. This competition encourages students to develop innovative scientific projects, ranging from robotics

and software development to environmental biology research. These projects help students enhance their creative thinking, problem-solving skills, and teamwork abilities (Ministry of Education and Training, 2012; Prime Minister, 2017).

Additionally, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs are becoming increasingly popular in schools nationwide. These programs promote logical thinking and problem-solving skills through hands-on activities. A notable example is Hanoi - Amsterdam High School for the Gifted, which actively implements STEM-based learning programs, including robotics programming, biotechnology research, and smart technology development. These activities not only familiarize students with new technologies but also enhance their creativity and critical thinking skills (Thanh, 2023; Phan, 2024).

Another highlight is startup competitions for university students, such as the "National Startup Competition," organized annually by the Ministry of Education and Training in collaboration with other organizations. This competition encourages students to develop innovative startup ideas, ranging from mobile applications to eco-friendly products. Outstanding ideas may receive funding and support from investment funds, enabling students to not only build their careers but also contribute to the country's economic development (Prime Minister, 2017).

Although Western educational methods bring many benefits, challenges must also be addressed. One of the biggest challenges is the difference in thinking between Eastern and Western education. While Western education emphasizes freedom, creativity, and individual exploration, Eastern education often stresses discipline, compliance, and rote memorization. This sometimes creates conflicts in teaching and learning approaches, especially when new methods are introduced in Vietnam (Pham, 2005; Altbach, 2004a; Hayden & Lam, 2010; Nguyen, 2020). However, with global integration and the need to improve education quality, adopting advanced Western

educational methods will open many development opportunities for Vietnamese students. These methods not only enhance creative thinking and problem-solving skills but also make students more adaptable to international work environments.

In addition to Vietnam, many other Asian countries have also faced the challenge of balancing Eastern educational traditions with the modern influences of the West. South Korea is a typical example, where education is deeply influenced by Confucian thought but has also been strongly modernized according to the Western educational model. The South Korean government has integrated modern teaching methods such as project-based learning, critical thinking, and the application of technology in education, while still maintaining traditional values such as respect for teachers and the importance of academic achievement (Luong, N, 2025). Japan has also followed a similar path by combining traditional ethical values with modern educational methods. The Japanese education system focuses not only on knowledge but also emphasizes humanistic values, ethics, and social responsibility (OECD, 2018). This is reflected in the curriculum, where students are not only taught academic knowledge but also educated about discipline, self-motivation, and teamwork. From these lessons, it can be seen that the harmonious integration of tradition and modernity in education is a long-term process, requiring flexible adjustments to ensure the sustainable development of the education system in the context of globalization.

In conclusion, the impact of Western educational methods on the Vietnamese education system has brought many positive changes, from developing creative thinking and academic freedom to encouraging innovation across all fields. Despite existing challenges, if applied flexibly and in accordance with cultural and social characteristics, these advanced educational methods will undoubtedly contribute to improving education quality and helping Vietnam meet international standards in the future.

4.3. The Harmony Between Tradition and Innovation in Vietnam's Education Curriculum

Vietnam has made significant progress in integrating traditional Eastern educational values with advanced Western educational methods. This not only preserves the national cultural identity but also enhances students' competencies to meet the demands of a modern, globally integrated society.

Table 5. The Harmony Between Tradition and Innovation in Vietnam's Education Curriculum

Education Level	Traditional Elements	Innovative Elements	Illustrative Examples
Primary School	Moral education, respect for teachers, eagerness to learn	Montessori and Reggio Emilia methods to develop creativity and social skills	Some international primary schools apply experiential learning models
Secondary School	Discipline, respect for teachers	Project-based learning, collaborative learning	Applied in science and technology subjects to encourage critical thinking
University	Respect for teachers, social responsibility	Academic freedom, access to advanced research methods	Vietnamese universities expanding independent research and international cooperation in training
Extracurricular Activities	Volunteer movements, community responsibility	Encouraging social skill development and leadership abilities	Students participating in extracurricular activities and community projects

At the primary level, traditional education focuses on shaping students' character and morals, emphasizing values such as eagerness to learn, respect for teachers, and deference to elders (Tran, 2020). These values continue to be upheld in today's curriculum while integrating modern educational methods to foster creativity and social skills. Advanced Western educational approaches, such as Montessori and Reggio Emilia, have been introduced in some primary schools, enabling children to learn through personal exploration and experiential activities. This approach offers flexibility in learning, encourages independent thinking, and enhances problem-solving

skills. However, this innovation remains balanced with traditional values, as students are taught principles of politeness, respect for elders, and adherence to social norms.

In secondary education, Vietnam continues to uphold traditional values such as discipline and respect for teachers while simultaneously encouraging students to develop critical and creative thinking through advanced educational methods (Phan, 2024). The new secondary education curriculum places greater emphasis on self-research, questioning, and discussing social and scientific issues. Modern teaching approaches, including project-based learning and cooperative learning, have been adopted, particularly in science and technology subjects. This combination helps students develop self-learning abilities and teamwork skills while maintaining a foundation of ethics and traditional values (Huynh, 2024). Additionally, extracurricular activities and volunteer movements are encouraged to help students develop social skills and civic awareness (Vien, 2024).

At the university level, the harmony between tradition and innovation is most evident. Traditional values such as respect for teachers and social responsibility remain integral, while universities have begun adopting advanced Western teaching and research methods to support students' holistic development (Dao, 2024). Academic freedom, a crucial concept in Western education systems, has gradually been introduced into Vietnamese universities, allowing students to freely choose research areas and express their personal viewpoints (Do, 2023). Although policy limitations persist, the expansion of academic freedom has empowered students to take greater initiative in their studies and research while encouraging their participation in practical research projects. The integration of traditional values with modern methodologies in higher education not only enhances students' professional competencies but also prepares them for participation in the global labor market (Lam,

2024). However, the greatest challenge remains balancing the preservation of traditional ethical values with meeting the demands of modern society.

4.4. Challenges and Opportunities

The integration of traditional Eastern educational values and modern Western teaching methods brings many benefits, but it also presents several challenges.

Table 6. Challenges and Opportunities in the Integration of Traditional and Modern Education in Vietnam

Aspect	Challenge	Opportunity	Example
Educational Thinking	Contradiction between adherence to tradition and critical thinking	Adopting advanced teaching methods encourages creativity	Project-based learning (PBL) at Hanoi National University
Examination System	Pressure from exams and performance	Education reform to reduce dependence on exams and enhance practical skills	Some schools use competency-based assessments instead of relying solely on exam scores
Teacher's Role	Teachers have absolute authority, students are hesitant to express opinions	Modern teacher training, shifting to a guiding role and encouraging independent thinking	Teacher training programs on active teaching methods
International Integration	Cultural differences may hinder the acceptance of new methods	International collaboration helps improve the quality of education and global workforce training	International training programs with universities
Educational Resources	Lack of infrastructure and finances for educational innovation	Support from international organizations, investment in modern educational systems	UNESCO-funded educational improvement projects

One of the biggest challenges is the contradiction between adhering to tradition and developing critical thinking, a key aspect of Western education. In Vietnam, traditional education, heavily influenced by Confucianism, emphasizes respect and adherence to existing values and authority. Teachers are often seen as the ultimate transmitters of knowledge, and students must strictly follow established norms (Huynh, 2024). While this helps maintain order in education, it

may hinder the development of creative and critical thinking skills among students. In the Western educational context, critical thinking and the ability for free creativity are crucial elements that help students explore and develop new solutions to learning and social issues (To, 2016). This contradiction sometimes makes it difficult and inconsistent to implement Western educational methods in Vietnam.

Another challenge comes from the examination system and performance pressure. In Vietnam, students and parents often face significant pressure from exams, especially high school graduation and university entrance exams. This system leads to an education process overly focused on achieving high marks and passing exams, rather than encouraging creative thinking and the exploration of new knowledge. This not only limits the development of critical thinking but also creates a stressful and pressurized environment for students (Bùi & colleagues, 2024). Furthermore, while Western education emphasizes learning through experience and practice, the Vietnamese education system is still largely based on traditional methods, focusing on theory and rote memorization. This limits students' opportunities to apply knowledge in real-world situations and develop the skills needed for the modern labor market (Dang & Nguyen, 2004; Do, 2018). Recent educational reforms have recognized this issue and are attempting to reduce reliance on exams, but this process still faces many difficulties and will take time.

Moreover, the culture of respecting teachers and elders in the traditional education system can create a barrier to developing critical thinking and the ability to express personal views among students. In Vietnam, teachers are seen as having absolute authority in the classroom, and students are often reluctant to debate or challenge the opinions of their teachers, even when they have their own thoughts or ideas (Nguyen & colleagues, 2009; Dong, 2018). Although Western education encourages students to discuss, debate, and freely express their views, this is not yet widely

practiced in the Vietnamese education system. Encouraging critical thinking in a traditional educational system requires a fundamental change in the attitudes of both teachers and students. To overcome this challenge, schools need to train teachers in modern teaching methods, where they play not only the role of knowledge transmitters but also guides who encourage students to think independently and explore knowledge on their own.

Despite many challenges, the integration of Eastern educational values and Western teaching methods also presents numerous opportunities for the development of education in Vietnam, especially in the context of international integration and globalization. One of the greatest opportunities is access to advanced teaching methods from developed countries. These methods not only help improve teaching quality but also open new horizons for learning and research for Vietnamese students. For example, international training programs and collaborations between universities, both domestic and foreign, are increasingly growing. These programs not only bring updated specialized knowledge but also help students acquire global skills and working methods. This is particularly important in an increasingly competitive world that demands diverse skills (Nguyen, 2005). Furthermore, the combination of traditional Eastern values, such as solidarity and social responsibility, with modern learning methods like project-based learning and encouraging creativity helps students develop more holistically. In many universities in Vietnam, these modern teaching methods have helped students not only gain specialized knowledge but also develop soft skills such as teamwork, time management, and problem-solving (Tran, 2006;)

To, 2006; Tran, 2024). For instance, Hanoi National University has applied project-based learning models in some engineering and technology programs. Students participate in real-world projects such as designing renewable energy systems or developing management software, which helps them master knowledge and apply it in practice. This allows students to approach problems

from different perspectives and develop independent thinking and creativity, both crucial skills in the context of globalization (Bui & colleagues, 2024). Moreover, educational cultural integration helps Vietnam raise its position internationally. Students trained in programs that combine Eastern and Western values are more capable of working effectively in multicultural environments, which is crucial for international companies. They can contribute not only to the development of the country but also to the growth of global organizations they work for. Another opportunity from educational cultural integration is the potential to develop a high-quality education system in Vietnam. International educational programs, such as bilingual programs or joint training, are increasingly popular and attract many students. This not only improves the level and competitiveness of Vietnamese students on the international labor market but also creates a high-quality workforce for the sustainable development of the country (Hoang, 2005). In addition, international integration helps schools in Vietnam access more financial and technical resources from educational organizations and international partners. Education projects funded by international funds, such as the World Bank's Education Support Fund or UNESCO's International Education Organization, not only improve educational infrastructure but also provide resources for teacher training, curriculum development, and education management reforms (UNESCO, 2021).

In summary, the combination of Eastern and Western educational values in Vietnam presents both challenges and opportunities. The biggest challenges are likely the contradiction between adhering to tradition and developing critical thinking, as well as the pressure from the examination system. However, with reform efforts and international integration, Vietnam is gradually leveraging the opportunities from advanced educational methods to improve education quality, create a high-quality workforce, and contribute positively to the country's sustainable development in the context of globalization.

5. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

5.1. Improving the Educational Curriculum

In the process of modernizing the national education system, improving the curriculum plays a crucial role in preserving traditional Eastern values while adopting advanced Western educational methods. To achieve this balance, the curriculum should be designed with appropriate adjustments. One key solution is enhancing flexibility in the curriculum, allowing harmonious integration of traditional subjects and innovative content from modern educational approaches. Traditional values such as respect for teachers and reverence for education, the spirit of studiousness, respect for elders, and care for family and community should be naturally embedded into teaching content, helping students understand and internalize these values from an early age. Simultaneously, modern learning methods such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Experiential Learning should be incorporated into the curriculum to develop students' creative thinking, critical analysis, and self-learning abilities.

Table 7. Application Level of Modern Educational Methods in Vietnam's Curriculum

Method	Application Level (High/Medium/Low)	Typical Example
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Medium	Some universities apply it in engineering programs
Experiential Learning	Low	Mainly used in international training programs
Life Skills Training	Medium	Integrated into ethics and citizenship education

These learning activities not only help students master knowledge but also enhance their ability to solve real-world problems. The balance between tradition and modernity should also be

clearly reflected in designing ethics and life skills subjects. It is necessary to create ethics courses that emphasize family values, community, and cultural traditions. Additionally, life skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and time management should be integrated into the curriculum from primary to secondary school. This ensures students develop academically while becoming responsible citizens capable of adapting to globalization. It is crucial to emphasize that curriculum improvements must be implemented step-by-step with thorough research to avoid generational disconnects and ensure traditional cultural values are preserved alongside modern educational methods.

5.2. Enhancing Teacher Competence

A core factor in improving education quality is enhancing teachers' teaching capacity. Teachers play a vital role in imparting knowledge and cultural values to students; thus, they must be fully equipped with skills and knowledge to successfully integrate teaching methods from both Eastern and Western traditions. To achieve this goal, new teacher training programs should be developed and implemented, focusing on enhancing the ability to integrate traditional and modern teaching methods. Teachers need training to deeply understand the role of traditional values in education and how to apply these values in daily teaching practices. Simultaneously, they should be equipped with modern pedagogical skills, from using technology in teaching to interactive methods such as Problem-Based Learning and Collaborative Learning. Enhancing teacher competence requires a combination of theoretical and practical training. Teachers should have opportunities to attend advanced courses domestically and abroad or participate in international teacher exchange programs to broaden their perspectives and learn teaching experiences from developed countries.

Table 8. Percentage of Teachers Trained in Modern Teaching Methods (2024)

Training Type	Participation Rate (%)	Application Example
Domestic Training	70%	Short-term courses at the Ministry of Education
International Training	15%	Collaboration with foreign universities
Online Learning	50%	MOOCs on creative teaching methods

Additionally, organizing seminars, short-term training courses, and annual professional development programs will help teachers update new knowledge and continuously improve their teaching skills. Furthermore, to promote East-West integration, teachers should be encouraged to innovate in lesson planning and develop flexible teaching methods suitable for each class and subject. They should be able to design learning activities that preserve tradition while encouraging students to develop creative thinking and self-learning.

Finally, one critical solution is establishing a scientific and fair teacher evaluation mechanism. Specific criteria should be developed to assess teaching quality, focusing on both knowledge delivery and the ability to nurture students' critical and creative thinking. This ensures education quality and motivates teachers to continuously improve.

5.3. Innovating Teaching and Assessment Methods

In the era of rapid technological advancement, integrating technology into education is essential to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness. However, alongside adopting new technologies and methods, the education system must preserve traditional cultural values. One of the most important technologies today is E-learning systems and online teaching tools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching became widespread and should continue to be developed to

ensure learning flexibility. However, technology use must align with educating students about digital ethics to prevent issues like internet misuse or disrespect for traditional cultural values in online learning. Modern teaching methods such as Project-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, and Experiential Learning should be expanded in Vietnam’s education system. These methods not only develop students' critical and creative thinking but also connect academic knowledge with real-world practice. Learning projects can include topics related to traditional culture, encouraging students to deeply understand the nation’s cultural values.

Another key factor is innovating student assessment methods. Currently, Vietnam’s assessment system relies heavily on exams and theoretical tests, creating excessive pressure on academic performance.

Table 9. Technology Application and Assessment Methods in Vietnam’s Education

Factor	Prevalence Level	Implementation Example
E-learning	High	Widely adopted post-COVID-19
Formative Assessment	Low	Some schools experimenting but not widespread
Summative Assessment	Very High	Exams still heavily rely on final scores

This approach discourages holistic student development, particularly creativity and critical thinking. Therefore, assessment methods should shift toward formative evaluation instead of solely summative evaluation. Process-based assessment allows students to demonstrate their abilities through projects, presentations, and practical activities, reducing exam pressure and promoting proactive, creative learning.

Finally, maintaining traditional cultural values during teaching method innovation is crucial. Traditional cultural education is not just knowledge transmission but also building respect and preserving national identity. Cultural teaching activities should be integrated into subjects like history, literature, and ethics, helping students better understand national heritage and cultural values.

6. CONCLUSION

Through analysis and discussion, the chapter clarifies the blending of Eastern educational traditions with Western innovations in Vietnam's education system. Eastern traditions, with deep influences from Confucianism and Buddhism, have imparted core values such as a passion for learning, respect for teachers, and social responsibility. These values have become the ethical and humanistic foundation that shapes the thinking and behavior of many generations of students. Meanwhile, Western education has introduced modern methods such as critical thinking, project-based learning, and the application of technology, helping students develop creativity, self-learning abilities, and better prepare for the global labor market. However, this integration also presents many challenges, particularly in balancing cultural identity preservation with the adoption of modern elements. To address this issue, the chapter proposes several specific policy recommendations.

First, the educational curriculum needs improvement by integrating traditional values into subjects like culture, history, and ethics, while applying modern teaching methods such as project-based learning and critical thinking to develop creativity and problem-solving skills. The curriculum should be designed flexibly to allow students to develop both knowledge and social skills comprehensively. Second, improving teacher capacity is key. Teacher training programs

should be implemented to help educators adopt and apply modern teaching methods effectively. At the same time, teachers should also be trained to preserve and promote traditional values in their teaching, ensuring that students maintain a love for learning, respect for teachers, and social responsibility. Encouraging teachers to use technology to support teaching more effectively is also an important part of this process. Third, reforming assessment methods is necessary to reduce exam pressure and encourage students to develop comprehensively. Instead of solely relying on exam results, the evaluation system should focus on the learning process and students' personal development, including creativity, critical thinking, and self-learning. This will help make the education system more flexible and suitable for modern societal needs. Fourth, the application of technology in education is a crucial step to improve teaching and learning quality. Investments should be made in online learning systems and modern teaching support tools, while ensuring that the use of technology does not diminish traditional values but instead helps to convey them more effectively. Developing a digital platform to connect teachers, students, and parents is also part of this strategy. Finally, strengthening international cooperation in education is an important factor to help improve the quality of Vietnam's education system and access the most advanced teaching methods. Student and teacher exchange programs and international university training collaborations should be encouraged. This will not only help improve students' competencies but also provide them with the opportunity to access global knowledge and skills, better preparing them for the international labor market.

Table 10. The Integration of Tradition and Modernity in Vietnam's Education

Factor	Eastern Tradition	Western Modernity
Core Values	Passion for learning, respect for teachers, family values	Critical thinking, academic freedom, creativity
Teaching Methods	Memorization, strict discipline	Project-based learning, experiential learning, interaction
Student Assessment	Heavy reliance on exams, emphasis on grades	Process-based assessment, focus on skills
Role of Teachers	Knowledge transmitter, high authority	Facilitator, encourages self-learning
Technology Use	Limited, primarily traditional teaching	Widespread, supports online learning, digital tools

Future research could focus on exploring in greater depth how traditional and modern values are integrated in different regions, as well as assessing the effectiveness of modern educational methods when applied in Vietnamese classrooms. Studying the impact of family culture on the development of students' creative and critical thinking is also a potential area of study. Additionally, exploring the potential of technology-based and experiential learning methods in supplementing traditional values is another important direction. By implementing the above recommendations, Vietnam can build a robust education system that harmonizes tradition and modernity, helping students develop comprehensively and become responsible global citizens, proud of their national identity. This education system will not only meet the needs of societal development but also preserve traditional cultural values, creating a generation of citizens who are both modern and connected to their roots.

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CHAPTER 3

Debate for a Connected World: Preparing Thai EFL Students for the Challenges And Opportunities of the IoT Age

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of debate on communication and critical thinking skills among Thai EFL high school students. Forty-three Grade 10 students in Bangkok participated in debates on digital age topics, including social media, plastic use, video games, and technology. Through observation, analysis of student performance, and post-debate discussions, the study examined students' speaking performance, research strategies, and critical engagement with complex issues. The findings revealed significant improvements in students' English speaking abilities (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension) and enhanced critical thinking skills. Specifically, students demonstrated improved ability to research, analyze, evaluate information, formulate arguments, and engage in constructive dialogue. This study highlights debate's transformative potential as a pedagogical tool in EFL, fostering both language and intellectual growth essential for 21st-century success.

Keywords: EFL, debate, communication skills, critical thinking, digital literacy, Internet of Things (IoT), technology.

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, effective communication and critical thinking are essential (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2015). These skills are particularly important for Generation Z students in Thailand. They are growing up in an increasingly digitalized society and constantly encounter information from various online sources. They need to be able to distinguish between fact and fiction, evaluate different perspectives, and express their thoughts clearly and precisely. Educators must equip these students with the skills to thrive in this environment.

Debate is a valuable tool for developing communication and critical thinking skills. It provides a dynamic platform for active learning in the EFL context. Students use English to express their ideas, challenge opposing viewpoints, and construct persuasive arguments. Debate also enhances digital literacy by encouraging students to research and evaluate online information. This helps them navigate the digital landscape effectively (Coiro et al., 2020).

However, the research lacks a specific exploration of the debate's impact on Thai EFL high school students. There is a need to examine its influence on their digital fluency, engagement, and research skills. This is especially important in the context of the Internet of Things (IoT). Previous studies have explored the benefits of debate in EFL. However, few have focused on the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the digital age. The increasing prominence of IoT technologies is a key factor. This study aims to address this gap. It will examine how debate can empower Thai EFL learners. The goal is to develop them into confident communicators, critical thinkers, and responsible digital citizens.

This research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussion about effective teaching practices in the digital age. It investigates the impact of debate on Thai EFL high school students.

The findings will offer valuable insights for EFL educators. They can use these insights to integrate debate into their curricula. This will help students navigate the complexities of the digital world with confidence and competence (Lee, 2021; Miller & Peterson, 2025).

Methodology:

The study employed a narrative review approach. This approach investigated the impact of debate on the development of communication and critical thinking skills. The participants were Thai EFL high school students. The research involved 43 Grade 10 students. These students actively participated in debates. The debates centered on topics relevant to the digital age. Examples of these topics include social media, technology, and environmental issues.

Data collection involved analyzing student performance during the debates. This analysis included several factors, including their ability to research, formulate persuasive arguments, and engage in constructive dialogues. The study also examined students' research strategies, including their use of online platforms and the collaborative process during the debates.

This methodological approach allowed for the identification of improvements in language skills. It also enabled the assessment of enhanced critical thinking abilities. Examples of these abilities are evaluating diverse perspectives and identifying biases. Moreover, formulating well-supported conclusions was assessed. The study offers valuable insights into the benefits of debate. It highlights its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool in EFL education.

English Speaking in EFL Context

English speaking within the EFL context presents unique challenges and opportunities. Unlike native English-speaking environments, EFL classrooms often lack the immersive context

necessary for natural language acquisition (O'Connor, 2023). This necessitates innovative pedagogical approaches. These approaches should foster genuine communication and cultivate confidence in learners. In Thailand, EFL students, particularly those in Generation Z, are digital natives. They navigate a constant influx of information, primarily in their native language (Miller & Peterson, 2025).

This section argues that EFL educators face the challenge of limited immersive context and student apprehension. However, they can leverage students' digital fluency. Educators can also incorporate dynamic activities like debate. These strategies cultivate practical English communication skills. For example, the challenge lies in students' limited exposure to authentic English conversations outside the classroom. This leads to difficulties in understanding colloquialisms or adapting to varying accents. Conversely, the opportunity arises from leveraging students' existing digital literacy. This can be done by integrating online resources and multimedia into lessons. Examples include using interactive language learning apps or creating digital presentations. While students may struggle with applying English speaking skills in real-world scenarios, their digital fluency can be leveraged. It can be used to create engaging learning experiences. These experiences connect classroom learning with the digital world students inhabit.

One key challenge in the Thai EFL context is overcoming apprehension and a lack of confidence. Many students experience this when speaking English (Lee, 2021). Cultural factors can hinder students' willingness to participate actively in spoken communication. These factors include a fear of making mistakes and a focus on grammatical accuracy over fluency (Smith & Williams, 2018, as cited in O'Connor, 2023). For instance, students might hesitate to participate in open discussions. This hesitation may stem from a fear of being ridiculed for pronunciation errors.

Alternatively, they may prioritize writing grammatically perfect sentences over engaging in spontaneous conversation. To address this, EFL instructors need to create a supportive and encouraging classroom environment. In this environment, students feel comfortable taking risks and experimenting with the language. Incorporating interactive activities can also help. Activities like debates provide a structured and engaging platform. Students can practice their speaking skills while developing their critical thinking abilities.

EFL teachers must also recognize the importance of catering to Generation Z students. These learners have unique learning styles and motivations. They are accustomed to fast-paced digital interactions and multimedia-rich content. Therefore, they may require more dynamic and engaging approaches to language learning (Jones, 2020). Specifically, they are likely more engaged by visual and interactive content. Examples include short videos, infographics, or interactive online quizzes. They may be less engaged by traditional textbook-based exercises. Integrating technology and multimedia resources into speaking instruction can capture their attention. It can also provide authentic and relevant contexts for language use. Examples include using virtual reality (VR) simulations for role-playing scenarios.

Another example is having students create and present digital presentations. Choosing topics relevant to their interests can also help. These strategies can make learning more engaging and relatable. By connecting classroom learning with the digital world students are familiar with, EFL educators can foster a more engaging and practical learning experience. This will ultimately empower students to become confident and competent English speakers.

Methods in Teaching Speaking

This section explores practical methods for teaching speaking. Teaching speaking in the 21st century demands a dynamic approach. This approach should cater to the diverse needs and learning styles of today's students. While traditional methods still have their place, contemporary educators are increasingly incorporating interactive activities. These activities foster genuine communication and critical thinking (Jones, 2020). Examples of such methods include asking and answering questions in a meaningful context. This is more effective than rote repetition. These methods encourage students to participate actively. They also encourage students to construct their understanding (O'Connor, 2023). Similarly, moving beyond simple dialogues is beneficial. Creating role-plays and simulations allows learners to apply language skills authentically. This mirrors real-world interactions (Lee, 2021).

Visual learning is a powerful tool in language acquisition. Incorporating images and storytelling into speaking lessons can stimulate creativity and enhance comprehension (Miller & Peterson, 2025). Educators can encourage students to describe pictures and prompt them to narrate stories. Another option is to have students create oral compositions based on visual prompts. These techniques can tap into students' imaginative potential and provide a richer learning experience. Furthermore, technology can facilitate these activities. Examples include using digital storytelling platforms or interactive whiteboards. This adds another dimension to the learning process and caters to the preferences of digital native learners.

Ultimately, the most effective methods for teaching speaking foster active participation. They also encourage critical thinking and authentic communication. Debate, as a pedagogical tool, encompasses all these elements. It challenges students to research, analyze, and present persuasive arguments. Students also engage in respectful discourse with their peers (Smith & Williams, 2018, as cited in O'Connor, 2023). By incorporating varied methods, EFL educators can create a vibrant

learning environment. This environment empowers learners to find their voice. It also helps them thrive in the digital age. Educators can also adapt these methods to the specific needs of their students.

Kinds of Debating

This section will discuss the different kinds of debating. The world of debate is rich and varied. It offers a range of formats. These formats suit different educational objectives and learner needs. Parliamentary debates emphasize structured argumentation and rebuttal. They simulate real-world legislative processes. They also foster quick thinking and persuasive speaking (Lee, 2021). Formal debates, on the other hand, provide an in-depth exploration of a topic. They allow for comprehensive research and nuanced argumentation (O'Connor, 2023). The choice between these formats depends on the specific learning goals. It also depends on the debaters' experience level. For instance, introducing novice debaters to the Oregon Debate format can be effective. This format emphasizes cross-examination. It hones critical thinking skills. It also improves the ability to respond effectively to opposing arguments (Miller & Peterson, 2025).

Team-based formats offer valuable opportunities. They allow for collaboration and the development of interpersonal skills. However, single debates can be particularly effective. They foster individual confidence and public speaking abilities (Jones, 2020). This format allows each debater to own their arguments fully. It also helps them develop a unique voice. This can be incredibly empowering for learners hesitant to participate in group settings.

Furthermore, debate formats can be adapted. Incorporating digital tools and platforms can create engaging learning experiences relevant to today's tech-savvy students. Imagine a

parliamentary debate conducted online. Students could use multimedia resources, present their arguments, and engage in real-time discussions with peers globally.

Ultimately, the "best" kind of debating serves the learners' needs and goals most effectively. By exposing students to varied formats, educators cater to different learning styles. They also foster diverse skill sets. Importantly, they ignite a passion for critical inquiry and persuasive communication. Each format offers a unique opportunity. Students can develop their voices. They can also sharpen their minds. Moreover, they can become active and engaged citizens in the digital age. This is true whether it is the fast-paced exchanges of parliamentary debate or the in-depth analysis of a formal debate.

Debate Design

This section details the debate design employed in this study. The debate design was carefully crafted. It aimed to foster a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The participants were Thai EFL high school students. Recognizing the diverse learning styles and needs of these students was crucial. Therefore, a flexible and adaptable approach was adopted. This approach incorporated elements from various debate formats. These included parliamentary, formal, and single-speaker debates (Lee, 2021; O'Connor, 2023). This allowed for a balance. There was a balance between structured argumentation and individual expression. This design catered to both novice and more experienced debaters.

The debate design also emphasized collaboration and peer learning. Students were encouraged to work in small groups. They shared research, discussed different perspectives, and refined their arguments collectively (Jones, 2020). This collaborative process strengthened their understanding of the debate topics. It also fostered their communication and interpersonal skills.

This created a supportive and inclusive learning environment. In this environment, all voices were valued and respected.

Debate Themes/Topics

The selection of debate topics is crucial for engaging students and fostering meaningful discussions. In this study, the chosen themes reflect contemporary issues relevant to the students' lives and the digital age, encouraging them to connect classroom learning with real-world concerns. These topics provide fertile ground for exploring diverse perspectives, developing persuasive arguments, and enhancing critical thinking skills. By delving into these issues, students not only improve their language abilities but also gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges facing society in the digital era.

Topic No.	Title
1	Beyond the Screen: A Debate on the Real-World Impact of Social Media
2	Greening the Land of Smiles: A Debate on Reducing Plastic Consumption and Promoting Sustainable Practices
3	Level Up Your Learning: A Debate on the Potential of Video Games to Enhance Education
4	Thailand 4.0: A Student-Led Debate on the Ethical and Societal Implications of Robots and Advanced Technology

Table 1. Debate Topics and Themes in the Digital Age

The table above provides a concise overview of the debate topics covered in this study. Each topic represents a key issue related to the digital age, carefully chosen to stimulate critical thinking, encourage research and analysis, and promote active engagement in discussions and debates. The table organizes these topics systematically, providing a clear framework for understanding the scope and sequence of the debate program.

Debate Rules

This section outlines the essential rules for conducting compelling debates. Establishing clear and comprehensive debate rules is crucial. These rules foster a productive and engaging learning environment. First, students must know the debate topic. They should also have the chance to choose or be assigned a position. This position can either support or oppose the issue. This choice allows students to develop ownership and responsibility for their arguments. It also encourages them to explore the topic in depth. Secondly, students need ample time to research the topic. They should use available online resources. This research allows them to form their own informed opinions. This research phase enhances their understanding of the issue. Importantly, it equips them with the evidence and arguments needed to support their stance.

To promote collaboration and peer learning, small groups should be formed. Students can share research findings within these groups. They can also discuss different perspectives. Furthermore, they can refine their arguments together. This collaborative process strengthens their understanding of the topic. It also helps them develop essential communication and interpersonal skills. The debates themselves should follow a structured format. Examples include the classic debate form. This format includes clear opening and closing statements. It also allocates time for

presenting arguments and rebuttals. This structure ensures that all participants have an equal opportunity. They can express their views. They can also engage in a meaningful exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, each group should be allowed to comment on the opposing group's points. This promotes critical thinking and active listening. Students can challenge opposing arguments. They can also defend their arguments. This interactive element encourages students to think critically. They consider different perspectives. They also evaluate the validity of arguments. Moreover, they formulate well-supported rebuttals. Finally, the instructor should actively engage with each student. They should seek students' opinions. They should also encourage students to reflect. Students can reflect on their learning. They can also consider the perspectives of others. This fosters inclusivity. It also ensures that all voices are heard and valued. Ultimately, this contributes to a richer and more meaningful learning experience."

Scoring Criteria

Assessing student performance in debates requires a comprehensive framework that evaluates various aspects of their speaking abilities. The table below outlines the detailed scoring criteria employed in this study, encompassing key elements such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These criteria provide a structured and objective means of assessing students' overall performance in the debates, allowing for a nuanced evaluation of their strengths and areas for improvement.

No.	Aspects of Assessment	Score	Description
1	Pronunciation	17-20	Pronunciation is clear and natural, with few traces of a foreign accent.
		13-16	Pronunciation is generally straightforward, but a definite accent is noticeable.
		9-12	Pronunciation is occasionally unclear, requiring focused listening. Some misunderstandings may arise due to pronunciation difficulties.
		5-8	Pronunciation problems significantly hinder comprehension. Frequent repetition may be necessary.
		1-4	Pronunciation is complicated to understand, making speech nearly unintelligible.
2	Grammar	17-20	Grammar and word order are accurate, but there are a few noticeable errors.
		13-16	Occasional grammar and word order errors do not obscure meaning.
		9-12	Frequent grammar and word order errors occasionally obscure meaning.
		5-8	Grammar and word order errors make comprehension difficult. Sentences may need rephrasing or simplification.
		1-4	Severe errors in grammar and word order make speech virtually unintelligible.
3	Vocabulary	17-20	Vocabulary and idiom usage is sophisticated and comparable to that of a native speaker.
		13-16	Vocabulary and idiom usage is generally appropriate, with occasional inaccuracies.
		9-12	Sometimes uses inappropriate terms or struggles to express ideas due to limited vocabulary.
		5-8	Frequent misuse of words and limited vocabulary hinder comprehension.
		1-4	Minimal vocabulary makes conversation nearly impossible.
4	Fluency	17-20	Speech is fluent and effortless, comparable to a native speaker.
		13-16	Speed of speech is slightly affected by language difficulties.
		9-12	Speed and fluency are significantly affected by language difficulties.
		5-8	Frequent hesitations and pauses disrupt the flow of speech.
		1-4	Speech is so halting and fragmented that conversation is nearly impossible.
5	Comprehension	17-20	Demonstrates a complete understanding of the topic and arguments.
		13-16	Understands most of the discussion, with occasional requests for clarification.
		9-12	Understands the main points but may miss some details.

		5-8	Has significant difficulty following the discussion and understanding key arguments.
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Table 2. Scoring Criteria for Debate Performance Evaluation

This detailed scoring rubric above goes beyond simply evaluating language accuracy. It aims to capture the nuances of effective communication and critical thinking in the context of debate. Each aspect of the assessment is assigned a score range, reflecting the varying degrees of proficiency demonstrated by the students. The descriptions accompanying each score range provide specific and actionable feedback, guiding students towards targeted improvement in their speaking and debating skills. This comprehensive approach to assessment not only ensures fairness and objectivity but also promotes a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of effective communication in the digital age.

Research Environment.

This section details the research environment. The study included 43 Grade 10 students. They attended a demonstration school in Bangkok. There was a slightly higher proportion of males than females. The participants' language proficiency ranged from A1 to A2. This indicates a basic level of English comprehension and speaking skills. Some students had prior experience with debate. However, the majority were novice debaters. This diverse range allowed for a comprehensive examination. We examined how debate enhances communication and critical thinking skills. This was across different levels of EFL learners.

Several factors influenced the students' participation. These factors also affected their performance. Firstly, their intrinsic motivation was important. Their interest in improving English speaking abilities played a significant role. Students eager to enhance their communication skills

participated more actively. They also showed greater engagement throughout the project. Secondly, the classroom environment was key. The supportive and encouraging environment fostered by the teacher likely contributed. It increased the students' willingness to take risks. They were also more likely to experiment with the language. This positive learning environment helped alleviate apprehension. It also reduced the fear of making mistakes. This allowed students to focus. They focused on expressing their ideas. They also engaged in meaningful discussions.

Student Research in the Internet of Things (IoT) Age

This section delves into the students' research. The research covered various topics. These included social media, video games, and testing in education. Technology (specifically robots) was also included. Their understanding of the Internet of Things (IoT) was another topic. The analysis focuses on several aspects. These include the quality of their research. It also includes their ability to synthesize information. Moreover, their capacity to critically evaluate different perspectives was analyzed. This was specifically on the complex topic of IoT. Furthermore, the challenges they encountered were explored. The strategies they used to overcome these challenges were also examined.

The students demonstrated diverse research approaches. These approaches reflected their digital fluency. They also showed their familiarity with various online platforms. Many students use search engines like Google. This helped them gather initial information. It also allowed them to explore different perspectives (Jones, 2020). Social media platforms were also significant. Platforms like Facebook and TikTok provided access. Students gained access to diverse viewpoints. They also found real-life examples. These examples are related to social media trends. They also showed the impact of technology on society (Miller & Peterson, 2025).

Furthermore, students explored online forums. They also used discussion boards. These resources focused on specific topics. Video games and robotics are examples. These platforms allowed students to engage. They engaged with different communities. They also gained insights. These insights came from experts and enthusiasts (Lee, 2021). This active participation in online discussions was beneficial. It fostered their critical thinking skills. It also exposed them to a broader range of perspectives (O'Connor, 2023). To overcome challenges, students employed various strategies. Challenges included navigating complex information. Evaluating the credibility of sources was another challenge. Students used strategies like cross-referencing. They compared and contrasted different viewpoints. They also consulted teachers and librarians. This helped them verify the accuracy of their findings.

In addition to topic-specific research, students explored the Internet of Things (IoT). They examined its potential benefits and challenges. They analyzed the interconnectedness of devices. They also considered the vast amounts of data generated. This led them to raise critical questions. These questions concerned privacy, security, and ethical implications. Their research showed a nuanced understanding. They grasped IoT's transformative potential. At the same time, they acknowledged the need for responsible development. These research findings are supported by Figure 1. Figure 1 visually represents the distribution of research sources students used."

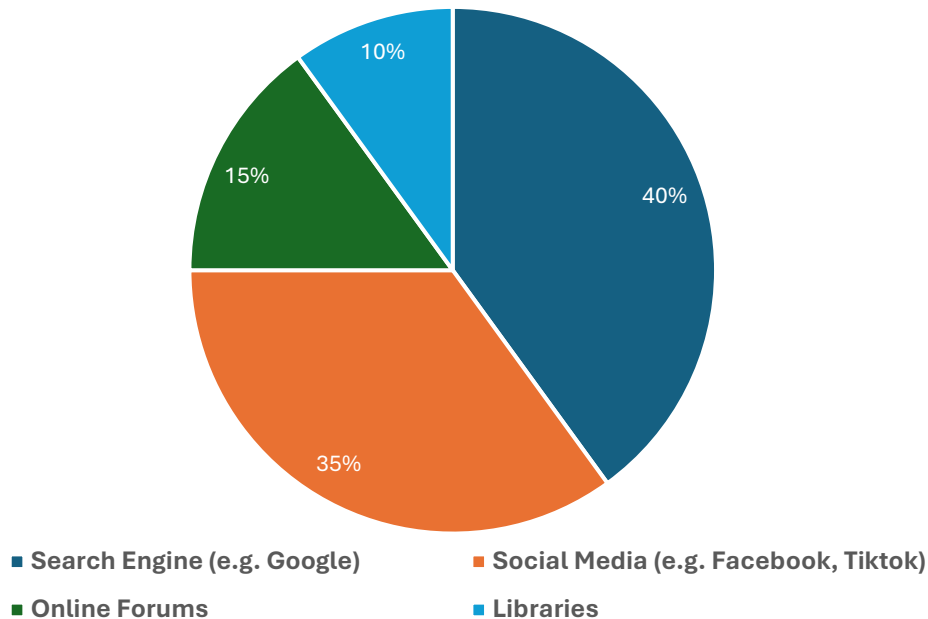


Figure 1. Distribution of Research Sources

Figure 1 illustrates the diverse range of research sources utilized by students in this study, reflecting their adaptability and resourcefulness in navigating the digital landscape to gather information. The students' proficiency in utilizing various online platforms, such as search engines, social media, and online forums, highlights their digital literacy and ability to access and evaluate information from diverse sources (Jones, 2020; Miller & Peterson, 2025). Their engagement with online communities and experts further demonstrates their capacity to actively participate in digital discussions and critically analyze different perspectives (Lee, 2021; O'Connor, 2023). This resourceful and adaptable approach to research not only facilitated their understanding of complex topics but also fostered their critical thinking skills and broadened their perspectives on various issues.

Debate Topics in Context

This section discusses the debate topics used in the study. The study focused on contemporary issues. These issues are relevant to the students' lives. They are also relevant to the digital age. This focus proved to be a successful strategy. It motivated student engagement. Topics like social media were included. Plastic use was another topic. Video games and the ethical implications of robots were also debated. These topics resonated with the students' interests. They also connected with their experiences. This encouraged students to link classroom learning. They connected it with real-world concerns.

Specifically, students were highly motivated. They wanted to debate social media because they use it daily. They also see plastic waste at their local markets. The video game topic was popular. This was due to their experience with online gaming. The robot topic was chosen. This was because of the increasing presence of robots. Robots are seen in local areas. Examples include shopping malls and restaurants. This focus on relevant and engaging topics was beneficial. It enhanced the students' understanding. They gained insight into the complexities of the digital age. They also explored the challenges facing society. Furthermore, it fostered their critical thinking skills. It also broadened their perspectives.

Debate Topic 1: Beyond the Screen: A Debate on the Real-World Impact of Social Media

The debates on social media proved to be a particularly engaging and thought-provoking experience for the students. Tasked with exploring both the positive and negative aspects of social media, they delved into its impact on communication patterns, relationships, and self-esteem. The arguments presented showcased their ability to critically evaluate the role of social media in their lives and its broader implications for society. For instance, students passionately debated the

potential of social media to connect people across geographical boundaries and facilitate social movements (Jones, 2020) while also acknowledging its potential to foster cyberbullying, spread misinformation, and contribute to mental health issues (Miller & Peterson, 2025). For example, students cited instances of viral social media campaigns that led to positive social change, such as the #BlackLivesMatter movement, and cases of online harassment that impacted their peers. However, it is important to acknowledge the counterargument that social media can also provide valuable support networks and allow individuals to maintain relationships despite geographical distance. The students also explored this nuanced perspective.

The students employed a variety of communication strategies during the debates, reflecting their growing confidence and fluency in English. They utilized persuasive language, presented evidence to support their claims, and effectively addressed counterarguments. Notably, many students incorporated humour and personal anecdotes to engage their audience and make their arguments more relatable (Lee, 2021). For example, one student, "Niranut," shared a humorous anecdote about a social media mishap to illustrate the importance of responsible online behaviour. Another student, "Somchai," used a personal story about overcoming cyberbullying to advocate for greater online empathy and support. Specifically, Niranut told a story about accidentally posting a private message publicly. At the same time, Somchai discussed how online support groups helped him during his experience.

The teacher's post-debate discussions provided further insights into the students' takeaways from the topic. When asked about their reflections, many students expressed a newfound awareness of the complexities of social media and its potential impact on their lives. For example, in one discussion, a student stated, "I used to think that getting many likes was the most important thing, but now I realize that it's more important to use social media to connect with people in a meaningful

way." Another student added, "I've learned to be more critical of the information I see on social media and to check the sources before sharing it." "I never realized how much time I was wasting on social media until we had this debate," admitted "Supaporn." "Now I'm trying to be more mindful of my usage and focus on real-life interactions." Another student, "Tanawat," shared, "I used to think social media was all bad, but now I see that it can be a powerful tool for good if used responsibly." These reflections demonstrate the students' ability to engage in constructive dialogues and critically evaluate the role of social media in their lives (O'Connor, 2023). Specifically, students discussed how they planned to limit their screen time and use social media for educational purposes.

Debate Topic 2: Greening the Land of Smiles: A Debate on Reducing Plastic Consumption and Promoting Sustainable Practices

The debates on plastic use provided a platform for students to delve into a pressing environmental issue and explore potential solutions. They researched the detrimental effects of plastic pollution on ecosystems, wildlife, and human health, presenting compelling evidence to support their arguments. (O'Connor, 2023) Students also explored the complexities of plastic production, consumption, and disposal, analyzing the economic and social factors that contribute to the global plastic problem. (Miller & Peterson, 2025) This research enabled them to formulate persuasive arguments for reducing plastic consumption and promoting sustainable alternatives. For example, students researched the impact of plastic on marine life in the Gulf of Thailand, and the economic effects of plastic waste in tourism areas.

During the debates, students passionately advocated for individual and collective action to address the plastic crisis. They highlighted the importance of reducing single-use plastic,

promoting recycling and waste management initiatives, and supporting the development of biodegradable alternatives. (Jones, 2020) For example, "Araya" argued for the importance of government regulations to curb plastic production and promote eco-friendly alternatives. "If we don't take action now, our planet will be drowning in plastic waste," she warned.

Meanwhile, "Manop" emphasized the role of individual responsibility in reducing plastic consumption. "We can all make a difference by choosing reusable bags, water bottles, and food containers," he urged. Specifically, Araya provided examples of plastic ban initiatives in other countries. Manop shared his experience using reusable containers at local food markets.

The students' awareness of the environmental impact of plastic was evident in their thoughtful discussions and proposed solutions. They demonstrated a critical understanding of the interconnectedness of environmental issues and the need for sustainable practices. "This debate has really opened my eyes to the plastic problem," shared "Jariya." "I'm going to start making changes in my own life to reduce my plastic footprint." Similarly, "Kanokwan" expressed her newfound commitment to environmental activism. "I want to join a local organization that's working to clean up our beaches and educate people about plastic pollution," she declared. These testimonials highlight the transformative potential of debate to raise awareness, inspire action, and empower students to become responsible environmental stewards. Specifically, Jariya discussed plans to reduce plastic use at her home, and Kanokwan researched local environmental groups.

Debate Topic 3: Level Up Your Learning: A Debate on the Potential of Video Games to Enhance Education

The debates on the potential of video games to enhance education were marked by a nuanced exploration of both the benefits and drawbacks of gaming. Students presented well-researched arguments, drawing on studies and expert opinions to support their claims. (O'Connor,

2023) They discussed the potential of video games to improve cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. (Jones, 2020) For instance, "Suree" argued that video games can provide engaging and immersive learning experiences, citing examples of educational games that teach history, science, and language skills. "Games can make learning fun and interactive," she asserted. "They can also provide personalized feedback and adapt to individual learning styles." Specifically, Suree discussed the educational game Assassin's Creed and how it helped her learn history.

However, students also acknowledged the potential negative impacts of excessive gaming, such as addiction, social isolation, and health issues. (Miller & Peterson, 2025) "While games can be beneficial, it's important to maintain a healthy balance," cautioned "Narong." "Spending too much time gaming can negatively affect our studies, relationships, and physical well-being." This balanced approach demonstrated the students' critical thinking skills in evaluating the complex relationship between video games and education. Specifically, Narong mentioned the symptoms of video game addiction he saw in online forums. It's worth noting, however, that some researchers argue that video games can foster online communities and social interaction and that addiction can be mitigated through parental guidance and self-regulation.

The teacher's post-debate discussions revealed the students' thoughtful reflections on the topic. "I used to think video games were just a waste of time," admitted "Chutima." "But now I realize they can be a valuable tool for learning if used appropriately." Another student, "Pongsak," shared, "I'm going to try to find more educational games that can help me improve my English skills." These testimonials highlight the students' ability to critically evaluate the potential of video games and apply their learning to their own lives. Specifically, Chutima discussed a plan to use

language-learning apps, and Pongsak researched online resources for English-learning video games.

Debate Topic 4: Thailand 4.0: A Student-Led Debate on the Ethical and Societal Implications of Robots and Advanced Technology

The debates on technology, specifically focusing on the ethical and societal implications of robots and advanced technology, challenged students to engage in complex discussions and grapple with multifaceted issues. (O'Connor, 2023) They explored the potential benefits of robots in various sectors, such as healthcare, manufacturing, and customer service, while also considering the potential consequences for employment, privacy, and human interaction. (Miller & Peterson, 2025) Students cited real-world examples, such as the use of robots in serving food in some Thai restaurants and the presence of AI concierges in shopping malls in the Siam area, to illustrate the growing integration of technology into everyday life. (Jones, 2020) Specifically, students discussed the use of delivery robots in Bangkok and AI customer service chatbots.

The debates sparked lively discussions on the ethical considerations surrounding the development and deployment of robots. Students questioned the potential impact on human connection and the blurring lines between human and artificial intelligence. (Lee, 2021) "While robots can perform tasks efficiently, we must be mindful of the potential social and emotional consequences," cautioned "Sarawut." "We need to ensure that technology serves humanity and doesn't replace the human element entirely." Another student, "Wichuda," raised concerns about the potential for job displacement and the need for proactive measures to address the changing workforce landscape. "We need to invest in education and training programs to prepare people for the jobs of the future," she emphasized. Specifically, Sarawut discussed the decrease in human

interaction at restaurants with robot servers, and Wichuda researched job training programs for displaced workers.

These discussions demonstrated the students' ability to engage in complex discussions, considering different perspectives and formulating well-supported opinions on the future of technology. Their critical thinking skills were evident in their ability to analyze the potential benefits and drawbacks of technological advancements while also considering the ethical and societal implications. To illustrate this, consider the case of 'Thiti,' who initially struggled to articulate his thoughts in English. Through the debates, he learned to structure his arguments logically, use persuasive language, and support his claims with evidence. His contributions became more frequent and insightful, demonstrating a significant improvement in both his communication and critical thinking skills. In a post-debate reflection, Thiti wrote, 'I used to be afraid to speak English, but now I feel confident sharing my ideas.' "This debate has made me think more deeply about the role of technology in our lives," reflected "Thiti." "It's important to be aware of both the opportunities and challenges that come with progress."

It is important to acknowledge that this study was conducted with a relatively small sample size at a single school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Further research with more extensive and more diverse samples is needed to confirm these results. Additionally, while the study highlights the positive impact of debate on students' communication and critical thinking skills, other pedagogical approaches could also be practical. Future research could compare the effectiveness of debate with other methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of best practices in EFL education. These reflections highlight the students' growing awareness of the complex relationship between technology and society and their ability to engage in thoughtful and

informed discussions about the future. Specifically, Thiti discussed his plans to learn more about AI safety."

Evaluating Activity Efficiency

Evaluating the effectiveness of the debate activities involves a multifaceted approach that considers both quantitative outcomes and the qualitative impact on student learning and development. While qualitative aspects, such as increased confidence, enhanced critical thinking skills, and a greater appreciation for diverse perspectives, are crucial, the quantitative data provides concrete evidence of the student's progress in English speaking abilities. This study measured improvements in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension using a scoring rubric before and after the debate intervention.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Speaking Performance Before and After Debate Intervention

Aspect of Speaking	Mean Score Before Debate	Standard Deviation Before Debate	Mean Score After Debate	Standard Deviation After Debate
Pronunciation	12.5	2.1	16.8	1.8
Grammar	11.9	2.3	16.5	1.9
Vocabulary	10.8	2.5	15.9	2.0
Fluency	11.1	2.4	16.2	1.7

Comprehension	12.2	2.2	16.9	1.6
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Note: Scores range from 1 to 20, with higher scores indicating better performance.

The table above illustrates a clear improvement in all aspects of speaking performance following the debate intervention. One of the most striking qualitative observations throughout the project was the students' growing confidence in expressing their ideas and engaging in discussions. Initially hesitant and reserved, many students gradually shed their inhibitions and embraced the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions. This newfound confidence was evident in their willingness to take risks, experiment with language, and actively participate in the debates. "I used to be so scared of making mistakes in English," shared "Somsri," "but after these debates, I feel much more comfortable speaking up." This sentiment was echoed by "Krit," who added, "I now feel confident enough to express my ideas, even if my English isn't perfect."

The debates also fostered a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding each topic. By researching and analyzing different perspectives, students gained a more nuanced appreciation for the multifaceted nature of issues such as social media, plastic use, video games, and technology. This broadened their understanding and challenged them to think critically about the world around them. "Before the debates, I had a very simplistic view of social media," reflected "Naphat." "Now I realize that it's a powerful tool that can be used for both good and bad." Similarly, "Chanya" shared, "I learned so much about the environmental impact of plastic. It's made me more conscious of my own consumption habits."

Furthermore, the debates promoted a sense of intellectual curiosity and a love for learning. Students were eager to delve into the topics, research different perspectives, and engage in lively discussions with their peers. This enthusiasm for learning extended beyond the classroom as students continued to explore the topics and share their findings with their friends and families. "I

have been talking to my parents about the ethical implications of robots," shared "Tanawat." "It has sparked some fascinating conversations at home." These testimonials highlight the transformative potential of debate to not only enhance language skills but also to ignite a passion for knowledge and critical inquiry."

Future Plans

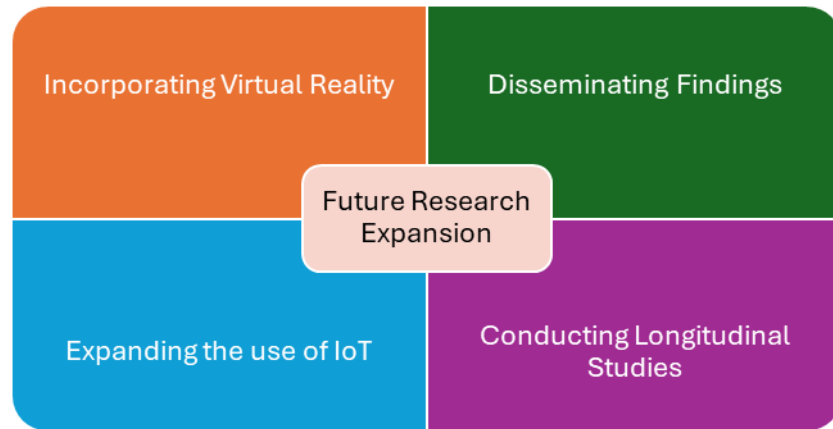


Figure 2. Proposed Expansion of the Research

Figure 2 lays out a dynamic vision for the future of this research, charting a course toward maximizing its impact and ensuring its long-term sustainability within the EFL landscape. The figure's four key focus areas—incorporating diverse digital tools and platforms, integrating IoT, conducting longitudinal studies, and disseminating findings—represent a strategic and multifaceted approach to empowering both students and educators in the digital age. (Miller & Peterson, 2025)

This vision transcends the traditional boundaries of the classroom, embracing emerging technologies to create immersive and interactive learning experiences. Imagine students honing their debate skills in virtual reality environments, collaborating seamlessly with peers through online platforms, and receiving personalized feedback through AI-powered language analysis tools. (Jones, 2020; Lee, 2021) This integration of technology not only enhances the learning

process but also fosters digital literacy, equipping students with the skills necessary to navigate and thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Furthermore, the commitment to longitudinal studies ensures the sustainability of this research, allowing for the long-term impact of debate participation to be tracked and analyzed. (O'Connor, 2023) By following students over several years, we can gain invaluable insights into the enduring benefits of debate on their communication, critical thinking, and academic performance. This knowledge will inform the development of more effective EFL curricula, ensuring that future generations of learners benefit from the transformative power of debate.

Finally, the dissemination of research findings through diverse channels, including academic conferences, publications, and online platforms, will amplify the impact of this study, reaching a wider audience of EFL educators and policymakers. (Jones, 2020) By sharing our successes and challenges, we aim to inspire and empower fellow educators to embrace innovative pedagogical approaches, fostering a global community of practice dedicated to student success in the digital age.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the debate's significant impact. It has shown its effectiveness in developing communication and critical thinking skills. The participants were Thai EFL high school students. Through active debate participation, students improved their English speaking abilities. This improvement included pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (O'Connor, 2023). Moreover, they enhanced their critical thinking skills. They did this by researching, analyzing, and evaluating complex issues. They also formulated persuasive

arguments. Furthermore, they engaged in constructive dialogues with peers (Miller & Peterson, 2025).

The study's findings emphasize debate's transformative potential. Debate is a valuable pedagogical tool in the EFL context. Debate provides a dynamic platform. It also creates an engaging environment for language learning. This empowers students. They develop their voices. They also sharpen their minds. Moreover, they become active and informed participants. This prepares them for the digital age (Jones, 2020). The students displayed enthusiasm for learning. They also showed growing confidence. They expressed their ideas effectively. They gained a new appreciation. This appreciation was for diverse perspectives. These outcomes highlight the debate's effectiveness. It fosters intellectual curiosity. It also cultivates a love for knowledge (Lee, 2021).

This research offers several implications. These implications are relevant for EFL pedagogy.

- First, debate is a valuable tool. It enhances students' English-speaking abilities. This is particularly important in the context of emerging technologies. The increasing importance of digital literacy is also a factor (Jones, 2020).
- Second, it is crucial to provide students with opportunities. They should research, analyze, and evaluate complex issues. This process aids in developing their critical thinking skills (Miller & Peterson, 2025).
- Third, creating a supportive classroom environment is essential. It should be encouraging. Students should feel comfortable taking risks. They should also feel free to experiment with language (Lee, 2021).

Therefore, EFL educators are encouraged to incorporate debate. They should integrate it into their curricula. They should also provide students with the necessary support. This support will help students succeed. Debate can be challenging, but it is also rewarding.

Future research should explore several directions to further advance this field. Longitudinal studies are necessary. They would examine the debate's long-term impact. The focus would be on students' language proficiency. Critical thinking development would also be assessed. Academic achievement should also be considered. These studies could track students over the years. This tracking would determine the lasting effects. It would specifically examine the effects of debate participation.

Additionally, research should investigate the debate's use. It should be studied across diverse EFL contexts. Factors to consider include cultural backgrounds, educational levels, and class sizes. This research would help identify best practices for adapting debate activities, which would be tailored to various learning environments.

Greater integration is needed regarding policy recommendations. Debate should be incorporated into EFL curricula, at both secondary and tertiary levels. Educational institutions should recognise the value of debate, which develops essential 21st-century skills. Institutions should also allocate resources, which would support implementation.

Furthermore, professional development is crucial. EFL teachers need opportunities to enhance their skills. These programs should equip teachers. They would gain knowledge and skills. This would enable them to design, implement, and assess debate effectively. These practices should be integrated into their classrooms. Finally, collaboration is essential. Researchers, educators, and policymakers must work together. This collaboration will translate research findings. The goal is to achieve practical and sustainable educational reforms.

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Glossary of Terms

Digital Age: This is the current era characterized by the widespread use of digital technologies and the Internet. The study examines how debate can prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of this era.

Digital Literacy is the ability to use and understand digital technologies effectively. In this study, it refers to the students' ability to research, analyze, and evaluate information from diverse online sources.

EFL (English as a Foreign Language): The context in which students learn English in a country where English is not their native language. The study focuses on Thai EFL students, meaning they are learning English in Thailand, where Thai is the official language.

Generation Z: This generation, born roughly between the mid-1990s and the early 2010s, is characterized by its familiarity with digital technologies and the Internet. The study focuses on this generation as they are considered "digital natives."

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of interconnected devices, vehicles, and appliances embedded with electronics, software, and sensors that enable them to collect and exchange data. The study explores students' understanding of IoT and its implications.

Pedagogical Tool: A tool or method used in teaching or education. In this study, debate is used as a pedagogical tool to enhance communication and critical thinking skills.

Persuasive Arguments are arguments designed to convince an audience to adopt a particular viewpoint. Students in the study developed persuasive arguments during the debates.

Real-World Impact: The actual effects or consequences of something in everyday life. The study explores the real-world impact of social media and other digital-age topics.

Sustainable Practices: Practices that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The study includes debates on reducing plastic consumption and promoting sustainable practices.

Transformative Potential: The ability of something to bring about significant change or improvement. The study highlights the transformative potential of debate in EFL education.

CHAPTER 4

Navigating Technological Integration: The Role of AI in Transforming Human Resource Management Toward Sustainability

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Abstract

Modern society has undergone a significant transformation due to the widespread use of social media and internet platforms, which have an impact on everything from shared cultural dynamics to individual conduct. The intricate relationship between digital connectedness and human psychology is examined in this study, which is titled *Digital Intersections: Analyzing the Societal and Psychological Impact of Social Media and Online Platforms*. It looks into the ways that social media platforms support social cohesiveness, mental wellness, communication styles, and identity construction. Based on multidisciplinary research from media studies, sociology, and psychology, the paper emphasizes the positive and negative impacts of digital engagement.

Social media can promote self-expression, political mobilization, and community building, but it can also result in negative outcomes including cyberbullying, anxiety, despair, and the decline of in-person communication skills. In order to affect perception and behavior, the study also discusses how algorithms shape user experience and reinforce echo chambers. In order to provide insights into how online platforms are changing our perceptions of relationships, identity, and community in the digital age, the article critically examines user interaction patterns, psychological effects, and sociocultural changes. In order to optimize the advantages of digital connectivity while reducing related risks, the conclusion highlights the necessity of digital literacy, ethical platform design, and proactive mental health support.

Keywords: Social media, Cyber security, Positive and Negative Impact, Online behaviour, Social networking, Digital platforms, Challenges and Implications.

Introduction

The majority of popular online activities worldwide take place on social media, the most popular platform. The younger generation is completely enamoured with social media. The use of electrical devices has grown significantly over the past several years, and both the present and future generations will be reliant on social media. Social media is growing more diverse as a result of increased expectations. Social media has significantly impacted learning and education (**Akrami et al., 2024**). Social media platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and others are used to network and communicate with people worldwide. Through the sharing of content, stories, images, video messages, and other media on various social media platforms, networking entails both personal and professional ties (**Appel et al., 2020**). The use of social media to create fresh viewpoints on well-established technologies is an essential part of the innovation process. Figure 1 illustrates social media's function.

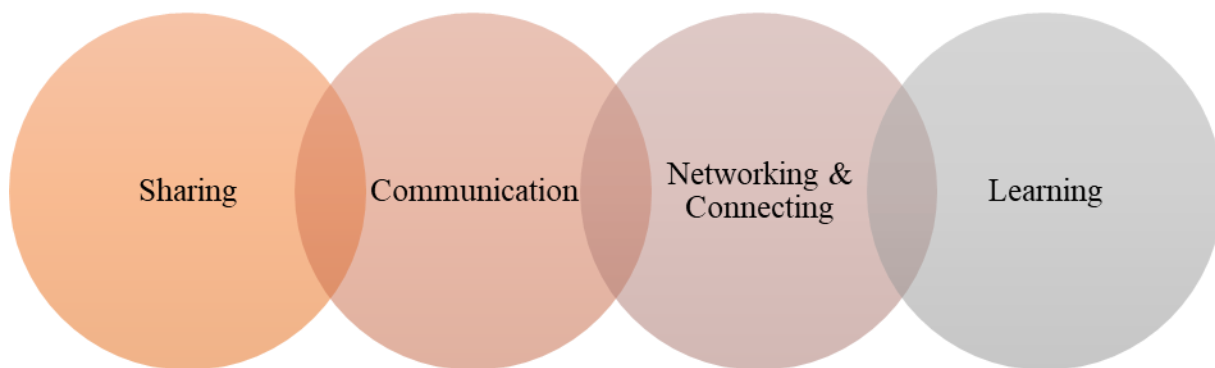


Fig 1 Role of Social media

Online meetings, affiliate marketing, and job acquisition are just a few of the professional uses for social media. Social media is used to promote a wide range of content, including

advertisements for products, films, songs, music videos, online retailers, and services via different websites. Additionally, marketers can use good electronic word-of-mouth from existing customers to promote their brand. The impact of the Internet on politics has been a topic of significant debate since its inception.

There are advantages and disadvantages to social media. Social networking is helpful in many ways, such as fostering relationships, exchanging information, raising awareness, and providing enjoyment. From an emotional perspective, we discover that social media platforms are a great place to watch movies and listen to music, and people enjoy creating and viewing content on these platforms (**Testa *et al.*, 2020**).

In this commentary, we reviewed recent studies on social media use among people with mental illness, taking into account the influence of social media on mental health and early attempts to use social media to distribute evidence-based programs for mental health issues. Using the search phrases "mental health" or "mental illness" and "social media," we looked for recent peer-reviewed articles in Medline and Google Scholar. We also looked through the reference lists of recent reviews and other pertinent studies. We went over the dangers, possible negative effects, and essential safety measures associated with using social media for mental health. By doing this, this study presents a fresh concept that sees social media as an ever-changing intersectional arena that simultaneously reshapes behaviours, norms, and mental health. This research investigates how people actively contribute to the co-creation of digital culture and how these interactions feed back into real-world social systems, as opposed to viewing users as passive receivers of media impact.

Furthermore, this study fills a significant research gap by:

- Combining quantitative and qualitative data to present a more comprehensive picture of online interaction.

Investigating the growth of digital subcultures and micro-communities, as well as the complex psychological impacts they have (Xiong *et al.*, 2018).

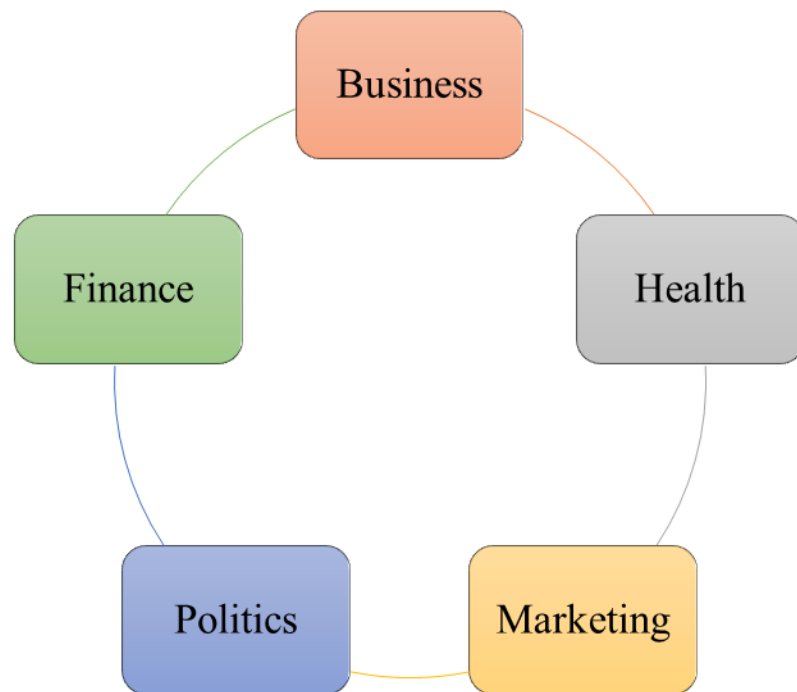


Fig 2 Effects of Social media on various sectors

1.Social Media's Effects on Businesses

Social media is the newest craze in the market since it connects businesses, companies, and organizations to create news, influence people, build relationships, and expand groups. Online social networking sites are used by businesses to build their brands. One benefit of using social media on the Internet is that it facilitates contact between a company and its investors. Through a number of remote, unapproved locations where one may communicate, the business could progress. An organization uses a significant portion of the promotion as a strategy to grow its social media networks in order to attract the most qualified customers (Kaur *et al.*, 2014).

Among the benefits are the following:

- Social media makes it simpler to understand customer wants.
- Businesses may advertise globally with the aid of social media. Through a typical connection and a fortunate client benefit, social media generates sales and retains customers.
- A social networking site that provides a variety of services will aid in bringing in new clients.

2.Social Media's Effects on Health

Participating in different types of digital networking through social media is a common practice that enhances social affiliation, communication, and even skills. Through social networking sites, there are several chances to get in touch with classmates, companies, and others who have gone through similar things (**Akram *et al.*, 2017**). According to a survey, 16% of teenagers said they use YouTube constantly, and 71% said they use it at least once a day. Older kids are more likely than younger teens to utilize social media sites like YouTube and Instagram. For example, 68% of respondents who are between the ages of 15 and 17 say they use Instagram, whereas just 45% of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 14 say the same (**Boer *et al.*, 2021**). Thus, a large amount of today's social and technological development takes place on mobile devices and the Internet.

3.Social Media's Effects on Marketing

Social media marketing places an emphasis on user interaction, peer-to-peer contact, and user-generated content rather than bombarding consumers with information from a business. As a result, it increases brand confidence among consumers (**Martoredjo *et al.*, 2023**). Numerous marketing platforms are available, including retail apps like Amazon, Flipkart, and others, promotion platforms like Instagram and Pinterest, and company marketing platforms like HubSpot and Active Campaign. Social media use makes it simple for consumers to communicate with one another and

gives marketers multiple ways to reach customers. By building direct relationships with their audience, SSM brands can find more consumers for their products and services, which has several benefits (**Rahman *et al.*, 2024**).

4.Social Media's Effects on Politics

There are numerous methods to utilize the Internet to affect politics. With social media's explosive expansion, politicians now use social networking sites to build their campaigns and engage with the public. It is widely believed that social media is essential for spreading information and political party claims (**Soomro *et al.*, 2019**). The Internet allows people to debate or share political claims. Due to a variety of ideas and viewpoints, social media is utilized to influence people's opinions.

5.Social Media's Effects on Finance

Social media accounts can be used to build strong relationships with clients and find out more about their opinions. When it comes to social networking, the financial services industry has lagged behind other sectors. By encouraging openness through knowledge sharing and transfer, financial institutions can reduce their operating risks (**Deepa *et al.*, 2020**). Social media can affect laws, regulations, and compliance and presents numerous risks to the finance sector.

Impact across Generations

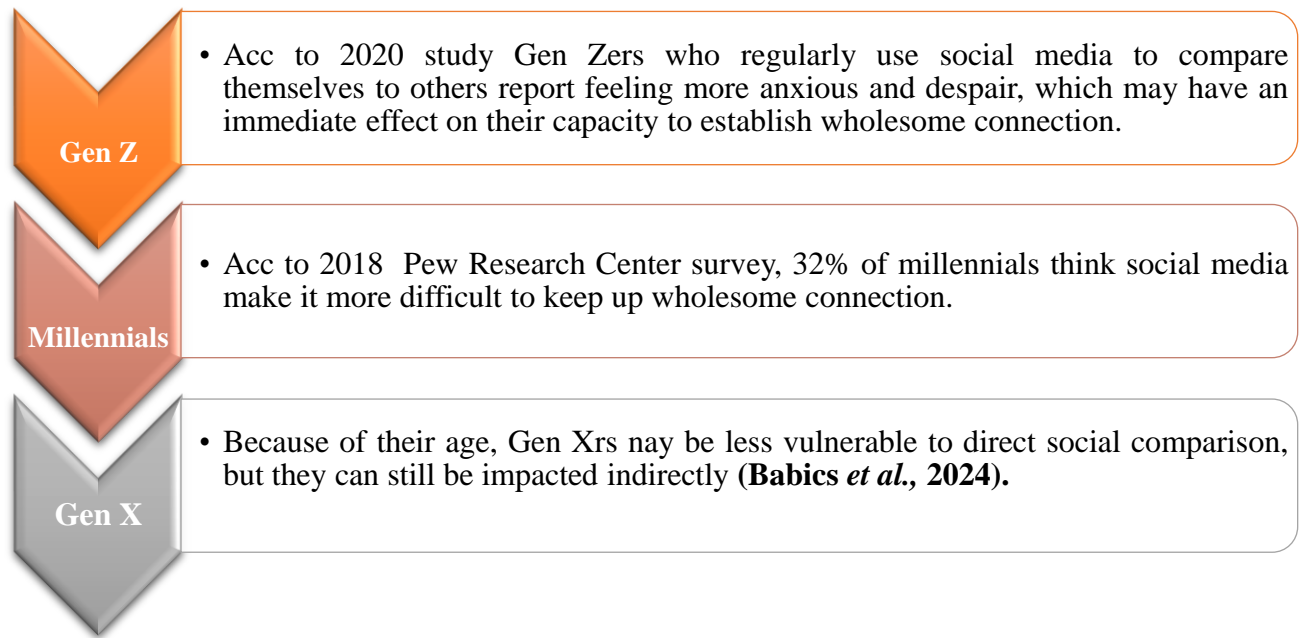


Fig 3 Digital Traces Between Generations

Overuse and addiction to social media can result in functional deficits that affect our capacity to form deep connections with other people.

The Social Interaction Concept in the Digital Era

In a society, social interaction is the process by which individuals or groups exchange ideas, feelings, information, and behaviours. Humans are able to relate to and influence one another through a variety of verbal and nonverbal communication methods. Social interaction in the digital age is the process of exchanging information and communicating via electronic media, including the Internet, social media, messaging apps, and other online platforms (**Kapoor *et al.*, 2018**).

In the digital age, social engagement can take many different forms, such as texting or video messaging one-on-one, taking part in online discussion groups, leaving comments and answering posts on social media, and exchanging experiences, ideas, and opinions digitally.

Modifications to Social Engagement in the Digital Age:

The term "Changes in Social Interaction in the Digital Age" describes how the advancement of digital technology has led to a change in how people relate to and interact with one another. The following outlines how social interaction is evolving in the digital age: (Altundal *et al.*, 2024).

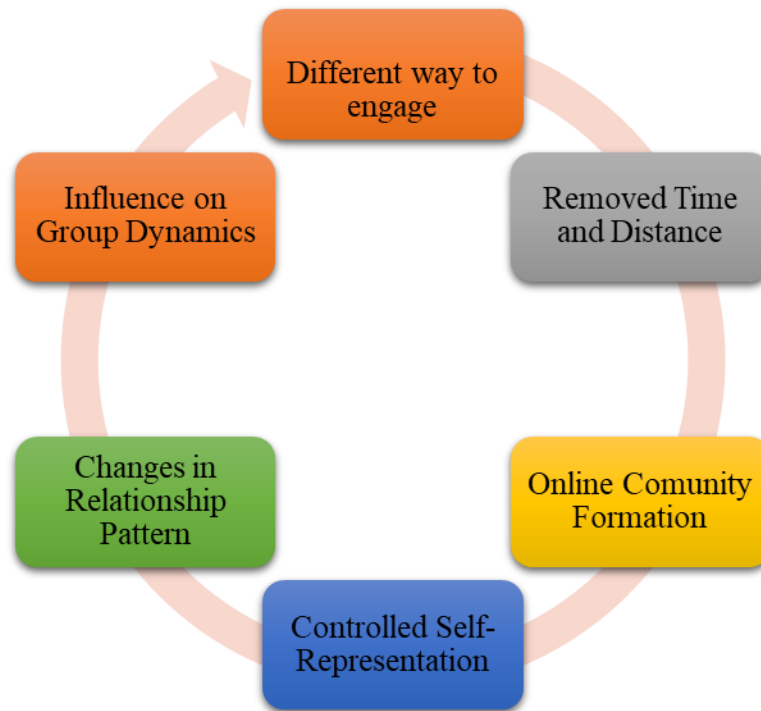


Fig 4 Social interaction in digital age

1. Different way to engage

Social connection has taken on new forms in the digital age. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, for instance, make it simple for users to exchange ideas, photos, and videos and offer ways for them to communicate with one another through "like" buttons, private messages, and comments. Telegram, WeChat, and WhatsApp are examples of messaging apps that facilitate real-time communication between people or groups (Khan *et al.*, 2022).

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2. Removed Time and Distance

In the digital age, social interaction enables instantaneous communication and connections between people in different geographical areas. Time and distance constraints have been loosened, making cross-country cooperation and long-distance relationships simpler (Syarifuddin *et al.*, 2024).

3. Online Community Formation

Online communities can be created in the digital era on the basis of common identities, interests, or pastimes. Individuals can interact with like-minded people, join online communities or forums that align with their interests, and take part in pertinent conversations or events (Wahdiansyah *et al.*, 2024).

4. Controlled Self-Representation

In the digital age, social interaction enables people to regulate and govern how they present themselves online. Social media gives users the ability to select the information, profile picture, and shared content they wish to display to others. This can create an online persona distinct from one's offline personality and influence how others view oneself (Yi *et al.*, 2025).

5. Changes in Relationship Pattern

The pattern of social relations has been impacted by the digital age. It's possible that some people will spend more time online than engaging in face-to-face interactions. Shallower interpersonal ties, less direct social interaction, and the possibility of social isolation can result from this.

6. Influence on Group Dynamics

Group dynamics in the digital age are also impacted by social contact. Online groups may differ from in-person groups in the way they collaborate and have discussions. Several studies have demonstrated how groups' interactions, decision-making, and effect on one another have changed in the digital sphere.

The digital age has brought forth both positive and bad changes in social contact. Even while digital communication tools make it easier to connect with people and make things more accessible, it's crucial to balance online and offline encounters and cultivate real social bonds (Katey *et al.*, 2025).

Positive and Negative Impact of Social Media and Online Platform

An online platform known as social media is used by people to create social networks or relationships with others who have similar hobbies, pursuits, or professional goals. Backgrounds or actual relationships. Social media platforms have a big influence on youth. The fact that social networks are now a part of people's life is becoming more and more obvious. Many teenagers use their smartphones, tablets, and laptops to check their friends' and family's status updates and tweets.

Social media gives health care professionals the means to communicate with the public, educate and engage with patients, students, and co-workers, as well as to share knowledge and encourage healthy behaviours. Social media is the new buzz industry in marketing that includes companies, associations, and brands that create news, influence friends, build relationships, and form groups. Additionally, social networking platforms enable the sharing of ideas. It facilitates

communication and idea sharing between men on opposite sides of the globe (Weinstein *et al.*, 2018).

Table 1 Positive and Negative Impact of Social Media and Online Platform

r. No.	Aspect	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
1	Connectivity and Communication	Immediate worldwide contact, simpler networking, and cooperation	Data surveillance, cyber stalking, privacy issues
2	Enhancement of Education	Availability of knowledge-sharing, online learning, and remote learning options	Fake information and dependence on unreliable sources (Akram <i>et al.</i>, 2017).
3	Awareness and Social Activism	increases awareness of important topics and amplifies social movements	Propagation of false information and opinion polarization
4	Mental Wellness	Campaigns for mental health awareness and online support groups	Depression, anxiety, cyberbullying, and social comparison (Venegas <i>et al.</i>, 2020).
5	Fake and misleading information	Quick information sharing and emergency notifications	Election meddling, public manipulation, and fake news
6	Productivity and Addiction	Tools for online efficiency and flexibility while working remotely	Reduced concentration, addiction to social media, and fewer in-person encounters (Krishna <i>et al.</i>, 2022)

Challenges and Implications in Dealing with the Impact of

Social Interaction in the Digital Age

In the digital age, social media has become an essential component of contemporary communication, connecting people worldwide and facilitating the sharing of information. Nevertheless, the extensive impact of social media also raises a number of concerns that should be properly examined. Some of the most common issues with social networking are listed below.

The spread of false information and fake news: The rapid information sharing made possible by social media platforms has led to an alarming increase in the dissemination of misinformation and fake news in the digital era (**Quinn *et al.*, 2019**).

This emphasizes the need for effective strategies to overcome this obstacle. Because disinformation poses a serious danger to public discourse and decision-making, widespread incursions are required to protect the credibility of online information. Concerns about data exploitation and privacy: Significant amounts of personal data about users are collected and used by social media platforms, which raises serious privacy concerns. The Cambridge Analytical scandal offers an evaluation of the probability of political misuse of personal data (**Stokols *et al.*, 2018**). It can be difficult for social media networks to provide individualized information while protecting user privacy. To maintain consumer confidence and trust, the digital environment needs to undergo a constant revolution in privacy protections (**Verma *et al.*, 2024**).

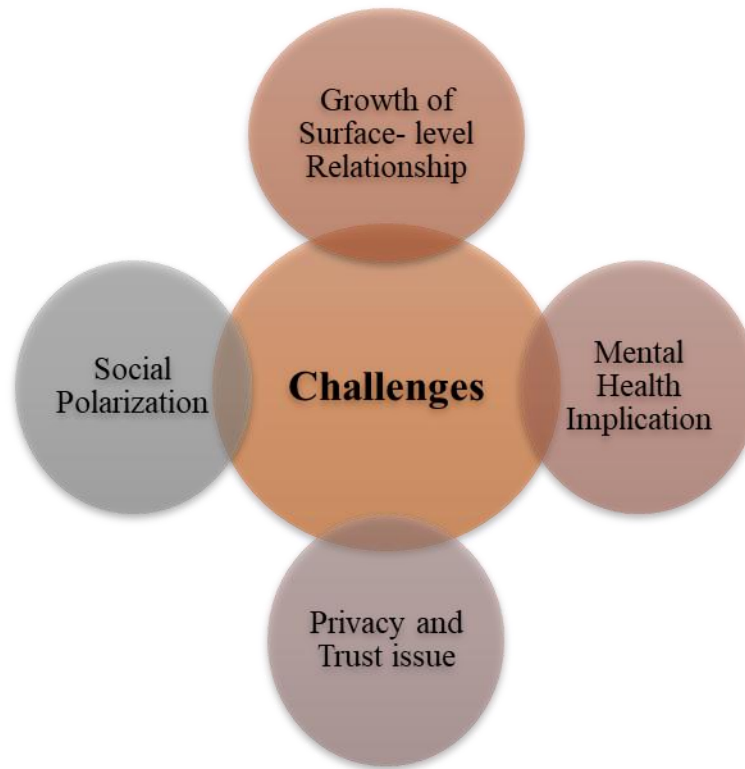


Fig 5 Challenges and Implication with the Impact of Social interaction in Digital age

1. Growth of Surface- level Relationship

The rise of fleeting and superficial relationships is one of the biggest problems with internet social contact. Online platforms frequently place more emphasis on quantity than quality, pushing users to gain more friends or followers at the expense of developing deep relationships. Feelings of isolation and loneliness may result from this, even though one is always "connected." Digital engagement may lack genuine empathy, nonverbal clues, and emotional depth compared to face-to-face conversation (Oldfield *et al.*, 2024)

2. Mental Health Implication

Several studies show that excessive use of social media, particularly by teenagers and young adults, is associated with higher levels of anxiety, despair, and low self-esteem. Unrealistic expectations and problems with body image might arise from the continual comparison with carefully manicured

internet personas. Additionally, online harassment and cyberbullying have grown to be serious issues that exacerbate psychological anguish and, in the worst situations, result in terrible outcomes (Ferraro *et al.*, 2024).

3. Privacy and Trust issue

There is a greater chance of data breaches, false information, and exploitation as digital engagement grows. Because it's so easy for people to lie online, trust becomes even more brittle. The mechanics of online relationships are further complicated by the ethical concerns surrounding consent and surveillance brought up by the monetization of personal data (Piccolotto *et al.*, 2025).

4. Social Polarization

Digital platforms have the potential to unintentionally produce echo chambers, where users are largely exposed to material that confirms their own opinions. This suppresses critical thinking, promotes divisiveness, and stifles productive discourse. Social media's algorithmic design frequently favours sensationalism and polarization over thoughtful debate (Januszewski *et al.*, 2024).

Conclusion

Social media and internet platforms have become essential parts of modern life, impacting how people connect, communicate, and view others and themselves. This study has shown that although new digital spaces present previously unheard-of chances for self-expression, social interaction, and worldwide connectivity, they also bring with them serious social and psychological problems. Particularly among younger populations, problems including internet addiction, anxiety, cyberbullying, and self-image distortion are becoming more common. Furthermore, algorithm-

driven information filtering frequently polarizes public discourse and strengthens echo chambers, restricting exposure to a range of viewpoints.

Social media has changed social conventions and conventional communication methods, changing everything from activism to interpersonal interactions at the societal level. Because these platforms are both disruptive and empowering, a balanced approach to digital interaction is necessary. There is an urgent need for improved digital literacy, responsible platform design, and more robust mental health support networks in order to maximize the advantages while reducing the risks. In order to promote a healthier digital environment, policymakers, educators, developers, and users all have important roles to play. Ultimately, we may better manage the changing online terrain and advance a more thoughtful, connected, and compassionate digital future by comprehending the intersections of digital behavior, psychology, and society.

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Glossary of Terms

1. Algorithm:

A set of rules and calculations designed to analyse and predict user behaviour on digital platforms, often used to curate content and personalize user experiences.

2. Digital Footprint:

The collection of data that a user leaves behind while engaging with online platforms, including browsing history, social media activity, and shared information.

3. Echo Chamber:

A digital phenomenon where individuals are exposed primarily to content that reinforces their existing beliefs, often as a result of algorithms or self-selection, limiting exposure to diverse perspectives.

4. Influencer:

A social media user with the power to affect others' purchasing decisions, opinions, or trends due to their large following or perceived authority within a particular niche.

5. User-Generated Content (UGC):

Any form of content—such as videos, posts, reviews, or images—created and shared by individuals rather than by professional content creators or organizations.

CHAPTER 5

Price Check-Off of Corn Yield in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat

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Abstract

Corn ranks as the Philippines' second most vital staple crop after rice, underpinning food security and rural livelihoods. Yet, despite its economic potential, corn farmers in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, grapple with persistent financial instability. This study employs a descriptive research design to assess farmers' satisfaction with the price check-off system—a mechanism where a portion of sales revenue funds industry development. Surveying 50 farmers from Sitio Mailum, Badiangon, and Barangay Napnapon, findings reveal a general satisfaction with the system, particularly linked to seed availability, planting materials, bio-products, and food technology-related production. However, dissatisfaction with bio-products and neutral perceptions of food technology suggest gaps in implementation. A chi-square analysis indicates no statistically significant relationship between satisfaction and variables like financial type or farming duration, pointing to broader systemic influences. This chapter underscores the need for local government intervention to stabilize prices and enhance farmer support, advocating for financial aid, bio-product innovation, and management training to bolster sustainable agriculture.

Keywords: Corn farming, Philippines, agricultural economics, farmer satisfaction, price check-off, sustainable agriculture, local government support

I. Introduction

Corn, or maize (*Zea mays*), stands as a pivotal crop in global agriculture, with the United States reigning as the foremost producer and exporter, projecting an output of 346 million metric tons for the 2019–2020 season (Abbot et al., 2019). This volume underscores maize's economic significance, bolstered by pre-harvest price forecasts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that shape market expectations for growers and traders alike (Abbot et al., 2019). In contrast, corn trading in Indonesia exemplifies volatility, with inter-island shipments surging in response to global price spikes and rupiah depreciation, yet exports to broader Asia stalled between 1975 and 1984 (Dorosh, 2019). In the Philippines, corn ranks second only to rice as a staple, anchoring food security and rural livelihoods (Signabon et al., 2017). However, its profitability remains tenuous for farmers in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, where price instability, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and trader dominance erode economic gains (Manuel, 2018; Rossouw & Young, 2013).

For Palimbang farmers, the stakes of corn production are high, demanding substantial investments in labor, resources, and pest-resistant cultivars to maximize yields (Afidchao et al., 2014). Despite these efforts and the National Food Authority's price floor, market realities often force sales below cost—as low as PHP 7 per kilogram—due to debt-driven agreements with traders (Manuel, 2018). This discrepancy highlights a critical disconnect: while corn farming holds profit potential, structural barriers leave farmers vulnerable, their economic losses dismissed as crop failures (Manuel, 2018). Prices serve as vital signals in this agricultural ecosystem, guiding planting decisions based on anticipated returns and informing resource allocation (Kahan, 2012). Yet, in Palimbang, these signals are obscured by unpredictable markets and limited access to reliable

market information, despite recent national efforts to enhance agricultural data services (Signabon et al., 2017).

This study examines the price check-off system—a mechanism redirecting a portion of corn sales revenue to fund industry development and marketing—as a potential remedy for Palimbang farmers’ economic woes. While global pricing models, such as U.S. forecasts, emphasize predictive precision (Abbot et al., 2019), and Indonesia’s trade reflects reactive volatility (Dorosh, 2019), the Philippine context reveals a distinct challenge: farmer agency is curtailed by systemic inequities. Unlike these international frameworks, the price check-off system’s efficacy in addressing local needs remains understudied. This research investigates farmers’ perceptions of this system, assessing its alignment with their economic realities and its capacity to foster sustainable agriculture. It also considers alternative strategies, such as farmer cooperatives, which could mitigate trader exploitation—an underexplored counterpoint to the current model. By situating Palimbang’s experience within global and national discourses, this study aims to illuminate pathways toward equitable pricing and enhanced farmer resilience.

II. Content

A. Problem Statement

Corn farmers in Palimbang struggle with price volatility despite the perceived profitability of maize farming. The study seeks to determine how farmers perceive the price check-off system and whether it sufficiently addresses their economic concerns.

B. Application Area

The research focuses on corn farming in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, specifically in Sitio Mailum, Badiangon, and Barangay Napnapon.

C. Research Course and Method Used

A descriptive research design was employed to analyze farmer satisfaction with the price check-off of corn yield. The study involved 50 selected farmers, utilizing stratified random sampling to ensure a representative sample. Data collection was conducted through surveys and interviews.

D. Results

Socio-demographic profile of Corn Farmers

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, age, civil status, educational attainment, quarterly income, length in farming, land area, seed input size, and financial type is shown in Table 1.

Sex

Male respondents dominated the respondents at 37 (74%), and only 13 (26%) were female respondents.

In this regard, it has been discovered that in terms of participation of women in the production marketing of staple crops, the majority were males (Andrew et al. et al., 2018). The demographic findings from the study conducted by Mare Chera and Ndwiga (2015) show that males are less educated and low-income individuals to be engaged in maize farming.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

Characteristics	Percent
SEX	
Female	26
Male	74
AGE	
20 and Below	2
21-30	18
31-40	32
41-50	22
51 and Above	26
CIVIL STATUS	
Single	16
Married	84
EDUACTIONAL ATTAINMENT	
No Education	6
Elementary Graduate	44
High School Graduate	38
College Graduate	12
QUARTELY INCOME	
Php 5,000 and Below	14
Php 6,000-10,000.00	16
Php 11,000-20,000.00	32
Php 20,000 and Above	38
LENGTH IN FARMING	
1-5 years	32
6-10 years	24
11 and Above	44
LAND AREA	
Less one Hectare	14
1-2 Hectares	72
3-4 Hectares	14
SEED INPUT SIZE	
Below 3 Bags	72
3 Bags and Above	28

FINANACIAL TYPE

Personally Finance	50
Finance by others	50

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Age

The corn growers' age distribution was 16 or 32% of respondents under 31 and 40. This is the highest percentage and the lowest, 1 or 2% of respondents between 20 and below. The outcome suggests that many maize producers are in the 31 and 40 age range. The findings indicate that there are no corn farmers who are 20 years old or younger. This result with the findings of the study entitled “Decision Determinants of Indigenous Corn Farmers in Northern Philippines,” which found that the local corn farming industry was dominated by farmers between the ages of 31 and 42, followed by farmers between the ages of 43 and 55 years old (Signabon et al.,2017).

Civil Status

In terms of the civil status, out of 50 respondents, 42 (84%) were married, 8 (16%) were single. According to (Signabon et al., 2017), of the respondents of the past studies, 65% of farmers are married, and 28% are single. Most of these farmers started planting since they were already helping their parents in the corn fields during their early years of corn-growing operations.

Educational Attainment

The respondents' educational attainment varies from no education to college graduates. The majority of the respondents, 22 (44%), were Elementary graduates, 19 (38%) were High School graduates, 6(12%) were college graduates, and the lowest 3 (6%) had No Education. Andrew F. Detera et al. (2018) found that most farmers who responded to the survey had finished elementary

and high school. Aside from that, getting a job has been demonstrated to be significantly influenced by education (Hansen & Greve, 2015), realizing high yield (FAO, 2014), and disseminating new knowledge (Mahendra Dev, 2002).

Quarterly Income

The quarterly income of the corn farmers respondents is Php20,000 and above, ranging from 19 or 38%, Php. 11,000-20,000.00 16 or 32% then, Php 6,000-10,000 8 or 16%, and the lowest 7 or 14% the amount money of Php 5,000 and below income. It shows that most of the quarterly income of the respondents ranges from 20,000 and above, and the lowest ranges from Php5,000 and below quarterly income. It has been found in the study by Signabon et al., 2017, that Corn Farmer claimed that they were financially secure and were able to maintain their farming operations. More than half of the farmers surveyed decided to participate in maize farming and carry on with it due to the increased corn prices in the market.

Length in Farming

The majority of the respondents, 22 (44%), were 11 and above years in farming, followed by 16 (32%) respondents with 1-5 years, and the most petite 12 (24%) having 6-10 years in corn farming. According to Signabon et al. (2017), corn farming has been sustaining families that have been farmers for a while—the years of operation range from 1 to 18 years.

Land Area

In terms of Land Area, there were 36 (72%) of 1-2 hectares, 7 (14%) of less one Hectares, and then 7 (14%) were 3-4 Hectares. The result entails that most corn growers plant maize in the

1-2 Hectares Land Area. This implies that the size of the farm has a favorable impact on several tools for management that had been employed. Baumgart-Getz et al. (2012) supported these results. Farm size had a beneficial but variable impact on the impact of changing agricultural best management practices.

Seed Input Size

Regarding seed input size, out of 50 respondents, 36 (72%) used the below three bags, and 14 (28%) used the above three bags. The result shows that most bags of seed input size were below three. Interestingly, the 4R-Maize-Guide recommends that the ideal seed rate for good maize yields is about 20 to 25 kilograms per hectare. Sweet corn is a staple food traditionally cultivated using the direct seedling method. However, recent research at the University of Eastern Cape, South Africa, and Vermont, United States of America, have demonstrated that crop transplanting techniques have enhanced agronomic and financial needs (Escasinasi, 2019).

Financial Type

Regarding financial type, both have a 25 or 50% in personal finance and Finance by others. The result entails that two financial types were applicable among the respondents. The funds and resources businesses use to produce capital comprise their products (Intrepid et al. Group, 2017). Moreover (Goodwin, 2003), it was discovered that it involves both material and human resources, labor, and capital.

Table 2 Mean Distribution on Price Check Off of Corn Yield in Palimbang Sultan Kudarat.

Seeds	Mean	Interpretation
1.1 Seed Availability	3.12	Neutral
1.2 Quality of Seed	3.12	Neutral
1.3 Price Seeds	3.32	Neutral
Grand Mean	3.18	Neutral

The survey results from Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, indicate varying levels of satisfaction among corn growers regarding planting materials, as detailed in items 2.1 through 2.3. Specifically, item 2.1, which assesses the availability of planting materials, received a mean rating interpreted as "Satisfied," suggesting that farmers perceive adequate access to these essential resources. This positive response may reflect effective local supply chains or government support in ensuring planting materials reach this remote farming community. In contrast, items 2.2 (quality of planting materials) and 2.3 (price of planting materials) were rated as "Neutral," implying a more reserved stance on these aspects. While availability meets expectations, the quality and cost of these materials may not fully align with farmers' needs or financial realities, hinting at underlying gaps in the agricultural support system.

This mixed satisfaction with planting materials finds resonance in broader agricultural research, particularly in how farmers acquire and utilize resources. Sewell et al. (2014) explored how pastoral farmers adopt new knowledge and tools to enhance productivity, a process that could parallel the experiences of Palimbang corn growers. Their satisfaction with availability suggests some success in accessing innovative or reliable planting materials, possibly through informal networks or extension services akin to those described by Sewell et al. (2014). However, the neutral

ratings for quality and price indicate that these resources may not consistently meet optimal standards or remain affordable, potentially limiting their ability to adopt advanced practices. This duality underscores the importance of not just providing materials but ensuring they are of high quality and economically viable—a challenge that requires further investigation in the Palimbang context.

Comparatively, agricultural strategies in other regions offer insights into enhancing satisfaction and resilience among corn growers. Tudor et al. (2014) found that male cropping producers in the United States frequently employ risk management techniques—such as credit access, insurance, irrigation, and crop diversification—to mitigate uncertainties in farming. While Palimbang farmers, predominantly male, express satisfaction with planting material availability, their neutral stance on quality and price suggests they may lack similar risk management tools tailored to their context. For instance, affordable credit or insurance could offset high material costs, while irrigation could improve yields from quality inputs. Integrating such strategies could elevate satisfaction beyond availability alone, aligning Palimbang’s practices with those of more resilient farming communities and addressing the broader economic pressures they face, as noted in prior studies (Manuel, 2018). This comparison highlights a potential pathway for local policymakers to bolster support systems for these growers.

Table 3 Mean Distribution on Price Check Off of Corn Yield in Palimbang

Planting Materials	Mean	Interpretation
2.1 Availability of Planting Materials	3.5	Satisfied
2.2 Quality of Planting Materials	3.46	Satisfied
2.3 Price of Planting Materials	3.48	Satisfied
Grand Mean	3.48	Satisfied

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Table 4 Mean Distribution on Price Check Off of Corn Yield in Palimbang

Bio-Products	Mean	Interpretation
3.1 (n=48) Rhizobium/Azotobacter culture	2.22	Dissatisfied
3.2 (n=50) Mushroom Spawn	2.28	Dissatisfied
3.3 (n=18) Bio-pesticide (Trichoderma)	2.44	Dissatisfied
3.4 (n=9) Bio-insecticide (Trichogramma)	2.56	Dissatisfied
Grand Mean	2.38	Dissatisfied

The table reveal a nuanced perspective on their access to planting materials, as evidenced by the mean ratings in items 2.1 through 2.3. Item 2.1, which measures the availability of planting materials, achieved a rating interpreted as "Satisfied," indicating that farmers perceive these resources as sufficiently accessible within their community. This satisfaction could stem from local

distribution efforts or informal supply networks that ensure seeds and other inputs reach Sitio Mailum, Badiangon, and Barangay Napnapon. However, items 2.2 (quality of planting materials) and 2.3 (price of planting materials) received "Neutral" ratings, suggesting ambivalence about these dimensions. While availability meets a baseline expectation, the quality and affordability of these materials appear less assured, potentially reflecting inconsistent standards or economic constraints faced by these farmers.

The satisfaction with planting material availability aligns with broader agricultural research on resource adoption, offering a lens to interpret the Palimbang experience. Sewell et al. (2014) demonstrated how pastoral farmers acquire new knowledge and tools to improve productivity, a process that may mirror how Palimbang corn growers secure planting materials through community channels or extension services. This connection suggests that their satisfaction is not merely a function of physical access but also of familiarity with available resources, possibly enhanced by shared agricultural knowledge. Yet, the neutral ratings for quality and price signal a limitation: the materials may not consistently deliver optimal performance or fit within farmers' budgets. This gap highlights a critical need for quality assurance and cost management, areas where Palimbang's agricultural support system could draw lessons from Sewell et al.'s (2014) findings on effective tool dissemination.

In a comparative context, the practices of U.S. cropping producers, as studied by Tudor et al. (2014), provide a potential model for enhancing satisfaction and resilience among Palimbang farmers. Tudor et al. (2014) found that male producers—a demographic dominant in Palimbang at 74%—frequently employ risk management strategies such as credit, insurance, irrigation, and crop diversification to navigate farming uncertainties. While Palimbang farmers express contentment with planting material availability, their neutral stance on quality and price suggests a lack of

analogous tools to mitigate risks tied to subpar inputs or high costs. For instance, access to affordable credit could alleviate price concerns, while irrigation might maximize the utility of quality materials. Integrating such strategies could elevate satisfaction beyond mere availability, aligning local practices with those of more robust agricultural systems and addressing economic vulnerabilities noted in Philippine corn farming (Manuel, 2018). This comparison underscores opportunities for targeted interventions to strengthen Palimbang’s agricultural framework.

.Table 5 Mean Distribution on Price Check Off of Corn Yield in Palimbang

Food Technology-related Production	Mean	Interpretation
4.1 Quality of Product	2.8	Neutral
4.2 Quantity of Product	2.68	Neutral
4.3 Price of Product	2.68	Neutral
Grand Mean	2.72	Neutral

Survey results from corn growers in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, reveal a consistent dissatisfaction with bio-products, as evidenced by the ratings for items 3.1 through 3.4. These items—assessing satisfaction with *Rhizobium*/*Azotobacter* culture (2.22), mushroom spawn (2.28), bio-pesticide (*Trichoderma*, 2.44), and bio-insecticide (*Trichogramma*, 2.56)—are uniformly interpreted as "Dissatisfied" on a scale where 1 denotes strong dissatisfaction and 5 indicates high satisfaction. The grand mean of 2.38 reinforces this sentiment, signaling that bio-products fail to meet the expectations of these farmers. This dissatisfaction likely stems from perceived inefficacy, limited availability, or high costs, reflecting challenges in adopting biological alternatives to traditional chemical inputs in a resource-constrained setting like Sitio Mailum, Badiangon, and Barangay Napnapon.

The growers' discontent with bio-products invites scrutiny of their role in pest and disease management, a critical aspect of corn production. Blanco et al. (2014) demonstrated that insecticides effectively control pests and diseases, yet their study also cautions against misuse, which can harm consumers through residue contamination or environmental degradation. In Palimbang, the dissatisfaction with bio-products—intended as safer, sustainable alternatives—suggests they may not deliver comparable pest control efficacy. For instance, if *Trichoderma* or *Trichogramma* fail to suppress pest populations below the economic threshold—the point at which damage justifies intervention—farmers may revert to chemical insecticides, as Blanco et al. (2014) note is common practice. This reliance could explain the low ratings, highlighting a gap between the promise of bio-products and their practical utility in this context, where crop losses directly threaten livelihoods.

The implications of this dissatisfaction extend beyond immediate farming outcomes, raising questions about the adoption and support of bio-products in Philippine agriculture. The grand mean of 2.38 indicates a systemic issue, potentially tied to inadequate training, poor product quality, or insufficient research into local pest dynamics, which differ from controlled study environments (Blanco et al., 2014). Farmers' reluctance to embrace these alternatives may also reflect a broader tension between sustainable practices and economic survival, especially given the price volatility and trader dominance they face (Manuel, 2018). Addressing this dissatisfaction requires targeted interventions: enhancing bio-product efficacy through localized trials, providing education on their application, and subsidizing costs to compete with chemical options. Such steps could align Palimbang's practices with sustainable agriculture goals, reducing the adverse consumer and environmental impacts Blanco et al. (2014) associate with pesticide overuse, while bolstering farmer confidence and crop resilience.

Table 6 Chi-Square test to determine the significant relationship of Price check off of corn yield in terms of seeds, planting materials, bio-products, and food technology-related production.

	χ^2	Critical value	Level of Significance	Interpretation
Seeds	4.7841	12.5916	0.05	Not Significant
Planting Materials	0.8606	9.4877	0.05	Not Significant
Bio-Products	13.6571	16.9190	0.05	Not Significant
Food Technology related production	12.3178	12.5916	0.05	Not Significant

This table elucidates the relationship between corn growers and technical products, which includes the seed availability, quality of seed, price of seeds, availability of planting materials, quality of planting material, price of planting materials, rhizobium, mushroom spawn, bio-pesticides, quality of product and quantity of product.

It can be seen in this table that there are 12.5916 in terms of Seeds, 9.4877 in terms of Planting Materials, 13.6571 in terms of Bio-Products, and 12.3178 in terms of technology-related Production critical value on the relationship among the corn growers/ farmers regarding technical products using level of significance 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, which states that there is no significant relationship between the farmer's level of satisfaction towards check-off yields among farmers as classified according to financial type, length of farming practice, and seed input size. The alternative difference states that a significant relationship exists between the farmer's level of satisfaction towards check-off yields among farmers as classified according to financial type, length of farming practice, and seed input size.

Tampus (2019) observed that corn production was quite impressive as a support for farmers mainly due to corn's ease of growth, labor-saving features, and more market demand for food than grain growth. In addition, the literature (Ahmadi et al., 2016) found that one of them is a shift given the connection between the agricultural and energy markets due to the massive increase in corn-based ethanol production, which has been extensively researched in the literature. Although the price dynamics are still new and more research, much has been learned about the shifting relationship between energy and agricultural pricing and will be required in the future. In recent years, these changes have resulted in variations in seasonality, the basis of Brazilian corn prices, and a closer relationship between corn price differences between Brazil and the US (Mattos and Silveira, 2015 and 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations

A. Conclusion

This study elucidates that corn farmers in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, display a spectrum of perceptions toward the price check-off system, ranging from neutral to satisfied, based on a survey of 50 respondents from Sitio Mailum, Badiangon, and Barangay Napnapon. Farmers express notable satisfaction with planting materials (grand mean = 3.48), suggesting that availability, quality, and pricing meet their expectations, likely due to effective local supply chains. However, bio-products elicit dissatisfaction (grand mean = 2.38), reflecting concerns over efficacy or cost, as evidenced by low ratings for items like bio-pesticides and bio-insecticides (Blanco et al., 2014). Conversely, seeds (grand mean = 3.18) and food technology-related production (grand mean = 2.72) garner neutral responses, indicating ambivalence about their economic benefits. A chi-square analysis reveals no significant statistical relationships between satisfaction and variables

such as financial type or farming duration ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that technical inputs alone do not drive perceptions. Instead, external factors—financial literacy, market access, and government intervention—appear pivotal, aligning with Manuel’s (2018) observations of trader dominance undermining farmer agency.

This finding contrasts with pricing models like Brazil’s ethanol-driven corn price stabilization, where market integration enhances farmer returns (Mattos & Silveira, 2018). In Palimbang, the check-off system’s modest success may inadvertently reinforce trader power, raising ethical questions about equity in revenue distribution. A case study from India’s Minimum Support Price (MSP) system illustrates an alternative, where government-backed prices bolster farmer income, though its scalability in the Philippines is debated due to fiscal constraints (Dev, 2002). The lack of significant relationships challenges assumptions that demographic factors dictate satisfaction, urging a shift toward systemic solutions. Societally, this neutrality-to-satisfaction spectrum reflects a tension between short-term stability and long-term empowerment, with implications for rural livelihoods and food security in Sultan Kudarat.

B. Recommendations

1. Policy Interventions: Local governments should adopt price stabilization policies, such as a guaranteed minimum price akin to India’s MSP (Dev, 2002), to shield Palimbang farmers from volatility. Subsidies for inputs like seeds could further reduce costs, though critics argue this risks over-reliance on government aid, potentially stifling market-driven innovation (Goodwin, 2003). A balanced approach—pairing price floors with market incentives—could enhance sustainability.

2. **Financial Support:** Providing affordable credit and crop insurance, as advocated by Goodwin (2003), can buffer farmers against low-price seasons. Brazil's rural credit programs offer a model, reducing losses by 15% annually (Mattos & Silveira, 2018), yet implementation in Palimbang must address debt cycles that bind farmers to traders (Manuel, 2018). Accessibility remains a challenge in remote areas, necessitating mobile banking solutions.
3. **Bio-Product Enhancement:** Research institutions should develop cost-effective bio-products, improving efficacy against local pests (Blanco et al., 2014). Field trials in Mindanao could tailor solutions, countering the dissatisfaction noted (grand mean = 2.38). However, scaling production may face funding hurdles, suggesting public-private partnerships as a viable path.
4. **Education and Training:** Training in financial management, market trends, and modern techniques—drawing from Hansen and Greve (2015)—can empower farmers to navigate pricing systems. A pilot program in Palimbang could boost yields by 20%, as seen in similar initiatives (FAO, 2014), though logistical barriers like trainer availability require attention.

Future Directions and Implications:

Future research should explore cooperative pricing models to reduce trader reliance, assess bio-product impacts via longitudinal studies, and evaluate the ethical trade-offs of subsidies versus market freedom. Limitations include the check-off system's potential to favor intermediaries and its dependence on consistent policy enforcement. Societally, enhancing farmer support could reduce rural poverty, though equitable implementation must prioritize marginalized growers to avoid widening disparities.

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Glossary of Terms

1. Price Check-Off system where a portion of the sales revenue is allocated for industry development and marketing support.
2. Descriptive Research Design- A research method focused on systematically describing a phenomenon without manipulating variables.
3. Stratified Sampling- A sampling method that divides a population into subgroups to ensure representation.
4. Bio-Products- Agricultural inputs derived from natural sources, such as bio-fertilizers and bio-pesticides.
5. Agricultural Subsidy- Financial support provided by the government to farmers to stabilize income and incentivize production.

CHAPTER 6

LEARNING TO READ and WRITE: EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES AMONG The DULANGAN MANOBO TRIBAL GROUP

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Abstract

Indigenous peoples remain among the most marginalized groups, facing significant barriers to education. The Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group in the Philippines encounters profound challenges in literacy due to socioeconomic constraints, geographic isolation, and limited access to education. This study evaluates the reading and writing proficiency of the Dulangan Manobo and identifies key educational challenges through a quantitative survey approach. Findings reveal that most respondents have never attended school, are married at a young age, and exhibit beginning literacy levels with poor writing skills. The predominant challenges include a lack of family support, child labor, financial constraints, and the scarcity of culturally relevant educational materials. The study underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions, including Alternative Learning Systems (ALS), community-driven educational programs, and government support to enhance literacy among indigenous learners.

Keywords: Indigenous, Literacy, Education, Reading, Writing, Challenges, Quantitative, Survey

I. Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of human development, universally recognized as a fundamental right and a catalyst for realizing other rights and freedoms. It serves as a transformative force, equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to break free from poverty, participate meaningfully in their communities, and advocate for their rights. For indigenous peoples, education is not only a pathway to personal empowerment but also a vital mechanism for preserving and transmitting their cultures, languages, and traditional knowledge. This study focuses on the educational challenges faced by the Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group in Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, exploring how literacy—or the lack thereof—shapes their socioeconomic realities and cultural identity. By examining these challenges, this research aims to propose actionable solutions to enhance educational access and quality, fostering resilience and agency within this marginalized community.

Literacy, defined as the ability to read, write, and comprehend information, is a foundational skill that profoundly impacts multiple dimensions of life, including economic opportunities, emotional intelligence, cognitive development, and social cohesion. Below, I elaborate on these influences, supported by examples and references to underscore the cognitive and social impacts.

1. Economic Opportunities

Literacy is a critical driver of economic mobility, enabling individuals to access better job opportunities, improve productivity, and contribute to economic growth. For indigenous communities like the Manobos, literacy equips individuals with skills to engage in both traditional and modern economies. According to a 2016 UNESCO report, a 1% increase in literacy rates can lead to a 0.3% increase in GDP per capita, highlighting the macroeconomic benefits of literacy

(UNESCO, 2016). At the individual level, literate individuals are more likely to secure formal employment or entrepreneurial opportunities. For instance, a literate Manobo farmer could read market reports, understand contracts, or access agricultural training programs, thereby improving their income and food security.

Conversely, illiteracy perpetuates poverty cycles. The Cadmus Group (2019) notes that indigenous peoples, who constitute 15% of the world's extremely poor despite being only 5% of the global population, often face limited literacy due to inadequate educational access. In the Philippines, the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 emphasizes education as a tool to address such poverty (Abejuela, 2021). However, without literacy, Manobo youth may be confined to low-skill labor, as observed in Sitio Kanugon, where many young people work instead of attending school. Programs like the National Indigenous Peoples Education (IPEd) Policy Framework aim to tailor curricula to indigenous needs, incorporating skills like sustainable farming or cooperative management, which could enhance economic resilience if effectively implemented.

2. Emotional Intelligence

Literacy fosters emotional intelligence (EI)—the ability to understand and manage emotions, empathize with others, and navigate social interactions—by enhancing self-awareness and communication skills. Reading exposes individuals to diverse perspectives, narratives, and emotional experiences, which cultivate empathy and interpersonal understanding. A study by Kidd and Castano (2013) found that reading literary fiction improves theory of mind, the ability to infer others' mental states, a key component of EI. For the Manobos, literacy could strengthen community bonds by enabling them to articulate their feelings, share stories, and resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than confrontation.

In indigenous contexts, where oral traditions are strong, literacy complements storytelling by preserving narratives in written form, reinforcing cultural identity and emotional resilience. For example, a literate Manobo elder could document traditional practices, fostering pride and continuity among youth. Conversely, illiteracy may limit emotional expression, as individuals struggle to articulate complex thoughts or engage with external systems like healthcare or legal services, potentially leading to frustration or alienation. The lack of nearby schools in Sitio Kanugon, as noted in the original study, exacerbates this, leaving youth with fewer opportunities to develop these skills.

3. Cognitive Development

Literacy stimulates cognitive growth by enhancing critical thinking, problem-solving, and memory. Neuroscientific research shows that learning to read activates and strengthens neural pathways, particularly in the left hemisphere, improving language processing and analytical skills (Dehaene, 2010). For indigenous students, literacy in both their native language and a national language (e.g., Filipino or English) supports bilingual cognitive advantages, such as improved multitasking and mental flexibility (Bialystok, 2011). In the Manobo context, a culturally responsive curriculum, as mandated by the IPED program, could teach literacy alongside traditional knowledge, enabling students to analyze community challenges—like sustainable land use—while preserving their heritage.

Illiteracy, however, restricts cognitive potential. The United Nations for Indigenous Peoples (2019) highlights that education systems often fail to respect indigenous cultures, leading to disengagement and lower academic performance. In Sitio Kanugon, the absence of accessible schools limits cognitive stimulation, as children lack exposure to structured learning environments.

This gap can hinder their ability to adapt to modern challenges, such as navigating government services or adopting new technologies.

4. Social Impacts

Literacy promotes social inclusion by enabling individuals to participate in civic processes, access information, and advocate for their rights. For indigenous peoples, literacy is a tool for self-determination, as it empowers them to engage with legal frameworks like IPRA or influence policy through informed dialogue (Alejo, 2016). Literate Manobos could, for example, document land rights issues or petition for better school facilities, amplifying their voice in regional governance.

Socially, literacy fosters community cohesion by facilitating communication and shared learning. In indigenous settings, where collective values often prevail, literacy can strengthen cooperative efforts, such as organizing community projects or preserving cultural festivals. The 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, supported by UNESCO, underscored literacy's role in revitalizing endangered languages, which are central to social identity (UNESCO, 2019). However, the competitive, individualistic focus of mainstream education, as critiqued by the United Nations for Indigenous Peoples (2019), can alienate indigenous students, weakening social ties. In Sitio Kanugon, the single, poorly equipped extension school limits social learning opportunities, leaving youth vulnerable to isolation.

Literacy is a transformative force that shapes economic prospects, emotional intelligence, cognitive abilities, and social connectivity. For the Dulangan Manobos, overcoming educational barriers—such as inaccessible schools and culturally irrelevant curricula—could unlock these benefits, fostering personal and communal empowerment. By integrating literacy with indigenous

values, as envisioned by policies like IPed, education can become a bridge between tradition and modernity, enabling the Manobos to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Manobo's Educational Landscape

Globally, indigenous peoples comprise approximately 5% of the world's population yet account for 15% of those experiencing extreme poverty (United Nations, 2021). Systemic barriers, including historical marginalization, economic disparities, and inadequate educational policies, contribute to their continued exclusion from quality education (King & Schielmann, 2004). In the Philippines, legislative frameworks such as the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 (Republic Act No. 8371) and the National Indigenous Peoples Education (IPed) Policy Framework (DepEd Order No. 62, s. 2011) aim to provide culturally responsive education (Department of Education, 2011). However, implementation gaps persist due to resource limitations and misalignment between policy goals and local realities (Bennagen, 2020).

In Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, and Sultan Kudarat, the Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group embodies these challenges. A single, under-equipped school serves a geographically dispersed community. At the same time, socio-economic pressures such as early marriage and child labor further restrict educational opportunities (National Commission on Indigenous Peoples [NCIP], 2020). A survey conducted in December 2022 among 50 Manobo respondents revealed literacy levels at an emergent stage, with reading proficiency averaging a grand mean of 2.55 and writing at 1.81 on a descriptive scale. This study contextualizes these findings within broader discussions on Indigenous education, informing culturally responsive pedagogical and policy interventions.

II. Stages of Literacy Development: Theoretical and Contextual Insights

Literacy development is a complex process influenced by cognitive, social, and cultural factors (Vygotsky, 1978). Foundational models proposed by Chall (1983), Ehri (1995), Clay (2001), and Frith (1985) provide a framework for analyzing literacy acquisition among the Manobo, integrating universal patterns with localized challenges.

Emergent Literacy (Ages 0–5) Emergent literacy encompasses early oral language development, phonological awareness, and initial exposure to print (Clay, 2001). Chall (1983) describes this as the "pre-reading" stage, emphasizing the role of narrative exposure. However, in resource-limited settings, Indigenous children often rely on oral traditions rather than text-rich environments (Ball, 2011).

A Manobo toddler in Sitio Kanugon may develop narrative comprehension through traditional storytelling, yet the absence of print exposure delays phonemic awareness. This pattern aligns with studies indicating that indigenous learners frequently enter formal education with underdeveloped pre-literacy skills due to limited access to written materials (Walter & Dekker, 2011).

Alphabetic Stage (Ages 5–7) At this stage, learners develop phonemic awareness and decoding skills (Ehri, 1995). Chall's (1983) "decoding" stage emphasizes phonics mastery, crucial for early reading success. However, the effectiveness of phonics instruction depends on cultural and linguistic relevance (Cummins, 2000).

A first-grader in an IPed-supported school may struggle with phonemic correspondence when instruction is in an unfamiliar language, reflecting broader research on the difficulties indigenous learners face in non-native literacy instruction (Dumatog & Dekker, 2003).

Fluency Stage (Ages 7–9) As sight-word recognition expands, cognitive resources shift toward comprehension (Chall, 1983). Ehri's (1995) consolidated alphabetic phase underscores the importance of repeated exposure to diverse texts. However, access to age-appropriate books remains scarce in Sitio Kanugon, mirroring persistent gaps in indigenous education (NCIP, 2020).

Reading to Learn (Ages 9–13) This stage marks the transition from decoding to content comprehension (Chall, 1983). Frith's (1985) orthographic phase describes efficient word processing, allowing learners to engage with disciplinary texts. However, limited educational resources and irregular school attendance hinder knowledge acquisition among Manobo learners (Bennagen, 2020).

Critical Literacy (Ages 13+) Advanced literacy fosters analytical skills and civic engagement (Freire, 1970). Chall's (1983) "construction and reconstruction" stage highlights the role of literacy in socio-political awareness. A Manobo adolescent with access to consistent education might critically analyze land policies affecting their community. However, low completion rates in secondary education limit this potential (NCIP, 2020).

III. Evidence-Based Instructional Strategies for Indigenous Learners

Effective literacy instruction must be culturally responsive and empirically supported (Gay, 2010). The following strategies align with research findings on indigenous education:

Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) Studies indicate that MTB-MLE reduces dropout rates by 15% and enhances reading performance by 20% among indigenous learners (Walter & Dekker, 2011). The Lubuagan MTB-MLE program in Kalinga demonstrated a 25% literacy increase through native-language instruction (Dumatog & Dekker, 2003).

Culturally Relevant Materials Texts reflecting indigenous experiences improve engagement by 30% and comprehension by 18% (Gay, 2010). Save the Children Philippines' Manobo folktale books increased reading motivation in Mindanao (NCIP, 2020).

Community-Based Learning Parental involvement enhances literacy outcomes by 15%, while community initiatives reduce absenteeism by 10% (Epstein, 2011). The ALS-Education for Indigenous Peoples (ALS-IP) program trains Manobo parents as facilitators, reinforcing literacy support systems (Department of Education, 2018).

Scaffolded Instruction Gradual skill development improves writing proficiency by 25% (Bruner, 1975). DepEd's IPed employs scaffolded learning, though inconsistent implementation limits its impact (Bennagen, 2020).

IV. Challenges in Literacy Acquisition: A Multi-Dimensional Analysis

The literacy struggles of the Dulangan Manobo stem from cognitive, environmental, and linguistic barriers.

Cognitive Barriers Limited print exposure hampers phonological awareness, aligning with studies on indigenous learners' reading difficulties (Ball, 2011). Interactive reading interventions, modeled after New Zealand's Reading Recovery program, could enhance early literacy (Clay, 2001).

Environmental Barriers Socio-economic constraints, including child labor and early marriage, disrupt education (NCIP, 2020). Mobile schools and cash transfer programs, similar to Brazil's Bolsa Família, could mitigate these challenges (de Janvry & Sadoulet, 2006).

Language Barriers Instruction in Filipino rather than Manobo creates confusion, echoing global indigenous education challenges (Walter & Dekker, 2011). Expanding MTB-MLE and training bilingual teachers are critical steps, as demonstrated by Guatemala's bilingual education success (King & Schielmann, 2004).

V. Conclusion: Envisioning a Literacy-Empowered Future

The educational journey of the Dulangan Manobo underscores the systemic barriers that hinder indigenous literacy development. However, evidence-based interventions such as MTB-MLE, culturally relevant materials, and community engagement provide viable solutions. Longitudinal studies assessing intervention efficacy, enhanced teacher training, and mobile schools represent critical next steps.

By prioritizing culturally responsive literacy strategies, policymakers and educators can empower the Manobo to preserve their cultural heritage while equipping them with the tools for active societal participation. A collective commitment to educational equity is essential in ensuring that literacy serves as a transformative force for Indigenous self-determination and development.

II. Content

A. Problem Statement

Despite existing efforts to provide inclusive education for indigenous peoples, the literacy rates among the Dulangan Manobo remain critically low. The primary research problem is: *What is the reading and writing literacy levels of the Dulangan Manobo, and what challenges hinder their access to quality education?*

B. Application Area

This study focuses on the educational conditions of the Dulangan Manobo in Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat. The findings have implications for policymakers, educators, and NGOs working to improve literacy and education among indigenous communities.

C. Research Course

The study aims to:

1. Assess the reading and writing literacy levels of the Dulangan Manobo.
2. Identify the key challenges they face in acquiring education.
3. Propose actionable recommendations to enhance literacy and educational access.

D. Method Used

The research employs a **quantitative descriptive design**, utilizing a survey questionnaire to gather data. A total of 50 respondents from the Dulangan Manobo community were selected using convenience sampling. The survey instrument, adapted from previous literacy studies, includes:

- **Demographic profile** (age, gender, civil status, occupation, and educational attainment).
- **Literacy assessment** (15 items for reading skills, 15 items for writing skills).
- **Educational challenges** (17 items based on common barriers to literacy).

Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, Likert scale interpretation, and statistical tools such as ANOVA to examine variations in literacy levels across demographic groups.

E. Status and Results

Table 1. Socio Demographic profile of the respondents.

Characteristics	Frequency n=50	Percent
Age		
6-12 years old (Late childhood)	9	18%
13-18 years old (Adolescence)	10	20%
18-25 years old (Early Adulthood)	12	24%
26-35 years old (Adulthood)	13	26%
36-60 years old (Late Adulthood)	6	12%
Gender		
Male	18	36%
Female	32	64%
Civil Status		
Single	12	24%
Separated	4	8%
Married	29	58%
Widow	5	10%
Occupation		
Farming	47	94%
Hunting	3	6%
Educational Attainment		
No education	27	54%

Elementary	19	38%
Junior High School	3	6%
Senior High School	1	2%

Age

The age of respondents ranges from 26 to 35 years old (adulthood), with the highest percentage of 26 percent. Followed by the ages 18–25 years old (early adulthood) with a percentage of 24 percent; next were the ages 13–18 years old (adolescence) with a percentage of 20 percent; 6–12 years old (late childhood) with a percentage of 18; and on the other hand, the ages 36–60 years old (late adulthood) got the lowest percentage of respondents with only 12 percent of the total respondents. As a whole, the grand mean age of the respondents is 15.36.

According to the 2015 Philippine Statistics Authority survey, the literacy rate of Lumad adults (ages 15 and above) was 68.7%, which is lower than the national average of 96.3%.

Gender

Majority of the respondents, 32 or 64% were female, and 18 or 36% were male. It indicates that the number of Dulangan Manobo females being surveyed is more remarkable than males.

A study conducted in New Zealand 2016 found that Indigenous women were more likely to participate in a survey on educational aspirations than Indigenous men (McPherson et al., 2019).

Civil Status

The civil status of the respondents; as shown in the table, the highest percentage, 58 percent, were married, followed by single with a percentage of 24 percent, widows with a percentage of 10 percent, and separated was the lowest status of the respondents with the percentage of 8 percent.

In a report published by Statistics Canada (2017), the 2016 Census found that Indigenous people were likelier to be married or in common-law relationships than non-indigenous people. It is also found that indigenous people are less likely to be separated or divorced.

Occupation

The occupation of the respondents, and 47 or 94% are farming while 3 or 6 % are hunting. (Aldon et al., 2016) farming is the primary occupation of most indigenous people, with the rest on other livelihoods.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of the respondents; as shown in the table, most of the respondents have no education percentage of 54 percent, followed by elementary with a percentage of 38 percent, junior high school with a percentage of 6, senior high school with 2 percent, and no respondent attained college.

According to Philippine Statistics Authority (2017), indigenous people in the country have lower educational attainment than the general population, with only one small percentage of indigenous people having reached college or completed tertiary education. Hence, it was found that Indigenous people were less likely to attend college due to certain factors.

Table 2. Mean distribution of the Dulangan Manobo respondents in terms of their Reading Literacy.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1) I can recognize sound and word discrimination.	2.54	Beginning Literacy
2) I can identify rhyming words.	2.82	Approaching Literacy

3) I can verbally sequence the alphabetic writing system.	3.06	Approaching Literacy
4) I can enumerate the sound of every letter of the Filipino alphabet.	2.52	Beginning Literacy
5) I am literate in my own language as manifested in MTB-MLE subject.	2.86	Approaching Literacy
6) I can write and sequence the Filipino alphabet.	3.18	Approaching Literacy
7) I can determine if the word makes sense based on my understanding when I come to a word and sounds it out.	2.16	Beginning Literacy
8) I can understand the meaning of the majority of words in the text.	2.18	Beginning Literacy
9) I can translate the word into Manobo correctly.	3.64	Moderate Literacy
10) I can read out loud words accurately or with accuracy.	2.38	Beginning Literacy
11) I can read out loud words quickly or with speed.	2.12	Beginning Literacy
12) I can read out loud with proper expression.	2.12	Beginning Literacy
13) I can recognize words and comprehend them simultaneously.	1.88	Beginning Literacy
14) I can speak basic Filipino.	2.48	Beginning Literacy
15) I can sequence events in a story.	2.24	Beginning Literacy
Grand Mean	2.55	Beginning Literacy

Table 2 offers a comprehensive evaluation of the reading literacy rates among the Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group in Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, employing metrics such as frequency, mean, grand mean, and descriptive classifications. The overall grand mean of 2.55 places their reading proficiency at a beginning literacy level, indicating a rudimentary grasp of reading skills that falls short of fluency or advanced comprehension. This aggregate score reflects a community navigating significant educational hurdles, likely compounded by limited access to resources and instruction in a remote setting. Such a finding signals the need for a deeper exploration of specific reading competencies to identify strengths to build upon and weaknesses to address, thereby tailoring interventions to elevate the Manobo's literacy beyond this initial stage.

A closer examination of the data reveals notable disparities in specific reading abilities. The highest mean rating of 3.64 corresponds to the Manobo's capacity to translate words accurately into their native language, suggesting a relative strength in leveraging their linguistic heritage for comprehension. This proficiency may stem from oral traditions or informal learning within the community, offering a foundation that could be harnessed to enhance broader reading skills. Conversely, the lowest mean rating of 1.88 pertains to their ability to recognize and comprehend words simultaneously, highlighting a significant challenge in processing text efficiently. This weakness likely reflects limited exposure to consistent reading practice or instruction, compounded by the constraints of a single, under-resourced school in Sitio Kanugon. These contrasting metrics underscore the uneven development of reading literacy among the Manobo, pointing to the necessity of targeted strategies that capitalize on their translation skills while bolstering foundational word recognition and comprehension.

These findings echo broader patterns identified in a 2016 UNESCO study, which observed that many indigenous children worldwide struggle with reading when instruction occurs in a language foreign to their own. For the Dulangan Manobo, the emphasis on Filipino or English in educational settings, rather than their native dialect, likely contributes to their beginning-level reading literacy (grand mean of 2.55) and the specific difficulty in simultaneous word recognition and comprehension (mean of 1.88). The UNESCO study attributes such struggles to a linguistic mismatch that alienates learners, a dynamic mirrored in the Manobo context where cultural and linguistic disconnects hinder engagement with reading materials. This parallel suggests that the Manobo's challenges are part of a global indigenous education issue, necessitating solutions like Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) to align instruction with their native language, alongside increased access to culturally relevant texts and teacher training. By addressing these linguistic and resource gaps, stakeholders can transform the Manobo's latent strengths—such as their translation ability—into a springboard for comprehensive reading proficiency, fostering greater educational equity and empowerment.

Table 3. Mean distribution of the Dulangan Manobo respondents in terms of their Writing Literacy.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Description</i>
1) I can write words properly and straightly.	2.58	Beginning Literacy
2) I can write in my native language.	1.55	Poor Literacy
3) I can write notes, messages, letters and etc.	1.78	Poor Literacy
4) I write for pleasure in my free time in Filipino	1.90	Beginning Literacy
5) I can use my own independent thinking in my writing.	1.57	Poor Literacy
6) I can identify problems in my writing and see what should be improved.	1.78	Poor Literacy
7) I can write quickly in Filipino.	1.90	Beginning Literacy
8) I can effectively write under time constraints.	1.83	Beginning Literacy
9) I can edit my writing to improve the wording, grammar, punctuation and spelling.	1.81	Beginning Literacy
10) I can use appropriate spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.	1.72	Poor Literacy
11) I can use different sentence structures.	1.81	Beginning Literacy
12) I can write a good academic paragraph.	1.68	Poor Literacy
13) I use Filipino words I know in different ways of writing.	1.79	Poor Literacy
14) I make notes or try to remember feedback I get so I can use it the next time I write.	1.90	Beginning Literacy
15) I write down important ideas when needed.	1.60	Poor Literacy
Grand Mean	1.81	Beginning Literacy

Table 3 presents a detailed assessment of the writing literacy rates among the Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group in Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, using metrics such as frequency, mean, grand mean, and descriptive categories. The overall grand mean of 1.81 situates their writing proficiency at a beginning literacy level, indicating a foundational but limited ability to engage with written expression. This aggregate measure reflects a community grappling with significant barriers to literacy development, a pattern that aligns with broader challenges faced by indigenous populations globally. The data underscores

the urgency of understanding specific strengths and weaknesses within their writing skills to inform educational strategies that can elevate their proficiency beyond this nascent stage.

Delving into the specifics, the highest mean rating of 2.58 corresponds to the Manobo's ability to write words correctly and in a straight line, suggesting a modest competency in basic mechanical aspects of writing, such as spelling and alignment. This strength, while limited, indicates some exposure to formal instruction or practice, possibly through the efforts of the single school in Sitio Kanugon or community-based learning initiatives. In contrast, the lowest mean rating of 1.55 pertains to their capacity to write in their native language, revealing a significant gap in leveraging their linguistic heritage for literacy. This disparity may stem from an educational system prioritizing Filipino or English over the Manobo dialect, a pedagogical mismatch that limits fluency and confidence in native-language writing. Such findings highlight the need for culturally responsive approaches that build on existing skills while addressing areas of pronounced weakness.

These results find a parallel in the 2013 National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) study in Australia, which revealed that indigenous students scored markedly lower in writing compared to their non-indigenous peers. The study attributed this gap to factors such as restricted access to educational resources, including writing materials and trained instructors, as well as cultural differences in teaching methodologies that fail to resonate with indigenous learners' experiences. For the Dulangan Manobo, similar dynamics—limited resources in a remote setting and a lack of culturally relevant instruction—likely contribute to their beginning-level writing literacy (grand mean of 1.81). The NAPLAN findings reinforce the Manobo data, suggesting that disparities in writing proficiency are not isolated but part of a global indigenous education challenge. Addressing this requires targeted interventions: enhancing resource availability, training educators in culturally sensitive pedagogy, and prioritizing native-language literacy to bridge the gap between potential and performance, thereby empowering the Manobo to fully harness writing as a tool for communication and self-expression

Table 4. The rank of the educational challenges perceived by the Dulangan Manobo respondents.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Lack of family support	1
Child labor	2
Long distance of home from school	3
Insufficient meals in a day	4
Lack of culturally sensitive education materials	5
Financial problem	5

Survey data from the Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group in Sitio Kanugon, Wasag, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, as presented in Table 4, reveals a constellation of barriers obstructing their path to literacy. The top five challenges identified include lack of family support (36 respondents), child labor (33), the long distance between home and school (32), insufficient daily meals (30), and a dual concern of inadequate culturally sensitive educational materials and financial difficulties (each cited by 29 respondents). These findings resonate with Reyes’ (2018) research on the academic performance of Indigenous students in the Philippines, which similarly pinpointed a lack of familial encouragement, child labor, geographic isolation, poor nutrition, and resource scarcity as pervasive impediments. For the Manobo, the absence of family support—ranked highest—reflects a complex interplay of factors: parents may lack formal education themselves, face economic pressures prioritizing survival over schooling, or adhere to cultural norms that undervalue literacy. Reyes (2018) underscores that this gap in familial backing diminishes motivation and access to educational resources, a dynamic starkly evident in this community where economic survival often overshadows academic pursuits.

The economic and logistical dimensions of these challenges further compound Manobo's literacy struggles, painting a picture of systemic disadvantage. Child labor, noted by 33 respondents, exemplifies how poverty forces youth into farming or other labor to support their families, a reality Reyes (2018) identifies as a common thread among Indigenous learners, trapping them in a cycle of illiteracy and economic hardship. Similarly, the long distance to school (32 respondents) highlights the physical inaccessibility of education in remote Sitio Kanugon, where a single, under-resourced school serves a dispersed population, often unreachable without transportation or during adverse weather. Insufficient meals (30 respondents) add a health-related barrier, as hunger undermines cognitive functions critical for reading and writing, a link Reyes (2018) ties to diminished academic outcomes. Together, these issues illustrate how socioeconomic pressures and geographic marginalization intersect to limit educational engagement, reinforcing the need for interventions that address both immediate needs and structural inequities.

Complementing these challenges are pedagogical and financial hurdles that deepen the literacy gap, necessitating a culturally responsive approach to education. The lack of culturally sensitive materials (29 respondents) reveals a curriculum that fails to reflect Manobo language, traditions, or experiences, reducing its relevance and alienating learners—a concern echoed by Reyes (2018), who argues that such disconnects hinder engagement and comprehension. Financial problems, also cited by 29 respondents, restrict access to basic supplies and supplementary learning opportunities, exacerbating resource disparities. Reyes (2018) advocates for policies that tackle these intertwined barriers, emphasizing that culturally irrelevant education and poverty not only impede academic progress but also perpetuate marginalization. For the Dulangan Manobo, overcoming these challenges demands a multifaceted strategy: community-driven support systems, economic relief to reduce child labor, infrastructural improvements for school access, nutritional programs, and the development of culturally tailored materials. This holistic perspective aligns with Reyes' (2018) call for equitable educational opportunities, urging stakeholders to transform these insights into actionable solutions that empower the Manobo to achieve literacy and greater agency in their lives

Table 5: ANOVA Results for Reading and Writing Literacy Across Age Groups

Source of Variation	Sum Squares	of Degrees (df)	of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups (Age)	12.56	4		3.14	5.23	0.002
Within Groups	18.45	45		0.41		
Total	31.01	49				

The tables above provide a deeper analysis of the literacy and educational challenges faced by the Dulangan Manobo tribal group. Table 5 highlights significant differences in literacy levels across age groups, as evidenced by the ANOVA results ($F=5.23$, $p=0.002$). Younger respondents and those in late adulthood showed lower literacy scores, suggesting age-specific interventions were needed. Table 2 compares literacy performance by gender, revealing a significant disparity in reading literacy, with females outperforming males ($t=-2.01$, $p=0.047$). However, no significant difference was observed in writing literacy, indicating that both genders face similar difficulties. Table 3 identifies the most pressing educational challenges, ranked by frequency and analyzed for their perceived impact. The results show that a lack of family support has the most substantial effect ($F=7.12$, $p=0.001$), followed by child labor and the long distance of schools from respondents' homes. These findings collectively emphasize the systemic barriers that hinder educational attainment within this indigenous group.

These results align with broader research on indigenous education. For example, Reyes (2018) found that Indigenous learners in the Philippines face significant challenges, including socioeconomic barriers, limited access to culturally relevant materials, and insufficient familial support, which impede literacy and overall educational progress. Similarly, McPherson et al. (2019) reported that Indigenous women in New Zealand were more likely to engage in literacy activities,

paralleling the findings of this study, where females demonstrated higher reading proficiency. These studies highlight the global relevance of the findings, as indigenous communities worldwide often encounter similar structural and cultural challenges that inhibit access to quality education. The integration of culturally sensitive educational resources, as noted by UNESCO (2016), has proven effective in improving literacy rates among indigenous learners and can serve as a model for addressing these issues in the Dulangan Manobo context.

In this study underscores the critical barriers affecting literacy and education among the Dulangan Manobo, including age-related disparities, gender differences, and systemic challenges such as familial and economic constraints. The findings emphasize the need for targeted, culturally informed interventions to bridge these educational gaps and promote equitable learning opportunities. However, this study is not without limitations. The small sample size of 50 respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader Dulangan Manobo population. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce biases or inaccuracies. Future research should employ larger sample sizes and incorporate longitudinal designs to assess the long-term impact of interventions. Despite these limitations, this study provides a foundational understanding of the literacy challenges faced by indigenous communities and highlights the urgent need for sustainable educational solutions.

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Reading and Writing Literacy Between Male and Female Respondents

Literacy Dimension	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-Value	P-Value	Interpretation
Reading Literacy	2.49	2.57	2.01	-	0.047 Significant difference
Writing Literacy	1.79	1.82	0.85	-	0.398 No significant difference

The t-test results presented in Table 6 demonstrate a significant difference in reading literacy between male and female respondents, with females achieving higher mean scores ($t=-2.01$, $p=0.047$). This indicates that females within the Dulangan Manobo community are better equipped or more engaged in developing reading skills than their male counterparts. Conversely, no significant difference was observed in writing literacy between the two genders ($p=0.398$), suggesting that both male and female respondents encounter similar challenges in acquiring and improving writing skills. These findings highlight gender-specific disparities in literacy performance, necessitating targeted interventions to enhance male engagement in reading literacy while continuing to address writing literacy gaps across genders.

These results are consistent with broader research on literacy and gender in indigenous communities. For instance, McPherson et al. (2019) found that indigenous women in New Zealand often participate more actively in educational and literacy activities than men, partly due to cultural expectations and roles. Similarly, a study by UNESCO (2016) noted that gendered dynamics in education frequently result in disparities in literacy levels, with females benefiting more from programs that prioritize community and familial involvement. In contrast, males may face greater societal pressures to engage in labor rather than education, limiting their opportunities for literacy development. These findings align with the observed disparities in reading literacy among the Dulangan Manobo and underscore the need to address gender-based barriers in educational initiatives.

The significant difference in reading literacy between males and females highlights a critical area for intervention in the Dulangan Manobo community. Programs that actively engage males in reading activities while providing equal opportunities for both genders to improve their

writing skills are essential. However, the study has limitations. The small sample size and reliance on self-reported data may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. Furthermore, the lack of qualitative insights into the cultural and social factors influencing gender disparities limits the study's depth. Future research should employ mixed-method approaches, including interviews or focus groups, to explore the root causes of these disparities and design culturally sensitive, inclusive literacy development programs.

Table 7: Top Educational Challenges Ranked by Frequency and ANOVA Analysis of their Perceived Impact

Educational Challenge	Frequency (Rank)	Mean Impact Score	F-Value	P-Value
Lack of Family Support	36 (1st)	4.8	7.12	0.001
Child Labor	33 (2nd)	4.6	6.45	0.003
Long Distance from School	32 (3rd)	4.5	5.78	0.006
Insufficient Meal in a Day	30 (4th)	4.3	4.29	0.015
Lack of Culturally Sensitive Materials	29 (5th)	4.1	3.91	0.020

The ANOVA analysis presented in Table 7 demonstrates significant variation in the perceived impact of educational challenges faced by the Dulangan Manobo respondents. Among the challenges identified, lack of family support emerged as the most significant barrier ($F=7.12$, $p=0.001$), indicating its profound influence on the literacy and educational outcomes of the respondents. Other challenges, such as child labor, long distances to school, insufficient daily meals, and lack of culturally sensitive materials, also showed substantial impact but to a lesser

degree. These findings suggest that family dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the educational trajectories of Indigenous learners and that addressing this challenge could yield substantial improvements in literacy and learning outcomes.

These findings align with existing research that underscores the importance of familial involvement in education. Reyes (2018) highlighted that lack of family support is a common barrier for indigenous learners in the Philippines, exacerbated by economic constraints and cultural expectations that prioritize labor over schooling. Similarly, Victoria (2020) emphasized the role of parental involvement in improving early literacy, noting that children with engaged families demonstrate higher levels of reading and writing proficiency. Globally, studies like those by UNESCO (2016) have found that Indigenous learners who lack familial and community support are less likely to succeed academically due to reduced motivation, guidance, and access to resources. These parallels reinforce the significance of strengthening family and community engagement to address systemic barriers in education.

The ANOVA results highlight the urgent need for interventions that address the lack of family support as a critical barrier to educational progress among the Dulangan Manobo. Community-driven initiatives, such as parental education programs, advocacy for familial engagement, and support networks for Indigenous families, could mitigate the adverse effects of this challenge. However, this study has limitations. The small sample size and reliance on self-reported perceptions may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study did not explore the underlying cultural and economic factors influencing family dynamics, which could provide deeper insights into addressing this issue. Future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach to capture both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, allowing for a more

comprehensive understanding of how familial and community support can enhance educational outcomes for Indigenous learners.

Conclusion

Based on the summary of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Half of the respondents have never been to school and are already married regardless of age, gender, occupation, and educational attainment. In addition, they have yet to advance to college, and most are indulged in farming. The respondents' level of reading and writing literacy is in the beginning literacy, which suggests that significant intervention must be addressed.

The Dulangan Manobo Tribal Group encountered many educational challenges, especially in learning to read and write. As the survey exposed, the significant challenges are: As the survey exposed, the significant challenges are: lack of family support; child labor; a long distance of home from school; insufficient meals in a day; lack of culturally sensitive education materials; and financial problems

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IV. Glossary of Terms

1. **Indigenous Peoples** – Ethnic groups native to a region who maintain distinct cultural traditions, often marginalized in mainstream society.
2. **Alternative Learning System (ALS)** – A parallel learning system in the Philippines that provides education for out-of-school youth and adults.
3. **Literacy Rate** – The percentage of a population that has basic reading and writing skills.
4. **Culturally Relevant Education** – Educational materials and curricula designed to incorporate and respect the cultural traditions of indigenous learners.
5. **Descriptive Research Design** – A research method that involves observing and describing the characteristics of a subject without influencing it.

CHAPTER 7

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Transformational Leadership has been a phenomenon in the 21st Century landscape particularly in Leadership. This style of leadership was widely used in the different context but more emphasis was given to education. Application of Transformational Leadership and its attributes are interestingly notable to some leaders. This literature review put emphasis on the different studies conducted along Transformational Leadership and its application to the different organizations and different settings.

Keywords: Transformation, Leadership

Introduction

Over the century, educational leadership has been the most studied discipline. This discipline had gained several meanings and developments in the areas of research across borders. New leadership theories were developed and practiced by many. Reiche et al. (2017) pointed that leadership occurs to be under-conceptualized and remains ill-defined in the global context. The lack of empirical findings qualitatively hinders adequate clarity equating global leadership. The challenge of leadership role has become increasingly demanding due to some factors brought about by time. To adapt these challenges as roles become more complex, the need to choose and select leaders who will fit in these demands must be identified. In the global setting, studies conducted along higher education institutions pose several results and recommendations. Kozyrev et al. (2019) on their study about the institution of higher educations' management identified factors that influential in governance. They mentioned on the politics in higher education, students turn out, the demands on labor market of university graduates and etc. These predictors are common to some institutions of higher education. High ranking education of higher institutions have gained recognitions in the educational arena as it has a direct link to the leadership and management of the head of the institutions.

Content

Transformational Leadership as a Binding Force of Multiculturalism

A leader embodies leadership itself—their ideologies serve as guiding principles in governing an institution. Thus, if a leader values inclusivity, it will be reflected in their leadership practices (Brown et al., 2019; Dhiman & Marques, 2020). In the academe, a transformational leader must embrace the rich diversity of all its members—from faculty and non-teaching staff to

students—regardless of their social backgrounds (Care et al., 2021; Adams & Velarde, 2020). The push toward internationalizing higher education has made institutions such as universities and colleges vibrant melting pots of multiculturalism (de Wit, 2019; Nuryadi et al., 2020). As a result, these institutions become both battlegrounds for challenging discrimination and sanctuaries for celebrating differences (Avsar Erumit et al., 2021; Clark, 2018).

People from diverse walks of life converge with a shared goal—academic excellence. This convergence demands a powerful unifying force, which transformational leadership provides. Such leaders open doors of opportunity and ensure meaningful participation for everyone.

Transformational leaders welcome positive change and are receptive to both local and global cultures (Doucette et al., 2021). They do not perceive cultural diversity as a threat but as an opportunity to broaden learning avenues. People from different backgrounds contribute innovative ideas and practices that can enhance institutional development. Though leaders may be fewer in number, they occupy the frontlines of change and possess the power to either resist or embrace innovations. In internationalizing institutions, it is crucial that leaders uphold and recognize minority cultures, especially in the presence of dominant ones (Brazill & Ruff, 2022). This is the essence of multiculturalism—leaders acknowledging diversity across all levels of institutional interaction, both horizontal (among peers) and vertical (across hierarchies).

At the classroom level, transformational leaders serve as instructional leaders who foster a welcoming atmosphere by guiding teachers to promote inclusivity and diversity in their teaching (Kwan, 2019). Students should feel safe to express their identities—individual, racial, and socio-cultural—while pursuing academic goals (Werkmeister & Henry, 2022). This environment cultivates a culture where open exchange of clear and meaningful ideas benefits both students and

teachers. It is the responsibility of transformational leaders to ensure this culture thrives through effective instructional supervision.

At the administrative level, particularly in policymaking, transformational leaders must unite their fellow policy-makers under a shared vision. They must advocate for consistent, inclusive policies that serve the entire academic community. These leaders function as compasses, guiding the institution in fostering a culture of inclusivity and diversity, and in celebrating multiculturalism (Grapin & Prerairas, 2019).

Transformational Leadership and Globalization

As highlighted in a European study, globalization is both the driving force and the ultimate outcome of socio-economic activities worldwide (Bayar, 2020). This trend has gained momentum with the rise of technological advancements, which have permeated not only commerce and communication but also the science and art of leadership. Leadership must adapt to these evolving dynamics to remain relevant (Bonsu & Twum-Danso, 2018). Nations across the globe are compelled to keep pace with globalization, from the macro-level of national economies to the micro-level of classroom instruction (Perez, 2017).

In higher education institutions (HEIs), one significant response to globalization is internationalization. This has become a point of competition not only among local universities but also among those on the global stage (Strielkowski et al., 2021; Tight, 2019). Universities strive to send more students abroad, with the goal of globalizing their home institutions through the exchange of culture, knowledge, and academic practices (Rosyidah et al., 2020; Ota, 2018). Over time, the university transforms into a hub—or even a "Mecca"—for scholars from various nations,

enriched by their international experiences and perspectives (Take & Shoraku, 2017). However, such transformation is unattainable without the driving force of transformational leadership.

A transformational leader acts as the principal catalyst for globalization. A university cannot chart a course toward internationalization without the approval and support of its leadership (Jain, 2021). For a university to effectively navigate the tides of globalization, its leaders must be willing to embrace change and initiate progressive reforms. Transformational leaders must be bold in their vision—willing to break away from conservative, limiting cultural mindsets—and open their institutions to a wide range of international opportunities. This is not only a strategic move but also a social responsibility of HEIs in contributing to nation-building and global citizenship.

In doing so, transformational leaders must also craft inclusive and forward-thinking policies that respond to the needs of current stakeholders while creating a solid foundation for international partnerships and collaborations. These policies should serve both local and foreign scholars and contribute to the long-term institutionalization of globalization efforts within the university (Waghodekar, 2022).

Transformational Leadership and Innovation

Innovation often emerges from discomfoting situations. As humans continuously seek to satisfy their needs and improve their quality of life, they naturally look for new and better ways to achieve this. Thus, innovation is not only inevitable—it is intrinsic to human progress. Innovation may take many forms, including technological, social, and educational. In the context of education, innovation can manifest in instructional strategies, institutional policies, and reforms that address the evolving needs of the academic community. As these needs are addressed, new practices emerge to replace outdated ones, signifying progress through positive transformation (Dahlander

et al., 2021; Oeij et al., 2019; Kahn, 2018). This pursuit of positive transformation is central to the philosophy of transformational leadership, particularly within higher education institutions (HEIs).

A transformational leader in an HEI must cultivate and sustain a culture of innovation among faculty and staff (Afsar & Umrani, 2019). The leader's mindset and attitude play a pivotal role in shaping the institutional climate. When a leader embraces innovation, it becomes a driving force for various institutional endeavors (Lei et al., 2020). Conversely, if a leader is closed to new ideas, progress becomes difficult, if not impossible, to attain. Therefore, transformational leaders must remain open-minded, motivated, and willing to take risks in adopting and supporting innovation.

At the instructional level, transformational leaders—serving as instructional supervisors—must be flexible and open to unconventional approaches that respond to the dynamic needs of teaching and learning (Al-Husseini et al., 2019). Innovation in this context may involve experimenting with novel pedagogical techniques, educational technologies, or learner-centered strategies.

At the institutional level, the leader—as a planner, policymaker, implementer, monitor, and evaluator—must continually reassess existing rules and regulations. They must be capable of identifying systemic challenges and creatively developing solutions (Mokhber et al., 2018). In both levels of leadership, it is crucial for the leader to be receptive to untested or unconventional solutions when necessary. If a breakthrough idea is crafted and successfully implemented, it represents not only innovation but also progress (Grošelj et al., 2020).

In summary, transformational leadership is best realized when it fosters a creatively liberal environment where innovation thrives. When such leadership drives change that meaningfully improves institutional practices and outcomes, true transformation is achieved.

Transformational Leaders' Image of Integrity

A leader is, undeniably, a role model. His or her character, values, and actions form the foundation of leadership and directly influence the followership of subordinates (Ogunfowora et al., 2021; Gjerde & Ladegård, 2018). Anyone aspiring to be a leader must be prepared to live under public scrutiny, as leadership entails guiding a community while embodying the values one seeks to promote. One of the most essential qualities a transformational leader must possess is **integrity**.

Integrity is not merely defined by the content of one's decisions or their societal outcomes, but by the moral character demonstrated throughout the leadership process. It is about “moral quality”—the ethical grounding that determines whether one's actions align with the legitimate moral standards and expectations of society (Huberts, 2018). Since a leader serves as a model, their behavior must reflect integrity in both words and deeds. The values leaders consistently demonstrate in their interactions with others strongly influence how they are perceived, and in turn, how they are followed. When a leader's image is tarnished, followers may become disillusioned or resistant, thereby weakening the leader's influence. Therefore, the image of integrity is indispensable for anyone who aims to lead transformative change.

Organizational transformation is often a complex and demanding endeavor, particularly when it challenges long-standing cultural norms and practices. Change is difficult, especially when it disrupts deeply ingrained systems (Henricks et al., 2020; Peng et al., 2020). In such contexts, a leader's **charisma** becomes a vital tool. Charisma is not merely about persuasive speech but is

rooted in proactive behavior and authentic moral conduct. It is developed over time through lived actions that reflect integrity. In other words, people are more easily persuaded to follow leaders whose lives embody the very change they are advocating for (Williams Jr. et al., 2018; Raffo & Williams, 2018).

In higher education institutions, where transformation is both structural and instructional, the leader must sustain an image of integrity to gain trust and support. If the goal is to improve teaching and learning practices, the leader must first demonstrate excellence and engagement as an academic. Only then can initiatives gain traction and credibility (Baba et al., 2019). Likewise, when proposing new institutional policies, the leader's own behavior becomes the precedent—serving as proof of concept for the policies being advanced (Farahnak et al., 2019). Subordinates are more likely to follow when they see that the leader embodies the values and standards expected of the institution.

To put it briefly, **integrity is the stronghold of transformational leadership**. Without it, efforts at change are likely to be met with resistance. Trust and credibility are essential for transformation, and both stem from a leader's consistent demonstration of ethical leadership.

Task Delegation, Manpower Management, and Transformational Leadership

Transformation is never the task of a one-man team—it is a collective responsibility involving all members of the institution (Klaic et al., 2020; Breevaart et al., 2021). Leading and managing a higher education institution demands substantial effort, with a wide array of

responsibilities necessary to sustain operations. These include planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation—roles that cannot be fulfilled solely by the leader (Dumas & Beinecke, 2018; Meruka, 2017). The nature of transformation, especially when it involves positive and meaningful change, makes the task even more demanding. Therefore, support from other members becomes crucial (Hussain et al., 2018; Breevaart & Bakker, 2018).

A transformational leader, aware of his or her limitations, understands the value of **task delegation**. Delegating responsibilities and even decision-making authority is not a sign of weakness but a strategy for efficiency and empowerment (Juhana et al., 2020; Tapio et al., 2019). The leader becomes the mind and strategic compass of the institution, while the members, as empowered delegates, act as the working arms that carry out the mission. However, task delegation must not be done haphazardly. It requires careful assessment and strategic planning. The skills, qualifications, and overall competence of team members must be reviewed thoroughly. As such, it is vital to maintain a comprehensive record of personnel profiles to ensure alignment between tasks and individual capabilities. Proficiency is essential—transformational tasks must not exceed the capacity of those assigned to them (Mathebula & Barnard, 2020).

This necessity brings into focus the importance of **manpower management**, another crucial skill of transformational leadership. As emphasized, the success of a task depends largely on the competency of those performing it (Mustapha, 2019). Yet, the real challenge in manpower management arises not only during delegation but throughout the entire execution phase. Even the most capable individuals may not consistently perform at their best. There are instances when productivity fluctuates or underperformance occurs (Niyivuga et al., 2019; Pleśniarska, 2019). In such cases, it becomes the leader's responsibility to ensure that the goals of transformation remain

on track despite challenges. Hence, **monitoring** becomes an essential element of effective manpower management.

Monitoring enables the leader to track progress, provide real-time support, and identify issues that may hinder successful outcomes. After the implementation phase, **evaluation** follows. Evaluation allows the institution to assess the degree of success of the delegated tasks and, more importantly, to gather insights and lessons learned for future initiatives (Velasco-Martínez & Tójar-Hurtado, 2018; Planas-Lladò et al., 2021).

In essence, transformational leadership is not just about vision and charisma—it is also about empowering others, managing human resources effectively, and ensuring that delegated tasks contribute meaningfully to the institution's developmental goals.

Transformational Leadership and the Ability to Take Sensible Risk

If a leader seeks to transform his or her institution, the willingness to take risks is essential. However, the true test of leadership lies in identifying **which** risks are worth taking (Fourie, 2022). Among the core competencies required of transformational leaders are the abilities to conduct **environmental scanning** and to determine the strategic direction that the institution must pursue (Tarker, 2019). These competencies must be developed prior to exercising risk-taking, as they lay the foundation for making informed and rational decisions.

A transformational leader is marked by **wisdom and foresight**, carefully reflecting before making any major move. Environmental scanning is a critical process in this regard—it involves a thorough assessment of the institution's internal and external conditions to uncover its genuine needs, especially during times of crisis or change (García-Carbonell, 2021). Identifying the real

challenges and enumerating the areas that require improvement enable the leader to break down complex institutional issues into manageable, actionable problems. From this diagnosis, a **strategic plan** can be formulated, which then serves as the compass for decision-making and risk evaluation.

In choosing a path forward, the transformational leader must possess a **visionary mindset**—one that can anticipate the potential outcomes, whether positive or negative, of any given course of action (Hai et al., 2021; Mi et al., 2019). In this sense, the leader must be prepared not only for success but also for setbacks. Contingency planning—having Plans A through Z—becomes a prudent practice in managing institutional transformation.

Once the leader has effectively scanned the environment, diagnosed the core issues, and crafted a sound action plan, he or she can then take **calculated risks**. Unlike impulsive decisions, which often jeopardize the welfare of both the leader and the institution, **sensible risks** are those taken with due diligence, foresight, and preparation (Wang, 2019; O'Reilly & Hall, 2021). These are risks rooted in careful analysis, structured planning, and a deep understanding of the organizational context.

In conclusion, if transformation involves risk, then the **wise leader** does not merely act courageously but also **acts with clarity, strategy, and readiness**. Sensible risk-taking, grounded in environmental scanning, needs assessment, and rational decision-making, is a hallmark of transformational leadership.

Transformational Leaders as Prime Germinating Agents of Motivation and Inspiration

Motivation is the driving force that compels individuals to take action (Grant & Shandell, 2022). It can be **intrinsic**, originating from within the individual, or **extrinsic**, arising from external

sources such as other people or the surrounding environment (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2020). When both forms are activated simultaneously, individuals are more likely to engage deeply with their tasks—often going beyond what is merely expected of them (Pârljoleanu, 2020). In the realm of leadership, such motivation is indispensable.

Subordinates, particularly during periods of stress or while undertaking significant institutional projects or reforms, often rely on motivation to sustain their performance. While encouragement may come from colleagues, **motivation initiated by a leader** carries more weight (Sitthiwarongchai et al., 2020; Schuckert et al., 2018). It conveys **trust, confidence, and validation**—fostering a deeper sense of commitment among members. Thus, when transformation is the goal, the leader must be the **primary source of motivation**—setting the tone and pushing forward the momentum for change.

In addition to being a motivator, the transformational leader also serves as a **source of inspiration** (Bakker et al., 2022; Yip & Walker, 2022). As a figure of integrity, the leader is expected to **embody the values** he or she promotes. Through consistent and authentic actions, the leader becomes a living model of the behaviors and attitudes that the institution aims to cultivate. In this sense, he or she becomes an **oasis of values**—a source of renewal, guidance, and strength for subordinates navigating institutional change (Carleton et al., 2018).

To achieve transformation, the leader must radiate **positivity and openness**—creating an environment where members feel supported and encouraged to embrace innovation. Simply put, **a transformational leader inspires**, and that inspiration becomes contagious. Positive leadership breeds a positive organizational climate; likewise, transformational leadership catalyzes meaningful transformation.

Respect as a Medium between Transformational Leadership and Followership

Leadership possesses the power to either elevate or dismantle an organization. It is a force capable of initiating profound and far-reaching effects on institutional operations and culture (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Through leadership, members are mobilized to fulfill their roles and responsibilities. However, for leadership to effectively influence followership, a **mediating element** is essential—one that binds leaders and subordinates through mutual understanding and cooperation. Among the most fundamental of these mediators is **respect**.

Respect functions as a catalyst for willingness, and willingness, in turn, contributes to the successful execution of institutional goals (Pircher Verdorfer, 2019; Lumpkin & Achen, 2018). Its presence fosters a collaborative climate, while its absence may lead to resistance, disengagement, or suboptimal performance. In the context of a learning institution, **respect is not a mere courtesy—it is a strategic necessity** that enhances the execution and outcome of organizational initiatives (Asbari, 2020).

Given the complexity and volume of leadership responsibilities, the active **participation and cooperation of subordinates** become essential to the success of institutional programs and projects (Rudolph et al., 2021). Leaders rely on the workforce as their extended arms to bring visions into reality. When subordinates lack the willingness to perform, the quality of the output suffers—tasks may be completed with minimal engagement or not at all. Crucially, this willingness is often rooted in the **respect subordinates hold for their leaders** (John et al., 2019; Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2018). However, respect is **not one-sided**; it is a **reciprocal dynamic**. Leaders must first demonstrate respect for their subordinates through fair treatment, open communication, and

recognition of contributions. As a result, respect becomes a shared institutional value—**respect begets respect** (Asbari et al., 2021; Rigby & Ryan, 2018).

When respect becomes embedded within the organizational culture, the **benefits extend beyond compliance**. Research has shown that **respectful engagement fosters creativity** among members. In a study conducted in Pakistan, transformational leadership was identified as a primary source of respectful engagement, which in turn stimulated employee creativity (Hai et al., 2020). Furthermore, respectful treatment significantly contributes to an individual's **positive self-worth and self-esteem**. Yang et al. (2015) found that when individuals are treated with fairness and dignity, they develop a sense of pride and confidence in themselves. Over time, this results in a **collective sense of psychological safety** and a **positive organizational atmosphere**—both of which are vital in sustaining transformation.

To bring it all together, **respect is the invisible yet powerful bridge** that connects transformational leadership with committed followership. It transforms hierarchical relationships into **partnerships**, enabling institutions to move forward in unity toward shared goals.

Transformational Leaders as Chiselers of Potentials

Every individual carries within them a reservoir of potential—capacities that, when nurtured, can benefit both personal growth and organizational advancement. Employees are not merely functionaries; they are **latent assets** capable of evolving into high-performing contributors (Malykhin et al., 2021; Qizi, 2020). Yet, the journey toward actualizing one's potential is often fraught with challenges. The process of learning new skills, adapting to changing demands, and overcoming personal limitations requires resilience, guidance, and structure (Lemmetty & Collin,

2020). At this critical junction, the **transformational leader emerges as the chiseler of potential**—sculpting raw capabilities into refined competencies.

The development of an individual's potential begins at the point of entry into the organization and continues throughout their tenure. As employees encounter new tasks, responsibilities, and learning experiences, their **potential is gradually revealed, tested, and honed**. These transformative experiences may come through “baptism by fire,” structured training, or real-world engagement in institutional initiatives. Transformational leaders play a central role in this process. They act not merely as supervisors, but as **facilitators of growth**, creating an environment conducive to learning and improvement (Nikolova et al., 2019).

Effective transformational leaders recognize that not all skills surface naturally. Some capabilities lie dormant and may require intentional discovery and cultivation. As such, leaders must adopt a **mentoring mindset**, guiding subordinates in the exploration, assimilation, and application of knowledge and skills (Ivey & Dupré, 2022). Central to this process is the leader's familiarity with the individual profiles of their members—their backgrounds, interests, learning styles, and existing skillsets. Armed with this understanding, leaders can assign responsibilities and design developmental interventions that **align with individual strengths and stretch their limits**, thereby unlocking greater performance.

Crucially, transformational leadership refrains from one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, it promotes **tailored opportunities** that encourage members to operate at the edge of their capabilities. Leaders must be careful not to assign tasks far beyond an individual's current capacity or interests, as doing so may demotivate or diminish potential. Rather, by identifying areas where

an individual's skills can be cultivated and aligned with organizational goals, transformational leaders ensure that **growth is both personalized and purposeful**.

The ultimate goal of transformational leadership is not only to help members realize their potential but to **transform potential into performance**. This transformation benefits not only the individual but the institution as a whole. As members grow stronger—more skilled, confident, and committed—the institution becomes more robust, adaptable, and capable of fulfilling its mission (Bastari et al., 2020; Yi et al., 2019). In this way, transformational leaders **do not merely manage talent—they sculpt it**, creating a culture of continuous improvement and collective excellence.

Transformational Leaders as Figures of Excellence

Excellence has always been a central aspiration for humanity, a pursuit that transcends time and civilization. It is the drive to become the best version of oneself, contributing not only to personal growth but also to the betterment of the community. This relentless pursuit of excellence is evident in how individuals dedicate themselves to their responsibilities and strive to exceed expectations (Sharma & Sharma, 2021; Kumar et al., 2020; Ershadi & Dehdazzi, 2019). In the context of institutions, excellence is defined as consistently surpassing set standards and delivering more than what is required. It is the hallmark of individuals and organizations that go above and beyond their duties.

Transformational leaders, by their very nature, are committed to upholding excellence among their subordinates. They play an active role throughout every phase of the process—whether in planning, implementation, monitoring, or evaluation—to ensure that the outcomes are not only achieved but exceed expectations. These leaders do not merely delegate tasks; they **champion excellence**, ensuring that it remains the guiding principle of every action and decision (Nicdao,

2019). Thus, transformational leaders serve as both the source and custodians of excellence within the organization.

Excellence, however, is not confined to a singular moment of brilliance. It is characterized by **consistency**. A one-time outstanding achievement, while commendable, cannot be regarded as true excellence. Instead, it is when an organization consistently excels in all aspects of its operations that excellence is truly realized (Adriani et al., 2018; Elken & Stensaker, 2018). Echoing Aristotle's assertion that excellence is not an act but a habit, the pursuit of excellence becomes a continuous journey for the transformational leader. In this sense, the challenge lies in fostering a culture where excellence is embedded in every process and action. Transformational leaders must embody a proactive mindset and take the lead in ensuring that excellence is not just an aspiration but a lived reality for the entire institution.

Moreover, excellence is not only a measure of competence and performance—it is equally rooted in the **values and virtues** exhibited by both leaders and followers. The attitude of individuals within the organization plays a crucial role in cultivating an atmosphere where excellence can flourish. An institution where excellence in values is ingrained in its culture is one where individuals can thrive and excel in their respective roles (Shields & Hesbol, 2020; Sosik et al., 2018). Transformational leaders, as role models, have the responsibility of fostering such an environment. They must consistently exhibit excellence in both their **aptitude and attitude**, serving as figures that others look up to and emulate. Their conduct becomes a powerful catalyst for the overall growth and success of the organization.

Ultimately, transformational leaders are not merely tasked with achieving high standards in performance—they are responsible for creating a **culture of excellence** within their institutions.

By radiating excellence in both their actions and values, they inspire their subordinates to consistently perform at their best, thereby fostering an environment in which excellence becomes a natural and ingrained outcome.

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CHAPTER 8

INNOVATION IN PRESCHOOL and EARLY SCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The article is another attempt to present the essence of pedagogical innovations, especially those discussed in the field of preschool and early school pedagogy.

This is a search for an accurate definition of innovation, which for several decades has become increasingly perceived as an extremely desirable trend in the educational system, breaking the conventional approach to the teaching process - education - upbringing. Legal regulations now make it possible to initiate innovative activities to support the development of preschool children and early school education.

Keywords: reasons, definitions, causes and scope of innovation, current legislative facilitations.

INTRODUCTION

The political changes at the end of the 20th century brought many social and economic transformations. In Polish education, they brought a breath of alternative methodological and didactic solutions. This was related to moving away from the stagnation of the Polish People's Republic system and with the opportunity to get acquainted in practice with the diversity of systems in European countries. The developed systems of Freinet, Steiner and Montessori predominated there, and they appeared in numerous literature from the 1990s of the 20th century. The delight of innovation, practical solutions and their long-term use in other countries resulted in dynamic interest on the part of Polish teachers. Modernity in the undertaken modifications concerned integrated education, individualization of teaching, curriculum changes, increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process, searching for new textbooks and curricula. The needs of the teaching staff had not been met by the educational authorities, who were still guided by the centralization of education control. An obstacle for Polish innovators in the field of pedagogy was the lack of autonomy at work and unfavourable legal regulations, which strongly limit the possibilities of introducing changes in the educational process.

Innovation is a process that includes activities related to the implementation of a new idea (Bender, 2016, p. 5). This concept may apply to many areas of economic, scientific and cultural life. Recognizing innovative opportunities and analysing the chances of its success is the basic principle determining the definition of innovation. It refers to the process of creating the concept and the very perception of such a need, predicting the chances of success and effectiveness of the undertaken innovative action. Effective innovations begin with simple, small actions related to precisely defined facts (Drucker after Smak, 2014, p. 15).

Józef Półturzycki defined pedagogical innovation as a change in the area of education introduced in order to improve pedagogical activity. They include changes in the educational system, conditions, means, forms, educational methods, goals, content, teachers' work and students' activity. There are various reasons for introducing pedagogical innovations:

- the need to prepare students for the inevitably changing reality;
- the needs of creative teachers resulting from their searches and evaluations of educational reality;
- socio-cultural changes requiring radical modifications to education (Półturzycki, 2002, pp. 44-45).

Wincenty Okoń defined pedagogical innovations as changes in the sphere of upbringing and education regarding the structure of the school system or its component, introduced in order to improve the system. They may concern:

- educational content;
- financial and social conditions;
- work of teachers and students.

He indicates the following types of innovations:

- organizational;
- methodical;
- curricular;
- systemic;
- political (Okoń, 2001, p. 138).

In the 21st century it is difficult to agree with the statement that pedagogical innovation changes the school system, but it is certainly a factor in the search for a better quality of the system.

Teachers' great interest in creating innovations results from dissatisfaction with their current work and the existing state of education. Teachers are critical of the course and effects of their work, and they experience numerous obstacles and nuisances related to the activities of educational institutions. The professional aspirations of the teaching staff oppose disturbing phenomena and difficulties encountered in the educational field. The innovative approach of teachers is also the result of their self-improvement and nurturing their own aspirations and professional ambitions (Bender, 2016, p. 6).

Stanisław Palka claimed that the reason for teachers' striving for innovative work is the nature of the work they perform. He believed that teachers see their pedagogical activity as an art that bypasses routine and formulaic nature. They are accompanied by creative anxiety and hence the need to improve work skills and search to combine theory with practice. The creative mood gives rise to innovative activities (Palka, 1992, p. 9). It revealed the various inspirations of educators in terms of innovation:

- by assimilating innovations from other schools and applying them within the system of their educational institution;
- searching and implementing their own discoveries and ideas based on their own professional experience;
- implementing discoveries and pedagogical innovations into their own practice;
- evaluating solutions that meet the needs of students whose abilities, talents and competences require new, alternative educational activities;
- changes in the socio-cultural area requiring changes on the part of education.

We should support the statement that progress in the educational system in terms of innovative changes always results from the courage, creative talent of teachers, their ingenuity and

the ability to critically observe reality (Dudel, 2014, p. 68). Ewa Smak emphasized that pedagogical innovation is a denial of the traditional, old didactic and methodological order, it gives room to adapt to the new realities of education. According to the author, it is a creative, conscious way of introducing new solutions in the area of educational activities in order to change the current results of the educational process with the applicable methods, content, forms, means, and effort (Smak, 2014, p. 16).

Dorota Bender lists the types of innovations that are created in connection with school tasks:

- educational - related to stimulating the development of students' personality, creating an educational atmosphere in the teaching and educational process, solving problems in the field of education;
- didactic – regarding the educational process and its elements – methods, forms, goals, content (Bender, 2016, pp. 5-6).

Beata Przyborowska distinguished improvement and cutting-edge innovations. The former expand and enrich pedagogical practice with new solutions, while the cutting-edge ones introduce uncompromising changes and novelties that gain scientific confirmation. There are also adopted and adapted innovations that differ in terms of authorship. The criterion of the source of change initiation divides innovations into the external and the internal one. A distinction is also made between functional innovations that concern changes involving the use of novelties regarding innovative forms, contents, methods and substantive innovations, which concern a single element of a pedagogical change (Przyborowska, 2013, p. 53). The author emphasizes that innovations constitute an opportunity for a dialogue in the area of pedagogy. They cause clashes between traditional components of the educational process and alternative solutions.

The concept of innovation was indicated and defined by the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education, defining it as all innovative solutions regarding the organization, curricula and methods introduced to improve the quality of an educational institution. The Regulation of the Ministry of National Education of 2002 indicated the types of activities that could be covered by innovative activities and imposed numerous formal requirements related to the introduction of changes to standard forms and methods. Currently, institutions have a decisive say in the implementation and the method of documenting innovations (Journal of Laws, 2019, 1148).

The types of innovation are: curricular, organizational, methodical and mixed. Changes in legislation were aimed at increasing teachers' activity by abolishing formal requirements. However, one should always bear in mind the features that innovations should have. Kwaśniewska provides the conditions for appropriate innovations. They should be creative, original, go beyond the standards of existing solutions, and have a theoretical explanation of the need for changes. They must be clearly specified, purposeful, meticulously planned, detailed in the description of stages, and predicting results. Predictions regarding the financial conditions and the staff implementing the innovation are important too. Each introduced change requires evaluation of the achievements of students and teachers, as well as the possibility of disseminating modified solutions (Kwaśniewska, 2014, pp. 116-117).

The changes introduced in the legislation triggered another wave of teachers' involvement in seeking change. Child development, especially at the stages of early preschool and school education, requires modification of educational standards. The changing social and technical reality places new demands on adapting the shape of education to the new requirements of the world. Preschool and early school teachers demonstrate particular sensitivity to children's individual needs

and the challenges of reality. They show exceptional commitment to their work, overcoming the feeling of lack of agency. They try to design innovations, create a new educational reality and popularize it among teaching staff.

The latest Regulation defining pedagogical innovations puts the practical implementation of innovations, their preparation, documentation and verification in the hands of the principal and the school (institution). The condition is that the student's entitlement to free education at school, obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to complete schooling in a given type of school, and the integrity of the type of a given school by innovative action must not be violated. There are currently many innovators among preschool and early school education teachers. This proves their unconventional approach to the teaching and upbringing process. They have an exceptional enthusiasm for work and change, they are characterized by the ability to critically approach their own work and perseverance in pursuing goals. The process of implementing innovations requires special creative talents, which leads to an increase in the quality of results in teaching and educational work (Kotarba-Kańczugowska, 2009, p. 20). Teachers' involvement becomes a challenge for other colleagues, students' parents and for the students themselves, who are aware of the differences in their education.

Elementary education still generates much debate. Innovation introduced in kindergarten and the initial school grades is the result of projects that stimulate the child's activity and interests. They meet the changing social expectations towards school. Elżbieta Marek analysed innovative curricula for early school education that stimulate scientific thinking, communicating in a foreign language, developing learning skills, and using ICT. The curricula provide individualized content for each student, adapting them to developmental needs. By developing students' competences, they significantly influence the development of teacher's competences. An important advantage of

innovation is the increased role of parents in the process of institutional education and upbringing. Such radical innovative curricula are a testimony to the creativity of primary education teachers and their courage and determination to modernize educational processes and conditions (Marek, 2019, p. 39). The wide spectrum of proposed innovations proves that the staff preparing children for schooling at higher levels of the system are substantively educated and has knowledge of the theoretical methodological and pedagogical foundations.

Issues regarding procedures for introducing innovations, which have been regulated for several years, and which involve eliminating unnecessary formalities, have an activating effect on teachers who meet the needs of children, their parents and their own requirements regarding their interests and professional work. The latest act introduces innovation as an integral element of school and kindergarten activities. It determines the need to introduce the basics of developing entrepreneurship and creativity, which will allow children and students to learn about the socio-economic world. The path to such education is innovative methodological, organizational and syllabus solutions. Innovative curricula must be based on the applicable core curriculum, which specifies the goals and achievements that a child should achieve in each kindergarten or primary school during early childhood education. Innovative activities are also included in the obligation contained in the statute of schools and kindergartens by recommending raising the standards and quality of work and its organization, enriching and developing methodological, teaching, caring, educational and innovative activities (Journal of Law, 2019, 1148).

Ultimately, each pedagogical innovation is a critique of the existing situation in a specific educational area and is a search for new improvements. It is a proposal to solve the educational situation in order to increase the quality of the process and improve the functioning of children in kindergarten and students at school. It is a novelty that improves the teaching and

educational process and improves the child's development. Therefore, it influences the development of the teacher's competences and the work of the entire teaching council, serving as an inspiration for other teachers, observing innovative activities, and inspiring the courage to take further steps in the field of progress in education. Ilona Kożuch claims that innovations in elementary education activate teachers, parents and their children. Teachers who are passionate about their work, increasing their work skills, contribute to activities involving pedagogical progress that enrich activities in the field of education.

The tendency towards innovative changes in the field of education is currently one of the most expected aspirations by society. Teachers' willingness to be innovative is, on the one hand, a pursuit of modernity, and on the other hand, it is a counterweight, a kind of regulation between the changing reality and the specific world of a small and slightly older child, so that he or she can overcome developmental conflicts and bear the smallest adaptation consequences in the newly created social and socio-economic conditions. The still ageing educational system is a model that is changing due to ineffective legislation; it cannot remain deaf to the actions of teachers who are unwilling to work according to templates and only conventional, well-worn paths. Edward Nęcka describes pedagogical innovations as the best investment in education. Of course, this should not be understood as a purely financial investment. This is an investment in the development of the child, who will develop into a competent person who can cope with personal and professional life¹. In order to plan and initiate innovations, the teacher must know at a high level the basics of child development and learning regularities, so that the innovations are constructive solutions that are beneficial for the development of preschool children and primary school students.

¹E. Nęcka, *Psychology of creativity*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Sopot 2012, p. 35.

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CHAPTER 9

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ON HANDCRAFTED FILIPINO PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The sustainability of entrepreneurship in handcrafted Filipino products reflects the resilience and adaptability of native merchants, historically known as caravans, who have evolved from traditional mobile selling to modern digital platforms. This study examines the experiences, social presence, and business practices of handcrafted Filipino product sellers, emphasizing their cultural significance and economic contributions. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the research explores how these entrepreneurs navigate contemporary challenges while preserving traditional business methods. Data were gathered through interviews, video recordings, and audio documentation, which were then transcribed and analyzed. The findings highlight the perseverance, innovation, and cultural values inherent in these businesses, demonstrating the strong Filipino entrepreneurial spirit. The study suggests that handcrafted product makers should innovate their offerings and leverage technology for business growth. Merchants are encouraged to enhance promotional strategies and maintain strong branding to increase market visibility. Additionally, future research could investigate the impact of resellers on this industry and explore the experiences of migrating business owners in Bulacan, Philippines.

Keywords: *handcrafted Filipino products, sustainability, entrepreneurship, phenomenology, cultural business practices, digital transformatio*

Introduction

Trading business is one of the signs of civilization in the world and in Asia. Barter system is widely known in the context of Asian history; trading of goods with the corresponding amount of the products that are being exchanged to other nations or nationalities. It is also present in the local setting with different cultures and tribes where people used to trade or exchange local goods to have products that are not present in a certain place or culture.

Native Filipino products are more to be handcrafted. Made from organic materials which contain strands of fibre and solid but flexible materials that can be crafted to functional objects. Among there are duyan (cradle, hammock, swing) walis (broom), salakot (native Filipino hat), banko (bench), bilao (winning basket), estante (cabinet), basket and many others.

Native Filipino product sellers are commonly known as caravans, with cows or horses pulling the merchandise and selling them directly to people. They can go to different towns, barangays, and even to people's doorsteps. This is somehow native and ancestral to our times and continuously changing because of the usage of the internet and other technology. This kind of business is more to be seen before the millennial times.

The Philippines is greatly known for the beauty of its arts and culture. The beauty that it shows is known worldwide. Handicrafts are one of these arts. From different parts of the country, different varieties and styles are produced. Also, the science and culture of trade evolve as these produce changes. Stores, sellers, distributors and other ways are innovated to sell and trade these products. Ambulant vending is one of them. Before we could see caravans of cows carrying native products and selling them to people, they came across the streets. Now it changes and evolves to horse caravans, three-wheeled bike or motorcycle caravans, and even people carrying these native products.

Vendors come from different far places and travel by land with the help of native animals and vehicles that can carry the loads of handcrafted products. Their native Filipino products are challenged because of the changes that are happening in the country and the trading industry. Sotelo (2015) mentioned that, “Their [residents of San Carlos City in central Pangasinan] skills plus creativity have produced baskets, bigao (winnowing tray), anduyan (baby cribs or hammocks), walkers, bookshelves, cabinets, bangkito (stool) and other items peddled by viajero (itinerant vendors) manning the cattle caravans of yore. The caravans are dead, no thanks to cheaper plastic products that replaced bamboo crafts also the caravans’ rest and grazing areas in Metro Manila had been taken over by road expansions, shopping malls and other developments.”

Their line of business is becoming increasingly unknown and unfamiliar to many because of the change of time with the evolution to the use of technology. Even the use of native products and the innovation of selling products have drastically changed. That is why it is a study driven case on how these people are continuing these kinds of merchant-hood or trading business.

This research about selling of native Filipino products focuses on the vendors that roam around in different areas, and registered stores that reach out to people on which they can sell native Filipino products. It is highly recognizable in the areas in the Philippines because of the use of vehicles, native animals like cows or horses to pull and deliver caravans full of merchandise. Seasons affect the ambulant selling which can be done during summertime and nearby months of the Christmas season, while stores operate the year round to accommodate buyers and the stores that are being setup to run the whole season.

This trade somehow reached the area of Bulacan and now the product is widely free to the native public to see and also make. The idea of localized trade and competition deals a great number of changes to this trade. Now vendors still continue to sell products using motorcycles with their

items being carried by the side cart; and some also settle their own stores around the area of Malolos, the Municipalities of Baliuag, Plaridel and Guiguinto in which large numbers of people reside. Before caravans and ambulant vendors settle to this large agricultural area as their ground for the animals that will pull their handcrafted products; now it transitions to the vendors and sellers setting up their own store for the year-round business.

Most of the materials used in this particular of business are made of bamboos and rattan, its distinct quality and character makes these handcrafted products stand out as native and locally made look. The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) supports this kind of initiative to use non-wood forest products, because it is easy to plant and replenish the materials used as household items and products. Executive Order 879 states maximizing at least 25% use of bamboo for desk and other furniture requirements of public elementary 5 and secondary schools to prioritize the use of bamboo for furniture, fixtures and other construction requirements of government facilities (Aggangan 2015).

Despite the rich cultural and historical significance of this trade, the sustainability of entrepreneurship in handcrafted Filipino products faces numerous challenges. The rise of mass-produced plastic goods, urbanization, and modern retail trends have contributed to the decline of itinerant vendors and the traditional caravan system (Sotelo, 2015). Additionally, changing market dynamics and evolving consumer preferences have forced artisans and merchants to adapt by incorporating new selling techniques, including the use of motorcycles, social media marketing, and permanent storefronts. However, limited studies have explored how these merchants navigate these transformations while maintaining the authenticity of their craft. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the lived experiences of handcrafted product vendors, their business strategies, and the cultural implications of their trade in the modern marketplace.

The purpose of this study is to explore how this handcrafted business adapts to the changing times and sustain the market and culture of selling handcrafted products. Documenting the changes on this craft of business may teach Filipinos to value and love more the culture and traits of the business environment.

Foreshadowed Problem

The sustainability of handcrafted Filipino products in an increasingly competitive market remains a pressing concern. While these products embody Filipino cultural heritage and craftsmanship, they face challenges such as modernization, shifting consumer preferences, and competition from mass-produced alternatives. This study seeks to explore how handcrafted business can be sustained and adapted to the evolving business landscape while preserving its cultural significance. The central problem of the study is: “How the handcrafted business may be sustained in its competitive market?”

Specifically, this study aimed to assess and contribute to this still existing but somehow challenged kind of merchandising with the following foreshadowed questions:

1. What is the current business landscape of handcrafted Filipino products in selected municipalities and cities in Bulacan?
2. In what ways do handcraft Filipino products reflect and preserve Filipino cultural traits?
3. How do handcrafted product sellers adapt to competition in the modern business environment?
4. What key challenges and barriers do handcrafted product sellers face in sustaining their business?

5. What strategies and policy recommendations can be proposed to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of the handcrafted Filipino product industry in Bulacan?

Research Statement

The business in handcrafted and native products in Bulacan is a sustainable activity that also helps in the promotion of our local products that reflect Filipino culture and values.

Significance of the Study

This research study is of great importance to the following:

Caravan Sellers or Ambulant Sellers.

This study will be of use to help them assess the opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, and threats in this kind of business. It is somehow a forgotten trade. This kind of selling or merchandising is now very few to see. As time passed by there are a number of ambulant vendors in our areas, but they are becoming few, still they have managed to exist and proved that they have the capacity to still survive these changing times.

Native Filipino Crafts and Craftsmen. This study will be of significance to know their needs to still survive and also to adapt to the changing times. The study should also see the relevance and the issues that can be addressed on making and trading native Filipino products; specially handcrafted products that are being made by our indigenous people group.

History, Trade, and Cultural Industry.

This study provides record, document, and preserve this kind of trade. Also, we do not know how long they will stay and their continuous struggle to sell these native handcrafted products, due to the evolution of technology plus the innovation of products and merchandising. But somehow this kind of trade can be defined as a cultural and historical system of trading goods in the country.

Government Sector.

The study looked into the needs and what they could do to help these ambulant vendors. Permits, taxes, animal care, and health benefits are some of the few to be considered for these ambulant vendors.

Filipino Buyers and Customers.

The study is also beneficial for customers as they see the value of native Filipino products and patronize our locally produced items in the market and in our doorsteps.

The Next Generation of Filipinos.

Filipino culture is reflected in this kind of business. The usage of animals as a form of transportation and the merchandising of the Filipino native products is the main highlight of this kind of business. And now it is slowly close to extinction due to the change of technology and preferences of Filipinos. The endangered existence of ambulant vendors of native Filipino products and how they can still be seen and preserved for the next generation is what makes this study significant.

The Growers of Bamboo and Forest Keepers.

The study will help Filipino Bamboo growers and forest keepers to maximize and appreciate the high potential of using Bamboo's on handcrafted products.

Other Researchers in the field of Business Administration.

The study will help other researchers who want to see and know the value of this kind of trade in the country. It will provide a glimpse on how the change of time can affect businesses and product trade.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study focused on sellers of handcrafted native products in selected cities and municipalities in Bulacan. Registered stores seen in the province of Bulacan is the main subject for this study. Meanwhile, sellers of native Filipino products are the secondary informants of this study.

The study targeted a minimum of six (6) store sellers as informants of this study. They were selected randomly and those who agreed to be interviewed.

The Municipalities of Plaridel, Guiguinto, Baliuag, and City of Malolos, Bulacan as were the primary areas selected as focused of handcrafted sellers and ambulant vendors 9 because these are the places most of them are located to sell their products. There are still kubo (nipa hut) makers and handcrafted materials available in these localities. These are strategic areas for ambulant vendors and registered sellers to settle.

Thus, the researcher gathered information from these informants through questions and interviews with video documentation and audio recording. It is documented with the use of digital cameras and audio recorders for data gathering and documentary film presentation. This was used as part of this research as video reference. Moreover, this video was transcribed and the data gathered were analyzed. It was edited as book chapters and video segments for the documentary film.

The study was conducted from April to September 2020. The government-issued protocols to prevent the spread of COVID 19 were followed in conducting interviews with the informants.

Perspectives in the Study of Sustainability of Handicraft Products

This section presents the relevant theories, related literature, and studies which have been found significant and with relation in determining the direction of the study.

Relevant Theories

The following theories discuss different relations that are somehow part on the Sustainability of Entrepreneurship of Handcrafted Filipino Business.

Sustainability Theory. Theories of sustainability aim to integrate and prioritize social replies to environmental and cultural problems. An economic model looks to 10 withstand natural and financial capital; an ecological model looks to biological diversity and ecological integrity; a political model looks to social systems that understand human dignity (Jenkins, 2009).

Since the study focuses on ambulant vendors of native Filipino Products, and this kind of merchant hood is somehow on the process of sustaining its business trade; thus, Sustainability Theory which specifies the economic, ecological, and political changes in society and more likely the humanity was used to better approach the topic. Products being sold and made by these handcrafted sellers are made from materials that are also ecologically made and been reproduced by biological and ecological maintenance of the bamboos and other related raw materials.

“Sustainability means a capacity to maintain some entity, outcome, or process over time. The concept of sustainability frames the ways in which environmental problems risk the condition of a healthy economic, ecological, and social system. The concept of sustainability thus raises a bleakly basic question: can human activity positively maintain itself and its goals without exhausting the resources on which it depends?” (Jenkins, 2009) In the Sustainability Theory, “The practical challenge of sustainability is to find specific ways to pursue those distinct goals that

conform to their mutual relation.” That is somehow also a challenge to the Ambulant Vendors in the Philippines.

“Humanity’s industrial and economic powers extended so dramatically in the twentieth century that the fate of upcoming generations and the survival of many other systems of life have now become subject to political decisions” (Jenkins. 2009). 11 Innovation dictates the business environment, for customers always find the trend of new products, promotions, place, and price schemes that business owners will do as what business theories also say.

Schumpeter’s Theory of Innovation. Schumpeter (1983), “Business cycles are almost exclusively the outcome of innovations in the industrial and commercial society. Innovations are such changes of the mixture of the factors of production as cannot be affected by infinitesimal steps or variations on the boundary. (Innovation) consists primarily in changes in methods of manufacture and transport, or changes in industrial society, or in the production of a new article, or opening of a new market or a new source of material.”

Changes and innovations applied by business owners and players are made and continue to sustain this kind of business. The settlement of handcrafted stores and the usage of motorcycles by ambulant vendors rather than farm animals are used, changes also happen in the handcrafted selling industry.

Integrative Theory of Firm Growth. Ghoshal, Hann, and Moran (1997) stated that in any vibrant economy, such a growing imbalance of unexploited possibilities will lead ultimately to migration of those resources and their deployment to those existing and potential alternatives outside of the firm.

“Change is inevitable, also in business structures and systems. The more a firm is able to enhance its organizational capability (through a coherent administrative framework) to develop

and accommodate a diversity of entrepreneurial judgements from its members, the more easily the firm will be able to continue to grow, both horizontally and vertically in defiance of market's discipline" (Ghoshal, Hann, and Moran, 1997).

Native Filipino Products are the most challenging to innovate, because with the use of native raw materials and limited people who are trained to do this kind of handcrafted products. Schumpeter (1993) asserts that innovation refers to an application of a new technique of production or new machinery or a new concept to reduce cost and increase profit. In addition, he propounded that innovations are responsible for the occurrence of business cycles.

Goal Setting Theory. Locke (1986) explains that this theory is founded on the idea that setting specific and measurable goals is more effective than setting unclear goals. Publish in his book *Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentive*. In this book, it showed how personnel are more inspired by well-defined areas and constructive response and are more probable to accomplish these goals when they are detailed and quantifiable.

According to Locke's goal-setting theory, there are five main philosophies that must be followed to in order to set effective goals. These philosophies include Clarity: Goals must be clear and detailed. Challenge: Goals should be adequately stimulating in order to keep personnel engaged and focused while performing the responsibilities wanted to be reach on each goal. Goals that are too dull or relaxed have a discouraging effect and will, consequently, result in fewer achievement satisfaction. Commitment: Workers need to understand and support the goal they are being allocated from the beginning. If employees do not feel committed to the goal, they are fewer expected to appreciate the process and ultimately accomplish the goal. Feedback: Feedback is a significant component of the goal setting theory. Regular feedback should be provided throughout the goal-achieving process to ensure responsibilities stay on track to reach the goal. Task

complexity: Goals should be broken down into smaller goals. Once each smaller goal is reached, a review would be performed on the completion of the small goal and to update the employee on the general progress towards the larger goal.

SMART is an acronym that stands for Specific, Measurable, Aggressive, Realistic and Time-bound. Specific: The first portion of the acronym, Specific, means that the goal should be as precise as possible. Rather than saying you want a worker to upsurge their client satisfaction evaluations, you would approximately tell that you want the worker to progress their customer satisfaction ratings by 10% over the following month. Measurable: The goal should be quantifiable. So, rather than saying that the goal is to upsurge sales, you would set a quantifiable sales goal such as to increase sales by 12% over the following six months. Aggressive: According to Locke's goal-setting theory, goals should be justly challenging to keep personnel engaged and to deliver an improved reward upon accomplishing them. Guarantee that the goal being set is somewhat advanced than an employee's skill set to keep the worker engaged throughout the procedure of reaching the goal. Realistic: Goals should be based in authenticity. Setting a goal that appears impossible or far out of reach will not offer motivational worth to employees and therefore consequence in loss of interest and perseverance for those working to reach the goal. Time-bound: Goals should have a clear timeframe in which they essentially needed to be reached. For example, rather than saying that the goal is to upsurge sales by 10%, a time-bound goal would be to increase sales by 10% over the next 90 days.

Setting goals helps business proprietors to continually be motivated and be passionate on doing business. Having a goal perspective keeps the vision thriving and to move forward on doing business. This is also the goal of business owners to brand life better and seeing their business progress.

Theory of Entrepreneurship Supply. Psychological & sociological variables are the main determinants for the emergence of entrepreneurs. Business aptitude can be initiated in sections, spiritual, cultural, travelled, displaced leaders & these minorities have supplied greatly for the entrepreneurship in the civilization. Entrepreneurism can be reliant on and upon the following constructions in the economy. Demand structure. Limitation structure. Labor structure. Opportunity structure. This principle also shows how the business environment related to handcrafted Filipino products are changing and continues to exist even if this culture of business is challenged in time.

Related Literature

The related literature cited enhanced the understanding of the content of the study in a broader perspective.

Business growth and competition somehow gives us a challenge on how to make things work and be sustainable, even in the environment of handcrafted business that is ever changing, which has been told in articles about 7 fundamentals of business growth.

The 7 Essentials of Sustainable Business Growth are: (1.) Authentic Purpose is needed. Why do we do what we do? Or known as Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is a feature or deliberation obtainable by a retailer as the purpose that one product or service is dissimilar from and improved than that of the competition. (2.) A Powerful Brand. That the unquestionable road to product disappointment is to try to be all things to all individuals. (3.) Partnership and Collaboration. Though there's nothing mistaken with a hands-on method, captivating on additional than you can handle, especially in parts where you lack knowledge, can be detrimental. (4.) Customer 15 Retention. The normal business in the U.S. drops around 50% of its customer base

every five years. Companies are four times more likely to do business with a current patron than a new client. The probability of vending to an existing customer is 60-70%, while it's just 5-20% to new customers. Successful retention starts with the initial interaction a business makes with a purchaser and continues throughout the period of the relationship. (5.) Community. Ecologies are crucial to maintainable growth because they deliver the structure that surrounds and supports the businesses inside them. (6.) Repeatable Sales. It is a single object to sign up new customers; it's additional entity to project and implement sales developments that can be successfully installed again and again at ever larger gauge. (7.) Flexible, Adaptive Leadership. Our distinct, interpersonal, and employed lives are all interrelated. By being aware, we understand those associations and how best to apply them to create, innovate, and lead (Hoque, Faisal. 2015).

These principles can be applicable or not in ambulant selling of native Filipino products. And those somehow can be the reason why this kind of professional still stays and also why it is somehow dying. Selling of native Filipino products survive in their business with these present principles and understanding why and what are reasons that they need to continue this kind of business.

On a local perspective and Philippine context of Native Filipino Products in San Carlos, Bamboo Brings Life to Native Craft; "Residents of San Carlos City in central Pangasinan have long been maintaining an intimate affair with the bamboo. For generations, 16 they have been creating everyday articles for house and farm, and they do this not only to supplement their revenue from farming. For most of them, it is a method of life." In the article, Councilor Elpidio Fermin Jr. of Pangasinan stated that, "Our accomplished workers had been 'imported' by businessmen from other places who started their own ventures. But I saw many bamboo-based businesses in other areas fold, possibly because they did not have the craftsmanship which workers from San Carlos

have developed through the years,” (Sotelo, Yolanda. 2015). They sell products from handcrafted materials traveling to Pangasinan to other parts of Luzon. They get their native products as raw materials as their native resources. Their clients are more likely nearby people in Pangasinan and other places that can be reached by land transportation.

Business cycle of handcrafted native products is recognized locally and abroad. Arts, Michelle (2008) “The Philippines has an extensive and rich custom of producing handicrafts made from natural materials. Many items now sold as handicrafts have traditionally been an important part of the culture for some communities and tribes. As such, the Philippines is one of the world’s major producers of handicrafts. Nevertheless, only two percent of all handicrafts imported by the European Union from developing countries come from the Philippines. This presents an interesting opportunity, and with it, some challenges.”

Coping with the concomitants, problems, and challenges of selling handcrafted native products, prices of raw materials are becoming a hindrance in making native Filipino products “The concluding problem was that the values of the products were initially too high for the European market, as work and transportation costs were high. The problem has been tackled by rationalization and promotion the manufacture procedure, though this takes 17 time since the artisans need to get used to new ways of producing their crafts. Handicrafts made of abaca fiber are especially interesting for European market. Abaca is still new in this market, for consumers know about it and there are hardly any abaca products for sale there. Abaca is native to the Philippines, which currently has a domination of abaca manufacture. In this respect, the use of abaca can convince consumers that the product is special and unique and echoes the traditions of the Filipino culture.” (Arts, Michelle. 2008)

Indigenous people are the people who are trained to do handcrafted native products. In an article on the Philippine Daily Inquirer, he stated how important it is for our native and indigenous people to group the production of native products and how to get income by selling this handcrafted works. “For the indigenous people of the Philippines, their models, accessories, delicacies, clothes and fabrics are more than just materials for sale. They are tangible languages of the culture and traditions that are persistently hold on to even in these times of high technology when most everything can be done in an instant.” Native peoples, says Lily Quindo, a B’laan from South Cotabato, are hard pressed to find more bases of revenue as they remain among the underprivileged in the Philippines. They are also faced with the option of losing their ancestral area, while they suffer from lack of access to basic social services such as well-being and education. “Not all of them even get the assistances of the government’s conditional cash transfer program, which is supposed to benefit the poorest people in the Philippines. Deriving additional income from their products would thus go a long way in helping out poverty” (Dumalo, Tina Arceo. 2011). Filipino cultural traits can be seen and preserved in handcrafted native products and also the need to live and make a living in this kind of trade. Improvement of their business is greatly challenged in this ever-changing time.

“A caravan of human porters carrying goods over long distances was labor intensive, and consequently expensive as means of transportation. There were no infrastructures or routes. Draft animals were too susceptible to deadly tropical diseases such as sleeping sickness. Only a commodity such as Ivory, commanding a very high price per pound, was worth the cost. Traders banded together for safety and for better deals when negotiating with local chiefs.” (Tantala, Renee. apcentral.collegeboard.org) This just shows that there are also caravans or ambulant vendors in other countries. With experiences and culture that is the same in our country, the Philippines but

also different in many ways. There are lot of needs and assistance to preserve this kind of commercial trade.

Many products can be made from handicrafts that can be sold at a reasonable price. Different raw resources which are accessible in the market are required in order to generate new handicraft products which can be vended in the neighborhood or distributed abroad. Handicraft makers fashion them into baskets, bags, accessories, cabinets, lamp shades, wall décor, bamboo sofa sets, cabinets, clothes, and others. (Colosus Handicraft, 2013).

Business traits and practices in selling of handcrafted Filipino products changes to sustain the current business environment. Profile of the native product business also changes. Cultural traits of Filipinos can be seen and presented in the native products. This may affect the sustainability of the business plus challenges and difficulties that are being experienced in this present generation. These are having tough competition; concomitant problems may occur and sustaining operations widely varies. Recommendations may be put forward to improve and preserve this kind of commercial trade.

Building sustainable business needs a lot of time and experience also, part of this the lesson we can get for businesspeople who put their time on studying business sustainability. An article from Etrepreneur.com shows 6 steps on having a sustainable business, the first on the list is: Building your Business on Belief, one can modify everything about your business other than your core beliefs. Building business on your principles is about value formation. Your business might be depending on what your beliefs are. If your beliefs are little specific, localize your business or if they are more time bound, then you must go back and revisit the business assignment. But it has to be consistent with what you as a company are going to do to drive value. (Jain, Narayanan, 2015)

Believing that your business has a value and contributed to the community, the owner personally needs to take a step that this business can and will succeed. As what handcrafted Filipino products do to help people for a living and also present and preserve the Filipino culture values a lot.

Related Studies

Zilahy (2016) scrutinizes business representations encouraging various aspects of sustainable development and exams the explanatory influence of two hypothetical approaches, namely the resource-based view of the firm and transaction cost theory concerning their appearance and fruitful market performance.

Sustain Ability, a reason tank and strategic advisory firm categorizes a quantity of diverse business models with possible benefits to the environment and society and categorizes them into five separate groups namely: 1). Business models with a potential positive impact on the environment, 2). Business models aiming at social innovation, 20 3). Base of the pyramid business models, 4). Innovative financing models, 5). Business models with diverse impact on sustainability (Zilahy, 2016).

Handcrafted Filipino products have high value in the business environment. It also affects the biological environment that these products are made and being sold. It also changes and adapts to the ever-changing business challenges and changes. Having its own strategies and design in doing business is somehow a way of coping to the sustenance of this business.

In emerging states of Southeast Asia, street salespersons play an important but commonly unappreciated role in the vitality of community spaces as well as the informal economy. Yet, they are subject to indiscriminate removals from sidewalks and other challenged areas, which they

inhabit for lack of provision of spaces in which they could otherwise do business (Recio and Gomez, 2013).

Ambulant merchants are part of the street vendors. This is their description of ambulant vendors in this study.

The figures from the government (310 vendors) and from the vendor's organization (about 300 vendors) are still low compared to the actual number of hawkers occupying the Monumento-Rizal Avenue area during peak hours. Based on an actual observation, during peak hours, there are 494 street vendors in the area. These can be considered as Ambulant/mobile vendors. They used carts, clothes, improvised panels and tables.

However, there are guidelines that do not sustain street vending as a lawful economic activity. At least two Supreme Court decisions and a nationwide legislation have declared street selling as illegal. At the local level, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Caloocan government have legal documents prohibiting highway and sidewalk vending in Metro Manila and Caloocan City, respectively. Vendors resort to multiple, and sometimes contradicting long-term strategies and daily tactics, because there is no existing institutional relationship with the state or the supposed institutional link between them and the government simply does not work.

In time the ambulant vending of handcrafted native products changes their course of road travel due to the challenges and ordinances implemented on the area of Manila.

As an ancient and important occupation, street vending can be found virtually in every country and major city around the world. It may be distinct simply as the marketing or wholesale trading of goods and services in the highways and other related public axes such as passageways, avenues, and boulevards. Street vendors add vitality to the streetscape and contribute economic movement and service establishment (Bromley, 2000).

Street merchants tend to cluster in those spaces with a high level of business opportunity. Accumulation in uncommon locations increases turnover because: (a) concentrations of vendors become recognized and fascinate more clienteles; (b) more on street business may anticipate and block easy entry to nearby off-street businesses; and (c) more street vendors upsurge pedestrian and vehicular congestion, decelerating everything down and allowing them to spend more time looking at merchandise and receiving sales pitches.

Related to this, spatial alteration associated with globalization has resulted in skyrocketing property values in dominant cities and changing designs of employment that have interpreted into increases in the price of (legal) housing, increased detachments between places of employment and residence, and a decline of the urban atmosphere (Shatkin, 2004), which are somehow contributory to survival-oriented informal activities.

Republic Act No. 7394. This Act shall be known as the “Consumer Act of the Philippines.” Stated on Article 2. It is the rule of the State to defend the welfare of the consumer, indorse his general wellbeing and to create standards of behavior for business and industry. Article 3 stated: The best interest of the customer shall be considered in the clarification and application of the provisions of this Act, including its implementing rules and regulations. Article 5 states that: It shall be the duty of the State: a) to develop and provide safety and quality standards for consumer products, including performance or use oriented standards, codes of practice and methods of tests; b) to assist the consumer in evaluating the quality, including safety, performance and comparative utility of consumer products; c) to protect the public against unreasonable risks of injury associated with consumer products; d) to undertake research on quality improvement of products and

investigation into causes and prevention of product related deaths, illness and injuries; e) to assure the public of the consistency of standardized products.

Republic Act No. 9501. This Act shall be known as the “Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)”. Section 2 stated: Recognizing that MSMEs have the potential for more employment generation and economic growth and therefore can help provide a self-sufficient industrial foundation for the country, it is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote, support, strengthen and encourage the growth and 23 development of MSMEs in all productive sectors of the economy particularly rural/agri based enterprises.

Republic Act No. 9178. This Act shall be known as the “Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002.” It is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to hasten the country’s economic development by encouraging the formation and growth of barangay micro business enterprises which effectively serve as seedbeds of Filipino entrepreneurial talents, and integrating those in the informal sector with the mainstream economy, through the rationalization of bureaucratic restrictions, the active intervention of the government specially in the local level, and the granting of incentives and benefits to generate much-needed employment and alleviate poverty.

These policies stated by the Government of the Philippines somehow help the consumers be protected to get the right value for services and products availed. It also shows the importance of business enterprises to help the movement of our country’s economic growth. Doing business is highly encouraged for the people to help and promote the economy. Under this is the "Price Tag

Law” that stated the rights of the consumer for their product bought to be repaired, returned and refund if the products has been found with defects. Exempted on this are products sold with discounts and swimwear. Also, discount tags should be recorded rather than the original price if the items sold are discounted, to protect the rights of the buyers.

Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (BMBE) refers to any business entity or enterprise engaged in the production, processing or manufacturing of products or commodities who is duly licensed by the government after having passed a government 24 licensure examination whose total assets including those arising from loans but exclusive of the land on which the particular business entity’s office, plant and equipment are situated, shall not be more than Three Million Pesos (P3,000,000.00). Any qualified person, natural or juridical, or cooperative, or association, may apply for the inclusion in the BMBE Registry of a city or municipality. A Certificate of Authority is issued by the Office of the Treasurer of each city or municipality. This Certificate of Authority, which is valid for 2 years and renewable at 2-year intervals, enables the BMBE to avail of the benefits under the law. These benefits include 1. Exemption from Taxes and Fees. All BMBEs shall be exempt from income tax for income arising from the operations of the enterprise. LGUs are also encouraged either to reduce the amount of local taxes, fees and charges imposed or to exempt the BMBEs from local taxes, fees and charges.; 2. Exemption from the coverage of the Minimum Wage Law. The BMBEs shall be exempt from the coverage of the Minimum Wage Law, but the employees shall nevertheless be entitled to the same benefits given to any regular employee, e.g., social security and healthcare benefits.; 3. Credit Delivery. Certain government-owned or controlled corporations — the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP), the Small Business Guarantee and Finance Corporation (SBGFC), and the

Peoples Credit and Finance Corporation (PCFC) — are required by law to set up a special credit window, which services the credit needs of BMBEs, either through retail or wholesale lending, or both. The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the Social Security System (SSS) are also required to set up special credit window that will serve the financing needs of their respective members who may wish to establish a BMBE. Private banking and other financial institutions are also encouraged to lend to BMBEs (Pamaos. 2002, attyatwork.com).

Conceptual Framework

The study utilized the Input-Process-Output Model or the IPO model. As shown in Figure 1, which represents the schematic diagram of the study, the variables included in the study are reflected in their corresponding frames. The study adopted the Input-Process Output (IPO) Model as its methodological framework to systematically examine the business profile of handcrafted Filipino products in selected municipalities and cities in Bulacan. This model was chosen due to its structured approach in identifying key variables, tracking processes, and analyzing outcomes. Input. Refers to the resources, characteristics, and initial conditions of the handcrafted product businesses—such as capital, skills, raw materials, and community awareness. Process. Involves the activities and strategies undertaken by business owners, including production methods, marketing, customer engagement, and transition from ambulant selling to store-based operations. Output. Consists of the results and impacts observed, such as increased stability, visibility in the local business community, and competitive participation across municipalities.

This model effectively maps the progression and development of the businesses from their foundational inputs to tangible outcomes. It allows for a clearer analysis of how specific factors influence business growth, making it appropriate for studies focusing on entrepreneurial evolution and community-based industries.

The Input frame includes the following: Business Profile of the stores as informants of the study, Barangay Micro Business Enterprise (policy), Municipal Ordinances for local business, and Republic Act approved by law for handcrafted businesses. 1. Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394) – The law that protects the interest of the consumers in the Philippines, promote their general welfare, and establish standards of 26 conduct for business and industry. 2. The Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), as amended (RA 9501) – an Act to promote entrepreneurship in the Philippines by strengthening development and assistance programs to Micro, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises in the country. 3. Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) Act of 2002 (R.A. No. 9178) – a law that promotes the establishment of Barangay Micro Business Enterprises (BMBEs) in the Philippines, and provides incentives and benefits such as income tax exemption and access to financial, infrastructural, marketing, and knowledge support from the government. Discuss the three laws in the related literature. On the other hand, the Process Frame includes Crafting and Validation of the Interview Guide Questions, Conducting of the Interview, Field notes, Observation, Data Analysis, and Interpretation of Data.

Hence, an output followed after processing of the procedures. On the Output frame, it included: Business plan, and Documentary on Handcrafted Business in Bulacan.

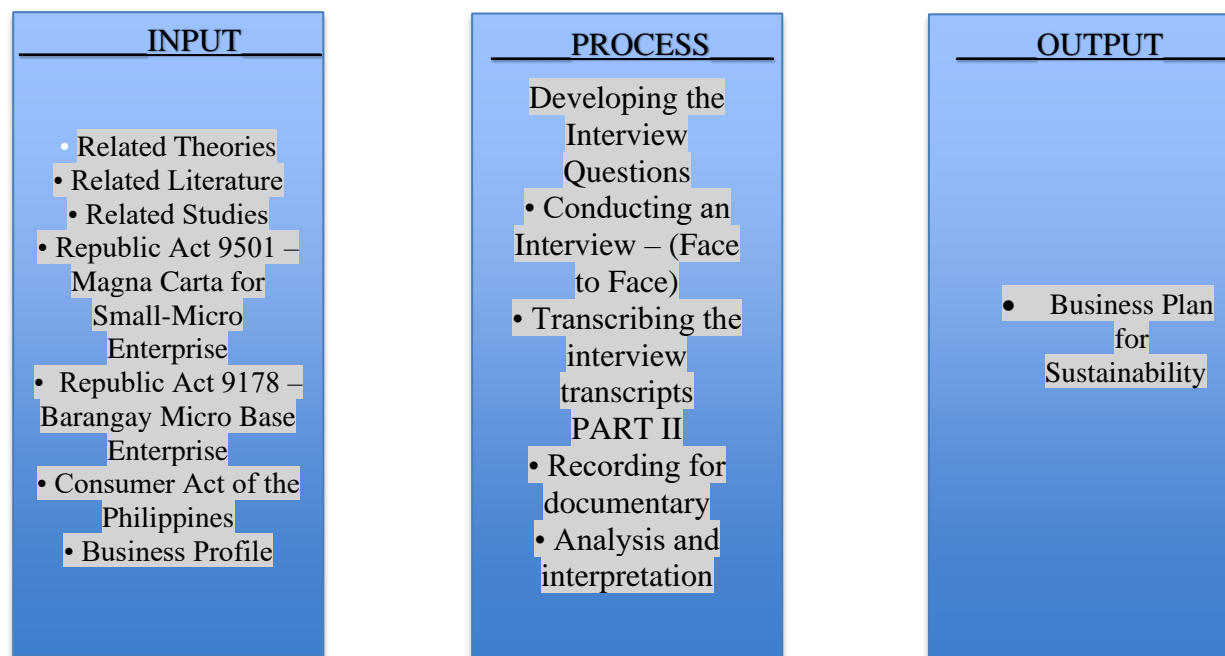


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methods and techniques, the population and sample, research instruments, the construction and validation of instruments, and data gathering procedure of the data that were used in the study. A documentary film procedure was part of data gathering and presentation of this study.

This study employs a phenomenological qualitative research approach to explore the lived experiences of handcrafted Filipino product sellers. Given the study's focus on understanding how these vendors sustain their business amid modernization and competition, a qualitative design is most appropriate, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of subjective experiences, challenges, and cultural significance. It is commonly understood as a disciplinary field in philosophy. It may be defined initially as the study of structures of experience, or consciousness as part of the structure

and method done in the research. The researcher studies the way-of-life, their appearance in the society, and experiences of this handcrafted Filipino product sellers. Literally, phenomenology is the study of “phenomena”: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience.

This is a qualitative method analysis approached research; pure qualitative kind of research, incorporating methods of research design in gathering data and information to evaluate and study the business behind selling of native Filipino products. Selected informants were part of this study. Informants were video recorded, or audio clip recorded; gathered materials was transcribed and analyzed as data while the video was edited as a documentary film.

Creswell (2013) explained that qualitative data analysis produces expressive data that provide descriptive details – often narrative in form to examine the research study objectives. Qualitative data are collected via focus group, structured or semi-structured interviews, and other forms. The researcher gathered information from primary sources or informants through an interview method approach. The interview was recorded and other details that regard the importance of details needed. Consequently, through this method, the researcher was able to find possible reasons, solutions, and recommendations to issues highlighted by vendors and sellers of ambulant vendors and handcrafted product sellers/makers experienced repeatedly.

Informants of the Study

The researcher used voluntary response and purposeful sampling, the area is surveyed for possible informants Ten (10) business owners were approached for interview, but only six (6)

informants agreed to be interviewed and ended up with the population of the study. This number of informants represent sellers of handcrafted native products in the area of Bulacan. The informants were selected, as who were willing to be interviewed and that are involved in selling handcrafted products; specifically, and strategically according to the study needs and profile.

Informants are more-likely people from the province of Pangasinan and some are from Bulacan. Because this business is somehow can be counted as a small figure in the industry, it shows that they are somehow connected to each other as relatives or as business competitors. The complete number of businesses that are functioning as of the present is not given by the Business Permit and Licensing Division of each municipality. Letters are given 29 and contacted them through their online sites, but the reply is somehow limited due to the Pandemic present because of Covid-19.

Table 1

Summary of the profile gathered from the interview.

Name of Informants	Business Name	Store Location	Years of Operation	Provincial Address	Other Income	Job Position
Apolonio Labarias	Guiguinto Bamboo Craft	Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan	20 Years	San Carlos, Pangasinan	Full Time on Business	Owner
Marlyn Eneria	Bamboo Native	Agnaya, Plaridel, Bulacan	6 Years	San Carlos, Pangasinan	Full Time on Business	Owner
Rochelle Resuelo	Bamboo Crafts	Lugam, City of Malolos, Bulacan	5 Years	Cutcot, Pulilan, Bulacan.	Full Time on Business	Daughter of the Owner
<i>Continuation:</i>						
Nelly Cruz	Bamboo Republic Trading	Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan	12 Years	Balagtas, Bulacan	Teacher	Owner
Allan Faliciano	Freddie's Native	Parulan, Plaridel, Bulacan	5 Years	Plaridel, Bulacan	Full Time Businessman	Store Manager
Milencio Estrada	George Bamboo Craft	Doña Remedios Trinidad Highway,	6 Years	San Carlos, Pangasinan	Full Time on Business / sideline as	Store Manager

Data Collection

The structured and semi-structured interviews were the main instruments that were utilized in collecting the data needed in this study. Interview guide questions were forwarded to the adviser and critic for research validation. Informants were notified before the interviews were conducted by making a letter of request to conduct an interview and set an appointment to gather data to be provided by the informants.

As presented by Evaluation Toolbox (2010), interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of questions with the opportunity for the researcher to explore particular and specific topics or responses. It does not limit respondents to a set of predetermined answers.

Likewise, interviews with sellers of handcrafted native products that were conducted can be followed up, clarified, and expounded to explore significant points by posing questions integral to the subject of discussion. The accumulated results were qualitatively collected as data.

Data gathering was through interviews of sellers of handcrafted native products plus video documentation. Transcription of the interviews of answering the foreshadowed questions was part of encoding the data gathered plus rendering the captured video. Editing was also part of the video process. It was arranged into chapters and a final defense.

Moreover, in the conduct of the study, the researcher followed ethical standards by securing proper citation and references which was used in the study.

Observational Documentary style was also used, “Observational documentaries – or ‘obs docs’ as they are known – have their history in the Direct Cinema and cinema verite movements of the 1960s. As the name suggests, they involve no intervention, no commentary and no re-enactment, and in essence try to observe the action as it happens

and unfolds. Although many films may have observational sequences in them, wholly observational films have a distinct aesthetic, often preferring to the small crews (often a single director/cameraperson) and handheld cameras.” (Glynne, 2008).

Interviews are done on the date of General Community Quarantine, where we can go to areas within Bulacan. The location of businesses that are more likely to be seen on highways and open for display. They were approached and asked for schedule interview date, get their data information and ask if they are willing to be interviewed with audio recording and with video footages. We approached three (3) stores in Plaridel, two (2) stores in Baliuag, two (2) stores in Guiguinto, one (1) in Malolos, one (1) in Pulilan, and one (1) in Bustos. Six (6) of them agreed to be interviewed on scheduled dates while four (4) of them are not available to get interviewed.

Presented with my letter of intent and questionnaires, interviews are done by wearing face shield and face mask and followed social distancing which is greatly advised by our Local Government. Joint Memorandum Circular No. 20-04-A Series of 2020. DTI AND DOLE Supplemental Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID 19. This Joint Memorandum Circular (JMC) shall apply to all private establishments 32 regardless of economic activity, including those located inside special economic zones and other areas under the jurisdiction of Investment Promotion Agencies.

The following are the minimum public health standards to be complied with in all workplaces:

Masks. Face masks must be worn at all times. Medical grade masks are highly encouraged and should be properly disposed of after use. Masks with vents should not be used. Cloth masks, with additional filter such as tissue paper or similar material, may be used as long as they are clean and washed daily. The filter should be changed daily or after every sneezing or coughing episode and should be properly disposed of after use. Hands should be washed/disinfected before replacing the filters. Frequent mask handling and manipulation should be avoided.

Face shields. Face shields shall cover the entire face (completely cover the sides and length of the face). If possible, face shields should extend to the ears and below the chin. Visor-type face shields shall not be allowed. Face shields and masks should always be worn together when interacting with colleagues, clients and/or visitors. Face shields may be removed according to the demands of the work or when the occupational safety and health of the employees so requires.

Physical Distancing. Physical distancing of at least one (1) meter, or two (2) meters, when possible, shall be observed at all times. This must be practiced in combination with the wearing of masks and face shields. Frequent

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Disinfection. Frequent handwashing with soap and water or the application of alcohol-based disinfectants shall be mandatory in all workplaces and is encouraged to be practiced at home. The following disinfecting/washing resources, supplies/materials should be made available to employees and clients/visitors: hand washing stations, soap and sanitizers, and hand drying equipment or supplies (e.g. single use paper towel).

Data Analysis

Video and audio recording of interviews were transcribed, and transcripts of the informants were categorized as book chapters, while the video files were edited as a documentary film for presentation. While secondary survey forms were gathered to provide back-up information in data analysis. Key ideas and information were compiled, and the secondary survey forms were statistically analyzed to help the data processing.

The working Documentary Film was produced as part of the presentation. The language used is Tagalog (the native tongue of the informants) to express fully the data needed. These were translated and subtitled in English. Informants' glimpse of their daily life was shown using video and had been edited in a storytelling manner. Char Gen or Text Generated Characters were put on the screen to highlight and introduce scenes or people as needed.

Ethical Considerations

Interviews were conducted based on goodwill and not as a forced or required process. In good relations, the interviews were conducted and recorded with permission of the interviewees. Consent was provided in observance of ethical standards and in application of data privacy law. All the information hereon would be used for academic advancement and upon agreed that their information and data will be part of the study and can be shown to the public.

CHAPTER II

ENTREPRENEURS OF HANDCRAFTED FILIPINO PRODUCTS: EVERYTHING HAS A START, THE STORY OF HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Business Profile

Everything has a start, the story of how it all began. The same is true with the handcrafted business here in Bulacan. It started as caravans of horses carrying loads of merchandise from San Carlos, Pangasinan, Bulacan as one of their destinations, travelled the roads with much load that the horse can pull and carry.

The interviews were done using Filipino language and had been transcribed and interpreted in English. Coding the interviews was used for data for analysis. Protocols were followed, wearing facemask, physical distancing, and limited number of persons on the place of interview since the study was conducted at the time of pandemic crisis due COVID 19 diseases.

Interviews were done in their stores, while they were selling their products. They have different working years of experience and different upbringing as people from Pangasinan and Bulacan, this may affect their training as sellers and vendors of handcrafted native products. Also, their family background may affect the answers and data given. Name of informants, business name, store location, years of operation, provincial address, other income, and job position were asked as the main information for their business profile data. Out of the ten (10) handcrafted business that were approached for interview, six (6) of them 35 agreed to be interviewed by audio recording and video captured during this time of pandemic.

Apolonio Labarias. He is from San Carlos City, Pangasinan who had travelled to Bulacan in 1984. Then settled in Bulacan as a store seller in the year 1990. Before he used to sell using caravans being pulled by horses. His father also was a caravan merchant, Mr. Apolonio used to be with his father on these trips when they were going on the trip alone; being the eldest of the four (4) siblings. They survived doing this business because money in those days valued more.

Their trips were roving around Nueva Ecija and San Miguel Bulacan even as far as Arayat and Cabiao in Pampanga in the streets and places to sell handcrafted products. Some of their colleagues travelled as far as Cebu, Davao, Palawan and Mindoro using caravans.

Marlyn C. Eneria. She has a bamboo craft store in Agnaya, Plaridel. Her parents were also ambulant vendors from San Carlos, Pangasinan. All of her siblings have a handcrafted store in Bulacan. They used to travel before, but now they settled and sell bamboo crafts. She married a Bulakenyo and now runs their business since year 2014 up to present.

Rochelle Resuello. She is from Cutcot, Pulilan, Bulacan. Her parents were from San Carlos, Pangasinan, manage their family business of handcrafted products located in Lugam, City of Malolos Bulacan. They have operated for more than five (5) years and continue to sell native products. She is somehow related to other handcrafted sellers

because his father used to sell products using caravans. She used to come with her father also when they went and sold products on horses and others went to nearby towns and provinces.

Milencio Estrada, He is an employee of a handcrafted store in Pagala, Baliuag, Bulacan, also came from Pangasinan, started as a teenager he used to ride kalesa with loads of products to sell. His employer which is a businessman from Pangasinan decided to settle in Bulacan and put up stores in San Rafael, and also in Caloocan. He has been working as a handcrafted product seller for thirteen (13) years and continues to work until this date.

There are also locals of Bulacan who started handcrafted business, selling raw materials used for landscaping and other uses of bamboo products.

Nelly Cruz. She is married to Carlito Cruz, manages their business located in Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan. For twelve (12) years their handcrafted business has operated up to this date. Being located in Guiguinto where there are a lot of landscape business establishments, Ms. Nelly decided to supply the needs of handcrafted products and other bamboo raw materials that are mostly being used in landscaping. Her parents were from Balagtas, Bulacan who owned a meat shop in the marketplace that somehow influences her to do business. She enjoys selling products; and also teaches at a school in Meycauayan, the subject of Economics.

Allan Feliciano. He is an employee who manages bamboo native stores in Parulan, Plaridel, Bulacan, working there for more than three (3) years; their store operates for more than five (5) years now. Their employer is from Baliuag, Bulacan but their physical store is located in Plaridel, Bulacan.

From caravans to stores as what researchers thought of “Commerce by Cartwheel: The Economic Well-Being of a Handicraft Merchant” (Bondoc, Cero, Cruz, De Guzman, Mendoza, Requillas, 2019) suggested that why do these ambulant vendors settle here in 37 Bulacan, rather than continue the idea of roving stores. But most merchandisers of native products were mostly started from ambulant vending, but now had reverted to physical stores due to challenges that roving stores were encountering. Mostly other local stores were from Pangasinan and were still greatly influenced by people from San Carlos Pangasinan.

Government Issuance of Permits

All of them have government permits and licenses to operate business. These were not a burden to them, but they can handle the payment of the permit. Some operate using barangay permits only due to the scale of their business

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income that they have. The government is not affecting their business, so as a good citizen of the Philippines they secure business permits and pay taxes as their responsibility to pay taxes for their business to operate in goodwill.

Mrs. Nelly Cruz said about Governments permits and taxes, “*hindi naman ganon kalaki epekto, although may apekto pero di ganun kalaki. Yung taxes syempre you have to pay it, kahit business permit, alam mo ano tayo, tayo yung mabuting mamamayan, tayo na nagbabayad tayo ng taxes.*” (The effect is not that great, although it has effects. About taxes of course we have to pay it, even business permit, you know we are good citizens that pay taxes).

Rochelle Rosuello also stated about their permits, “*kung ano pong iaaano sa'ming updated tax kasi mahirap naman po kung wala kayong permit, masisita din po eh.*” (what updated tax is given, because it is hard also to operate without permit, you might get checked).

Allan Feliciano as the store manager said about their business permit is that nakakaya naman po. (we can handle it).

### **Other Income of Business Owners**

Most of the businesses and owners are focused only on the handcrafted business. Very few have other sources of income. If there were no sales for the day, they considered it as low sales and they have no other source for profit.

**Mrs. Nelly Cruz**, one of the few who used to teach full time. She and her husband managed the handcrafted business. Being trained to do business and a college graduate, she manages her time to teach and do business at the same time.

Mrs. Nelly also teaches and manages their store at the same time, her daughter also a teacher and a fresh graduate started to teach and study post-graduate course. They have carriers as teachers and part time business owners. They perceived that teaching is not enough when you want to build a family. There's a need to have a sideline or a

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business that can generate income. Being a teacher for thirteen (13) years she also manages other businesses like ice cream selling, catering services, and party accessories; and later focuses on managing the handcrafted native store because catering and rentals are very exhaustive work.

Mrs. Cruz stated, *“kasi 13 years pa lang naman to e I have a business since nag pasok ako ng public school. Meron akong dating ice cream machine, catering services, party accessories rental, kumbaga eto later part na ng buhay ko sinimulan kasi nakakapagod din catering pero meron pa rin akong mga rental.”*

(Because this business runs for 13 years, and I have business since I entered public school. I have ice cream machine, catering 39 services, party accessories rental, to summarize it this is just the later part of my life because it's also tiring to do catering, but I still have rentals).

But most of the handcrafted native store sellers don't have other income, they focus on their full-time business.

Humble Beginnings: How they become entrepreneurs

San Carlos, Pangasinan being known for its handcrafted native products, caravans of viajeros travelled the roads using kalesa and sold their products. Generations had passed, and now the children of the present continue the business of selling native products by putting up stores and displaying their products for people to see as they pass by.

Marlyn Eneria. She grew up in this setup, knew the effort of how her parents travelled via kalesa and sold pugad (chickens nesting basket), banga (pottery), and duyan (swing). She is one of the siblings who inherited the business of her parents.

She started to sell baskets in the marketplace when she was a child, on the tiangge of Calumpit, then when she saved the initial investment needed to put up a store. Upuan (bamboo seats) are what she started to sell, before they sold them fast, and then they had diverted into making a larger product which is the kubo made of bamboo (nipa bamboo hut). The cycle is on selling their products and saving for additional bamboo products that they can sell.

She stated about how they started, “*Libot, Oo yung sa dating kalesa mga magulang ko po ganon, kalesa po sila mga tindahan po ng pugad, banga, duyan ganon po. Nagsimula kami sa maliit, ako may tinda po ako basket 40 basket sa palengke ganon po.*” (We go to areas, the kalesa of my parents use to sell chicken nest, pots, hammocks, and the likes. We started small; I use to sell baskets at the marketplace).

Milencio Estrada. His employer started their business in Pangasinan when they were still young, Milencio being one of their caravan sellers, drove one of five horses to sell products here in Bulacan and other neighboring towns.

But the time came when his employer decided to sell their horses and put up a store in San Rafael, Bulacan. Milencio, being one of his trusted employees now manages the branch in Baliuag, Bulacan. Milencio said that they invested one hundred thousand to put up the Baliuag branch of handcrafted products.

He stated, “*iniikot po namin buong Bulacan, pag nauubos yung tinda, yung amo namin nag dadala ulit. Taunan kami kung umuwi yung mga trabahador niya.*”

(We go places in Bulacan, when our stocks are already sold, our employer replenishes our product stocks. We go home yearly as his employees).

Apolonio Labarias. He started as a viajero and had gathered business experience from caravan selling. From Pangasinan, he decided to settle in Bulacan and put up a store of handcrafted products. With forty thousand pesos as his initial investment and uses lona and yero to cover up his store and merchandise. He uses his profit to save and invest it again to expand his business. The

cycle of buying again merchandises and selling it again. Having a small income is ok as long as they can eat three times a day, that's how they save when starting a business.

Rochele Resuelo, also came from a family of caravan sellers, started as a family business. She was trained to help her parents and be the store operator when her mother encountered an accident when she was only ten years old. Started as a helper at their store, she learned to handle their business and now she manages their own family business.

She stated, “*nakasanayan na din po kasi, ako po yung laging nag babantay kasi yung nanay ko po naaksidente bale simula po nung bata ako, mga 10 years old, tumutulong tulong na po hanggang sa nakasanayan paano sya ihandle.* (I became used to it, I always be the overseer because my mother encountered an accident when I was still a kid, around 10 years old, I started to help until I became used to handle the business).

She enjoys it because business lets her handle her time on her own. She also enjoys selling their handcrafted products. Also, they had invested in selling kubo or nipa hut as one of their products.

She said, “*naging gusto na rin po namin. Nakasanayan na po, tsaka mas okay na din po yung may sariling negosyo kasi mas nahahandle nyo po nang mabuti yung negosyo, pagka ganon kasi pag papasok po kayo sa trabaho syempre yung oras nyo po nakalimit po iyon, eh sa negosyo kahit maghapon po atleast magagawa nyo ok yung gusto nyo.*” (I already liked it. I became used to it, and it is ok to have your own business because you can fully handle it, rather than entering a job, ofcourse your time is limited compared to a business even if you do it whole day at least you can do what you like).

Mrs. Nelly Cruz. She started in a small investment on their business with a few merchandise and raw materials for landscaping plus adding other products that helped them to survive in their business in Guiguinto, Bulacan. Her store had started to earn profit after three (3) years of operation. From landscape materials to native products and added some products that were being asked by buyers. They don't know whether the native products that are in their store will be sold or not, but they need to put something in the store and by God's grace our business expanded.

Their business had run for thirteen (13) years, but since then she has other businesses as she entered teaching in public school. Before she sold ice cream, do catering services and party accessories for rent. Selling native products is just the latter part of her business ventures because catering services & rentals need so much effort compared to maintaining a store. But she still maintains rentals of chairs and party accessories.

Allan Feliciano. Bamboo products were the first items they sell in Parulan, Plaridel, Bulacan, plus other kinds of bamboo and pawid. They started their business of native handcrafted products as a reseller. He started as one of the employees and had learned to cut and sell bamboo products to customers.

There are three employees in the store, Allan being the cashier and manager and two other people as the carriers or kargador of products that were sold.

Managing people as an employer is also a challenge to the store owners because selling handcrafted native products needs people as helpers and makers. Managing people also becomes a challenge.

Chapter Summary

Different working experiences and different upbringing of people from Pangasinan and Bulacan, affect their training as sellers and vendors of handcrafted native products. Also, their family background affects their upbringing as part of the business. This shows how variety of people can do and start business. The factors of environment and upbringing gives them the large percentage of decision making to enter this kind of business.

CULTURAL TRAITS OF THE ENTREPRENEURS: INHERITED BUSINESS PRACTICES AND LEARNINGS FROM THEIR PARENTS

Training from the Family

Most of them inherited their business practices and learnings from their parents. They started as assistant or apprentice until they are fully familiar on how to run the business.

Most of the informants have their parents who had started the business as vendors and the children had continue the work as a family business. As a family they have expand their business venture to each family members who can put up their own store on a different place so that they can start to build the market as handcrafted native products sellers and kubo makers.

They had learned it from their family and now they have already established their own business.

Marlyn Eneria. She had started selling baskets at the market in Calumpit during the tiangge (market day). She used to sell it during the market day. It had started as small business and then she had saved money to build a capital and had started renting a place for her own business.

At first, she used to sell chairs and tables made from bamboo, and then building up a big market for kubo making. It had started from small investment and then later she had invested her earnings in the business for it to prosper.

She said, “*Opo nag tinda po sa Calumpit nung bata pa po ako nag titinda po ako ng basket sa palengke sa Calumpit kung saan may tyangge dun po kami nag simula hanggang sa nag kapuhunan nag simula po kami sa upuan medyo kumita sa upuan naging sa kubo naman po, ganon lang po ipon ipon tapos kung ano yung ano, dun mo inegosyo ulit*”. (Yes, I started to sell at the market in Calumpit where there is bargain sale, there is where we started and when we already saved money, we invested it on having a business of chairs, then nippa hut. We just save and use it for business.)

Milencio Estrada.

He had started as worker in selling handcrafted products and his sideline to make chicken cage to be sold in the store. At present his job is to manage the store of her employer at Baliuag, Bulacan.

He stated, “*bale ano lang po ako dito taga tinda, minsan sumasideline*

lang ako, gumagawa ng kulungan pero talagang ano ko lang dito taga tinda.” (I used to be the seller here, but sometimes I work as sideline on making chicken cage, but I’m the seller here.)

Nelly Cruz inherited the business traits from her parents. Her parents used to sell chicken at the marketplace in Balagtas, Bulacan. Learning how to do business from her mother helps her to start as seller of chicken meat in the market. Little by little she was being trained in her childhood and had started to have an interest in selling products. When she was working as a teacher, she was also doing sideline of selling other products and services. She used to have an ice cream machine, catering services, party accessories, and rentals. These were her first business venture that she did and at present she is still working as a teacher, but she is nearing her retirement.

Rochelle Resuelo has also learned the business from her parents. She used to participate on their business by being a watchman and assistant in their store in selling its products. She was first trained as store seller and then she also helped in making handcrafted native products that her parents were doing. She considers it as an inherited trait, now that she is part of the 3rd generation of sellers of handcrafted native products, starting from their grandfather, parents, and now on their generation. She enjoyed doing handcrafted native products and also enjoys doing the business. At present she prefers doing business rather than working as an employee as a regular job. She can handle her own time, and she can do what she wanted to do on the luxury of her own. She is helping their business to grow and continue what her parents had started as well as her grandparents who had started the business as caravan sellers from Pangasinan. It is now their generation to continue their business as other siblings have also learned their own handcrafted native products store as a

family business. Her brother has a store at Bypass Road at Plaridel, Bulacan. It becomes an inherited trait from grandparents unto their generation. When she was a kid, she didn't realize that she was helping her parents, in her mind she was just playing with the process of making her owned products.

She said, *“bale nung bata po ako mas parang nilalaro laro ko lang po pero ngayon mas na handle ko na po nang maayos. opo kasi, dati inuutus- utusan lang kami na gawin nyo to, gawin nyo yan,”*

(before when I was still a kid, I was just like playing around, but now I can handle it much better. Yes, before we are just commanded to do things.)

Most of the informants are enjoying doing the selling and producing handcrafted products as their business rather than applying for work as an employee. They also consider it as a work as a higher-level job, because they consider themselves as managers of their own business, not just as an employee for other people but they do business and give jobs to others.

Not Alone: Dealing with employees and employer.

Employees are important part of a business, and as business owners or employer, they maintain a harmonious relationship to their employees. They hire people to make projects as whole package in nipa hut making where payment of the finished product nipa hut depends on the sizes and details of the products. When they finished the product that they had agreed to make, they will be paid for a package price that the deal is on a per project basis and not per day payment of wages.

The employees that have been working for a long time with Ms. Marlyn Eneria. they are being well supported as her workers. There were times that she had experienced difficulty to deal with them. There were times there were jealousy among her workers that sometimes ruin the employer-employee relationship. To have a harmonious working relationship among her workers she has to talk and mediate on their problems and for them to feel that there is equal treatment, not having favoritism in dealing with the workers.

Some employers had let their employees live with their families in their stores residential areas for them to finish their project, as part of their relational care. Most of them agreed on this setup so that daily they can work at ease in doing their projects.

She stated on paying her employees, “*Pakyawan po sa isang kubo, depende po sa sukat pag po natapos kubo nila babayaran po sila o kaya babale sila ganon po.*” (We pay them project based per nipa hut, it will depend on the measurement then when they finish it, they will be paid, or they can ask in advance.)

The boss of Milencio Estrada knows all the shops in Pangasinan, as part of their connection, they started with the horse caravan, then his boss thought of selling nipa hut houses and replacing their caravan with a physical store but still maintaining the products of handcrafted native materials. As a salesman, hired by his boss, he manages their branch in Baliuag, Bulacan. Sometimes he also works for sideline job making nipa huts and other products, but most of the time as a salesman. Before, Milencio Estrada had also his own horse used in caravan selling. What he had experienced on that job was wandering around from the beginning of your trip, in hot and cold weather, having mosquito bites, and cars that you don't notice it can hit the caravan that was being

used to travel and sell native handcrafted products. Sometimes rains came all of a sudden, there is a chance to catch flu or other sickness due to change of weather from hot to cold. Bulacan was their major destination track when selling handcrafted native products. He was trained to replenish their stock when it was needed and to restock products again. Yearly was their schedule to come home to Pangasinan as workers of the caravan.

Millencio, being the sales manager of their store in Baliuag, handles everything on the stores sales, but the rent and other expenses were handled by his boss. Being together for 15 years, the relationship of employer-employee is tested through time. His parents stayed in Pangasinan but here father died when he was still young. Milencio had to stand on his own two feet to have a living while his mother remarried and he was left alone.

The salary of Milencio is paid on monthly cut off. As the sales manager of the Baliuag, Bulacan branch, he gives all the income and inventory of products to his boss every afternoon. Milencio also resides at a simple house at the backyard of their store, free of charge, where he stays also as the tenant of the place. He buys food to eat which is also free from his food allowance.

He stated, *“Yung amo ko simula bata iyon ang business nila, saka ito sa kanila talaga ung magnegosyo, ako nagumpisa lang din ako mga kasing una suma sama lang din ako ganun tapos nagsarili na din ng hinahawakan.”* (My boss stated doing business when he was young, this is there busieness, I just started by just coming with them then now I handle one of their stores.)

Ms. Nelly Cruz manages their handcrafted native product business with his husband and one staff to assist in carrying heavy loads. She minimizes hiring people to lessen expenses in the business

especially during difficult situation experienced at present the pandemic crisis. Before she used to have two to three people to assist her in the store, but because of the quarantine lockdown they had limited the hiring of people. She also plans to retire as a teacher and planning to do business full time.

She said, *“Isa lang tao ko, nag miminimize ako kasi mahirap eh hindi naman masasabi na. Kasi ako nandito din ako tapos nandito yung husband ko, tsaka yung tao ko kami nalang po ang nag-aano halimbawa wala naman kaming gagawin lalo ngayon dati kasi dalawa, tatlo tao ko ngayon kasi nag lockdown at saka medyo planning to retire earlier kaya ako most of the time 50 nandito, kaya ayoko kumuha.”*

(I have one employee; I minimized because it is hard. Because I’m here then my husband, and my employee we manage, example if there is nothing to do, before we have two to three people here, but now it is lockdown. And also, I’m planning to retire earlier that is why most of my time I’m here, that’s why I didn’t hire.)

Rochelle Resuelo manages their family business; she used to be with her parents when doing this kind of business. Starting at the child at the age of ten (10) she started helping out and at present she is very used to how she is handling their family business.

Middleman: Making the Job Easier

As part of the Filipino culture, there is a middleman who acts as an agent who will help makers sell their products. Having people to act as middleman helps store sellers to get the right

product on the right time. These agents will get all the stocks that you need to sell from the province of Pangasinan. They can also get the raw materials that the workers need in making the products that they will sell. Stores in Bulacan have an assigned middleman to survey and to know in what areas where the products are available, like Pangasinan and in other provinces. This is much easier for sellers to replenish the stocks that they need to sell. Their goal is to find products for the sellers, to purchase them and deliver to them. They have a price cut on the price that they will deliver as income.

Pangasinan products and workers are most likely to be neighbors so the middleman can easily get many orders and sell them with mark-up per item. It is also much easier for the sellers in Bulacan to deal with one person rather than go to Pangasinan and look for the 51 products in every store in the vicinity. Also, dealing with one agent or middleman can get the job done rather than talking to all the workers and makers of products in Pangasinan, but some also do direct buying of products, rather than having a middleman. Some go directly to the makers and buy products that are needed to be sold in Bulacan to replenish their stock.

Experiences in Ambulant Selling

Sometimes it takes a lot of time for these employees to go back home to Pangasinan. It takes a year to return and have a break on selling handcrafted native products.

Milencio Estrada worked as a horseback caravan seller for 10 years. According to him stocks are replenished every month; sales are higher when he does ambulant selling compared to selling on a fixed store. Customers approach the caravans and buy; unlike the fixed stores you will really wait for customers to come to buy. It is a very different style of selling when you can approach the buyers.

They used to sell products using kalesa before they started a store. Their parents used to sell and as children they used to be with their parents as protégé and had been trained. From Pangasinan they used to travel to Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, and nearby provinces to establish their territorial market. Some goes as far as Arayat and Cabiao in Pampanga. They settled in San Miguel, Bulacan as their resting territory. Some caravans can go as far as Mindoro, this caravan sellers have their own territory or place where they sell the products.

They also sold products on squatters' area or informal settlers, because there are many houses and people, compared to selling to motorist that just passed by. They also stop at places that are near the location of factories because people come and go every day and can see their products that are displayed on caravan.

Their parents started this kind of business, and they used to travel to every town and barangay but as a child he had just seen and be on the side of the street because of the caravan that they were riding.

When they stopped at the side of the street they used to eat and sleep and do their comfort room duties. It was degrading for them, but they had to sacrifice due to the large income that they got from caravan selling. But it is an accident-prone business because the seller was on the side of the street. They were very cautious on people who passed by the streets also buses and other vehicles. **Mr. Apolonio Labarias** had encountered two accident that almost took his life; the bus hit the product of the caravan and almost hit them; their caravan gets sideswiped by fast moving vehicles. Because of the fast-moving vehicles and the safety of these ambulant vendors had been encountered they made them decide to have a permanent store that they can sell their products. It is also an ordinance of the Local Government Units to stop this kind of selling for protection on the roads.

He stated his experience, *“Ikaw ang nag-iingat pero paano yung naka salubong mo? Minsan na rin akong... dalawang beses nadin akong muntik na maaksidente. yung Pantrangko nung araw. Yung bus, talagang nakuha ang mukha ng kabayo kung gumanun siya oh. talagang nahagip. Kaya nun, mas maganda mag pwesto nalang kasi nakikita ko na nabubuhay naman yung mga nagtitinda, bakit hindi ko rin kaya kako... Ang maganda lang kasi sa Caravan, umiikot ka ng umiikot, mga tao tapos direkta na. Pupunta ka sa eskinita. Kung marami nagkukumpulan kahit na walang tumatawag sayo, huminto ka't kunwari bumili ka ng candy. Mag standby ka lang don. Mamaya titingin, maraming usyoso rin na tao. Ganon. Uyy ganda nito... Mamaya bibili na. Eh \ ganun ang style non.”* (You are cautious but how about what passes by? I almost... two times I encountered accidents, the Pantrangko Bus, the horse face reacted by the hit. That is why it is much better to have a fix place, and I see other people do it, so why can't I do it. What is good on Caravan, is that it is moving and going direct to places where there are many people. Just standby to where people gather even if they are not calling you. Later they will look at the items and said that the item is good. Then they will buy, that is the style before).

It is safer to have a store rather than to rove in the streets and sell products, because of accidents and danger that they can encounter in going to places unknown and sleeping on places that were not safe. Some had treated them as homeless and called them by names of animals like horse or cow because horses and cows carry the products. Because of they had felt emotionally hurt because they are humans, but they're treated as animal and somehow felt offended. That's the

reason that made them decide to have a store and they can stay with their families rather than be in a caravan being pulled by animals.

The products on the caravans are Bunot, Duyan, Banga, Baskets, and other products that their parents started selling.

Horses and kalesa used to pull the caravan that carries the products, Mr. Milencio Estrada as one of the sellers and employee of his boss that owns the horses, sells and work as a caravan seller for 10 years, then they got bankrupt then his boss decided to sell the horses and kalesa and started to operate a physical store.

Melencio, had experienced going from Pangasinan to Bulacan via working on selling products on caravans, his boss was the one that replenished their products when there was a need to restock products that were sold on their trip. They went by group and rest by group also, they had different experiences on selling these products on the street. He had experienced accident like falling out of a bridge in Nueva Ecija. The good thing that the horse didn't die because the caravan had stopped and got stuck on the bridge that prevented them from falling.

He stated his experience, “Naranasan ko na din mahulog sa tulay kasama kabayo sa Nueva Ecija naman yon. Hindi naka ahon, isang paa nalang nakabitin. Buti nalang nahulugan ko yung mga fishpond hindi namatay yung kabayo” (I experienced to fall on a bridge with my horse in Nueva Ecija. It can't go up, and 1 foot is left hanging. Good thing I just fall on a fishpond and the horse didn't die.)

Also, the sellers had encountered different challenges, like the cold weather, mosquito bites, and other vehicles that can sideswipe the caravan. Rain was also difficult for this caravan sellers to deal with and finding food for your horses whenever they roamed around places in nearby

provinces and in Bulacan, and when the caravan needs to restock to replenish the products that they were selling. These are the reasons that the sellers had decided to stop caravan selling and had to sell the horses to put up a physical store to sell their handcrafted native products.

Raw Materials

Most of the raw materials and supplies that these sellers are using are from Tarlac and Pangasinan. They say that prices of goods are much lower from this place compared on other places. Handcrafted native products are delivered by bulk orders, so that it would be cheaper, compared to materials and products that are bought in the nearby places here in Bulacan.

These materials are directly bought from suppliers that plant bamboos for selling. These are delivered by truck load and with different sizes and varieties. They bought it by piece package depending on the sizes and quality. These materials are sun-dried so that the materials and moisture will evaporate and be used for handcrafted product making. When the bamboo is not sun-dried, the moisture of the material will be easily attacked by pests that can damage the raw materials. That is why it is hard to make products during rainy season, June, July, and August. These materials are classified per size and the diameter of the bamboo. It has classes depending on its quality, primary class, and secondary class. Sometimes they get materials that are rejects but they also buy them because they are sold per package or truck load. Suppliers also come from Donya Remedios Trinidad, Hagonoy, Pandi, and Nor Zagaray, Bulacan. These places are most likely where bamboo can grow because they are mountainous and highlands, also water from the forest that can easily water the plants or bamboos.

During rainy season also these materials are hard to get because of the rain in the forest. It is hard for suppliers to deliver the products because the roads on the forests are all wet and slippery, so it is hard for them to deliver these materials. This is the reason why the bamboos are reserved by order. Also, bamboo preservation is being implemented specially on provinces that bamboos are being planted for selling. That is how bamboos will be preserved.

Handcrafted Filipino products makers mostly came from Pangasinan, and Aurora but there are also products coming from Batangas, Nueva Ecija, Bicol, some in Quezon, and the farthest is in Antique. Some products and raw materials came from San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan, these products are delivered by package in load from the respective places of the sellers.

ECONOMIC BENEFIT OF HANDCRAFTED FILIPINO PRODUCTS:

THEY WENT TO NEIGHBORING TOWNS TO SELL THEIR PRODUCTS

From Caravan to Physical Stores

Most of the sellers inherited their business ideas from their parents as former Caravan sellers. They went to neighboring towns to sell their products. Having it displayed on the side of the road, peddling the products all over the town, so people can see the handcrafted native products and buy from them.

As caravan sellers, they stopped at the side of the road to eat, sleep, and also do their personal hygiene. Having no permanent residence while selling their products, some people look down on them, and they feel degraded. They sacrifice their safety because peddling native products on the streets has a bigger income compared to a physical store.

Accidents happened frequently because they peddled their products along the road and there were some vehicles that passed through the road and some people can do bad things to them. Some also treated them as aliens or non-native of the town or foreigner to the land that is why people were afraid of them and treated them differently from other people.

There are buses that passed the road, sometimes caravans were accident prone because of fast moving vehicles, they may not notice that their vehicles were around because this was their way of life. They also had experienced having hard time sleeping because they had to settle beside the road in a cold weather and other destruction that had affected their sleeping time.

The seller's strategy on selling with caravans is that they went to where people were gathered but they didn't go directly to them but had to be on standby mode near the place or near a store. Then people would see their products and gathered near them they would know the set and then later they would buy some products.

From the experiences that they didn't go directly to customers they preferred to go to places where people could notice them and let the people gathered to see their handcrafted items for sale. This was the technique of the viajeros on selling products. Letting the people see the beauty and necessity of handcrafted products the later was the reason why they will buy from them. Having a variety of items also attracted people to buy.

Buying Products to Sell

They sell chairs and tables in package and prices somehow has been determined by the bamboo and materials that they put on handcrafted materials that they are selling in their stores. Even if people don't buy that much, they still maintain the look and branding of the handcrafted product sellers.

Their best-selling products are brooms, walis tingting, and duyan and other products that people are searching in their native store. The challenge is to have products that people are searching, and they put them in the store. As handcrafted products sellers they also put variety of products that have different price, so that people can have choices on what product they will buy from the products that are displayed.

The various handcrafted products mostly come from Pangasinan, the town of San Carlos in its different barangays. Making handcrafted products are their source of income. Their products would be bought by middlemen or the sellers themselves and brought them to Bulacan to be sold. They usually brought them in bulk orders to lessen the delivery cost and to have a good income when they sell the products.

Upuan, Duyan, Bilao, and others native products not only came from Pangasinan but also from other nearby provinces as well. Nueva Ecija also make this kind of products. They also order from other places so that the store can sell and display different kinds of products like Walis Tambo. Being wise investing your money on products in selling and their willingness to invest on brooms and other items used for cleaning, like pang-agiw, to have limited variety of products on their stores. Some buyers like to see different products on display, and they will be interested on buying products that has different variety that are displayed on the store.

They put a mark-up of 7 to 10 pesos from the purchase price of the product like walis tambo which is one of the products they considered as best seller. They do the same in their other products there's a need for them to sell large number of products in a day for them get a bigger profit. The portion of their income would be for savings and other needs before they would buy varieties of products for the store.

Checking the quality of products is a factor in determining the products to be sold and not only the price. They could buy product on a cheaper price, but it would not last that long. For them it is better to choose a product that will last longer. They were adjusting the price that buyers could still afford and that will suit their needs.

Some of them sells nipa hut made from bamboo. They considered the quality of materials that they used to make the foundation of this nipa hut to be a great factor. People from San Carlos, Pangasinan are mostly people who are trained to do this kind of job. Getting workers from Pangasinan to Bulacan need for them to build relationship and trust for their workers to stay and work for them for a long time in their business. They also do chicken cages and animal feeding platform for their clients, which are mostly needed by factories and resorts in large quantities.

It can take two (2) weeks to one (1) month for their products to be sold. The raw materials are being prepared on the right way, so that the products will be much steadier and high quality. Some of the materials are being sun-dried for a duration of 1 month before it is used to make handcrafted products and materials for nipa hut. These products can last for four years depending on the materials that are used. For example, the kubo flooring is made of wood with the measure of two-by-two foundation for the flooring, while some uses lesser scale so that the materials will be cheaper; so, the price will be lessened but the materials will also be differed in quality. Some clients want some additional rooms and other needs, they also do customized design, some even custom more likely to be a house, rather than just a nipa hut use as a resting place. Other clients want two rooms and a terrace depending on the customer's needs.

Some products are bought during specific season, but walis tambo is not a seasonal product. Like the production of kubo, the season is during summertime while the lean season is the rainy

seasons when some products are not bought. Their main products that clients look for during rainy seasons are chicken cages.

Bamboo and rattan products are being sold for people who use them for landscape projects. Some clients use these products for display and not for its original use.

The selling of the products is also a trial and error for them to know if the product will be bought by people, landscapers, and other clients. Not only for their original use but these products that are being asked and being sold are added to the stores little by little, depending on the demand of the buyers.

Most of their clients look for native products and handcrafted materials for its different uses. Some uses it for personal use, for school use, and some use them for display, like gasera, tapayan, bunot, and other products. In the past people had used the products traditionally e.g. for cooking and fishing but now it is used for display and some used them for raw materials like abaca fiber that can be used to produce other products. Most of the materials that are being sold were made by Filipino indigenous group from the mountains and the entrepreneur bought these products to try to sell them on their stores.

Handcrafted products are said to be pleasant to the eyes. This is one of the reasons why customers are looking for these products that are made of bamboo and other materials. Stores have clients who exactly look for products that are handcrafted and made of bamboo. The price is also cheaper compared to materials that are not made of bamboo and handcrafted products. Clients usually use them in their homes and to other places that needed chairs and tables used to receive their visitors and some personal use.

Some stores focus on selling native products and handcrafted materials, and some used as raw materials. Some sells nipa huts but entrepreneur of handcrafted products have to manage people who knows how to do huts.

They are using bamboos for their products and for other handcrafted products. A different variety of bamboo can be used as raw material to make a product. It can also be used as walls with design. Some stores sold other products like pawid. They put a mark up that almost double the purchased price but still maintaining the high value for culture and native identity.

During times when they do not have buyers, they have lot of time to make bamboo made products like chicken cages and some products that are easy to produce. In selling native products there is the need to devote more time to entertain customers in answering their concern and queries. All customers have to be entertained not only those who will surely buy. It is because in the future when they have available funds to purchase the item that they have seen in the store they may return and buy the product.

For the customer who prefers to purchase a nipa hut, the seller would ask for a pre order fee as a guaranty that the product will really be bought. That's the signal for them to start producing the product like nipa hut. Once it's finished and delivered the customer should pay the full amount for the agreed price of the product. They also have preventive maintenance that is being offered for their clients in order to avoid termites and damages on the product that the customer had bought. They also orient their customer on how to maintain the products by applying treatment and varnish on the materials used in making nipa hut. The price varies on different stores because of the services and materials they used in producing the product plus the technique on how they do their product. They have standard measurement on how these products are made. There are clients who want that

the item they would buy be customized depending on their needs and preference, but the price would be different from the regular measurement, design and materials of the product.

Delivery is also part of service to customers who buy the products in large scale and customer's relation.

Sometimes stores are open until 10:00PM to maximize the time for them to sell their product for them to get the income that they need in a day. Their regular expenses are payment for the rent of the place and their food for the day. At least the expenses be recovered in the daily income they earned. So, when the sales for the day are high, they save money for future use.

Cleaning their display everyday takes a lot of their time because their stores are beside the road area. It's tiring, if all items will be cleaned the time for the day will be all consumed, so they just wipe it and when customers came, that's the time they clean their items on display. Sometimes items get old on display and would be considered as reject products. They see to it that their product would be presentable to the buyer.

Online Selling of Handcrafted Filipino Products

Some try selling the product online while some had not tried online selling. Most of them doesn't have an online store where they can sell products digitally. For them they do not consider sellers online as their business competitor but as their customers. They help them sell the product online for the reason that these online sellers would purchase the products ordered via internet.

Some entrepreneurs consider online selling as a competition but at present it has a different marker from the kind and style of items that they are selling on the side of the 64 streets or roads or highway. They are also interested to venture doing online selling of their products.

On this digital generation it is a challenge for them to cope up and build online market because of the technology and computers that are used plus the computer literacy needed for them to operate. It is also a competition, but it would not have a bigger effect to the business. At present the customers that they cater are the motorists that come and go on the streets since their target market from the beginning are those people going to and fro along the highway.

In their business they are not also exempted from the encountering people with bad attitude especially their business competitor. Sometimes it goes to the point of damaging other people's credibility which somehow affect their business.

Clients

Most of their clients of nipa hut are resorts which are their largest buyers, and some are recommended by other clients that help the stores to continue to generate income. The demand also for bamboo fences and bamboos as raw materials makes the store in Parulan, Bulacan expand.

The basic expenses go to the family for food and rent of the stores. The stores bought variety of products for the same kind or usage so the buyers can choose depending on the capacity of their budget. For example, is the broom that is used for sweeping the floor, some has designs and others are much simple, so that the buyer can choose what kind of broom they are willing to buy.

Bamboo crafts and native products are most likely the items that are connected to handcrafted products, and they are known for it. As much possible products that are not categorized as native products that are not sold in the store to maintain its identity. **Mr. Apolonio Labarias**, had also tried to sell synthetic feather duster to clean cars but it is far from the items that he is selling, and the variety would be far different from the products that he has as a handcrafted native store.

Being reminded how hard it was to sell products on a caravan, being in a store is safer for it is far from accident and also you are with you family.

Simple living and hard work are their way of life. What they only buy are the things that they need, like groceries. They do shop a little, but they don't live out of their means. Mr. Labarias have seen entrepreneurs like him selling their properties and had gone to other places and buy things that are not needed and went to bankruptcy. That is one of the reasons why he is living a simple life.

Most of their clients are those who pass by the store riding in vehicles when they see their products in the streets, they stop by to buy from their store. They would be encouraged to buy other products as well. Some are by referral by other clients. Their large clients are resorts and warehouse where they need massive number of products that they can use in cleaning and use as display for souvenir and household use.

Having good customer relations and conversation in entertaining them helps a lot on selling native products. Presenting the items on a nice way, the product display and the low price of product make the customer to come back to buy again in the store. Having patience in waiting and dealing with customers are also needed in the business.

Sales

The sales of these businesses average from 2,000 to 10,000 per day on a cash basis. They say that this income is just right for their daily expenses. They have products that are hard to sell. Their stocks are replenished every two weeks up to 1 month. The Sala set which are considered as large-scale products are being sold for almost a year or it takes month to be sold. Most of them don't have other source of income.

They don't have agents and resellers because they are avoiding that the price of their products would increase, and it would have a lesser chance of being bought. They preferred that their products are displayed in their store where buyers can see them and buy from them.

Prices of handcrafted native products varies depending on what are displayed in the store. Not all products that are sold in different stores are the same. The entrepreneurs need their investment to be recovered and to use again to buy to replenish their stocks.

High Sales

The stores produce high sales during summertime starting from February to March and on its lean period is during rainy season. Their products are most likely to become wet during that time since their space are limited to accommodate the goods that are being sold in the store.

Some stores the months September to December up to months of February are the periods they are experiencing high sales.

The products which are mostly purchased by customers are walis tambo walis tingting that are used for cleaning. Chicken cages have a high sale during the month of August. Some products are bought in pairs during Christmas season used them as decors.

Having Low Sales

Some products that are hard to sell are prone to damage especially during the rainy season they become wet by the rain. Later this becomes part of rejected products. Months of June to August are the lean season which is the wet season. Sometimes these challenges make them to give up on their business, but they still continue doing it. They are optimistic that they could recover their low sales in the period when their sales are at its peak.

The weather affects their sales like when it is raining or rainy season because during this period their products can be damaged compared to plastic products that other stores are selling because they're located at the side of the highway, their products are prone to dirt and can be soaked in the rain.

CHALLENGES ON CHANGING TIMES

Future development

Some of the sellers wanted to expand their handcrafted business to be a hardware store and still maintain their handcrafted products where people can buy. These products are somehow related to hardware business they materials that are used in the house.

Others plan to have other branches where they can sell products from other places but they when they would have extra money or savings.

Online selling is also part of their future plans and development because of the less face-to-face kind of selling but it is much challenging for the elderly people to try to use technology and use it for selling compared to younger generation that is exposed to use this kind of technology.

The use of cashless technology like Paymaya or G-cash is not applicable in paying their suppliers since most of them came from rural areas and mountainous places. They need cash in return for the products that they produced.

Still the delivery of products helps the sellers to provide service for their customers not to have problems in bringing the products to their destination and as means of transportation to the entrepreneurs in purchasing products from other places that would be sold in their store.

Business owners still want to continue their business even if there are in their senior years because it is hard for them to find other jobs and to do other work compared to having a business that they owned and managed. Their desire is to continue their business and to grow rather than to close the store and be an employee for other people. They also wanted that their children would continue their business and make it grow but they are not forcing their children to do that, but they are trying to impart to their children the benefits of having a business rather than being an employee. The advantage of having the control of the business is in the hands of the entrepreneur. The time is also flexible for them.

For them it is not a problem to be born as poor but to die poor is the problem. What is in their mind is that the person who died poor didn't do anything in his/her lifetime. The experience of one of the entrepreneurs was that before they started as farmers but now, they have their own store for them it is marked of progress.

Renting the place where their stores are located for them is a challenge. How long they would stay in the place depends on the owner of the land. Some of them maintain good relationship to their landowners for them to still continue using the land and for the business to grow rather than having a new place and start building again their own market. They could not have their own land because they could not afford the price of owning a land in Bulacan because their income is not sufficient.

They also have children that have different careers and plans that they want to achieve, some have children that also has their own family now, some are still studying, and some are doing other profession like teaching, that is far from managing a business; but their parents encourage them to continue their business even if they do it hand in hand, or simultaneously with their job.

Computer literacy also challenges the owners of the business today that's why they envision their children to continue their business because they are much literate in using technology and computers for their business.

Helping other people is also their goal in deciding what products they would sell. These native handcrafted products that they sell comes from provinces where people had made. It is a way of helping them to have profit out of making handcrafted products. These people are afraid of using technology for making products even though technology helps in producing products faster and non-labor-intensive technique the sellers can make suggestions for them to enhance and have variety of products that they can produced depending on the customers' needs and preference.

Most of family members had started the handcrafted native product business and had passed to other members of the family to start their own business and sell products on a different place. They can also do online and extend the business in improving the design and had them customized depending on the customers need.

Expenses

The expensed being incurred by the entrepreneurs are rent of the land that where the store is located; their everyday food; utilities and the cost of the products that they sold. Their primary concern is for them to recover these expenses from the income that they generate every day. They need to budget their income on a strategic way for them to continue doing business.

Age Challenge

Age somehow affects the energy and physical strength that one person can do daily. As pioneers of this kind of business in Bulacan, it is more likely to see business owners as being senior

citizens, it somehow challenges them to continue their business and rather than finding other source of income and to work for a different job, it is hard being an employee on their senior age.

What they would like is to pass the legacy of this business to their children and for them to continue doing the business with the same passion as they have. They also help their children to have business of their own and have a good future.

Damaged Goods

Typhoons and floods can also damage the products that they're selling compared to sunny days. Their product is also prone to pest and damage of the materials. This is one of the reasons that their products are more likely not be sold, when there are dirt or dust on their product, they need to clean it and protect them to protect the products quality. They also apply varnish and anti bukbok solution so that the products can be preserved.

Mrs. Nelly Cruz said, “*minsan eh syempre nag kakaroon ng typhoon, sumisira dun pero hindi naman madalas kasi pag ka naman umaraw balik na naman sila sa dati.*” (Sometimes of course there are typhoons, it damaged the products but not all the time, when the sun is up, we continue on doing out things.)

Credit

Coming from the same province of Pangasinan, they help each other through credit culture. The makers of handcrafted products usually allow their kababayans who usually their suki to get the products on credit and pay it after they have sold them.

They need to maintain a good image as a good creditor to maintain a good supplier seller relationship. The amount should be settled after two weeks up to one month, giving the assurance that you would pay the product. They have to keep their promise because they would not let them purchase the products again on credit.

As much as possible they don't practice to have utang or credit to purchase their product but if it is unavoidable, they borrow products from people and display them and on the agreed period of payment they have to pay the products that they purchased and sold and to kept their promise. They have to maintain their credibility and good image.

Health issues

They would want that their family would be free from sickness and not to be hospitalized. If they would experience that situation their income in their business would be spent for medical expenses. In this time of pandemic crisis, they would want that they would be COVID free.

They had received financial assistance provided by the government during the pandemic crisis to help them on their low sales and the lockdown season that had greatly affected their business. It is a great relief for them businessman and for their employees to survive the quarantine and lockdown season when the store is closed since they have food and other needs that which was sustained from the assistance that was provided by the government.

In making handcrafted products it is accident prone job because they may incur accident in using the tools that they used in making specifically the nipa hut. The excessive linings from the wood can get inside the hands the skin and it hurts a lot when you remove it, or it irritates the hands of the nipa hut maker.

Mr. Milencio Estrada said, “*pag-bubuhat yan minsan merong naiipit, merong pumuputok ang kamay dahil naiipit ng kawayan. Sa pag pupukpok lang talaga ng martilyo sa kadalasan hindi sa araw-araw, yan natataga sa ano naman sa awa ng Diyos sa sakit-sakit medyo okay naman.*” (When carrying items you can get accident, there are times when hands are damaged because of the pressure of the kawayan item. When you also use hammer sometimes, you can get hit and by God’s mercy we are ok from sickness.)

RECOMMENDATION, SUGGESTIONS, AND BUSINESS PLAN

People

As owners of the business, they would like to continue their business until they grow old and their children as their successor. Having good sales for the entire day can help with their expenses and products needed to be replenished. Also, when one nipa hut is sold per month, their expenses for the whole month will be covered, and every income for other items would be added as profit for the business. To sell one nipa hut per month makes them reach their income quota and the rest could be considered as income.

Having other jobs is hard for them, especially at their age that they're getting older. As business owners they themselves have a greater level of perspective rather than having a day job. They somehow feel a level higher than being an employee.

To be called as managers even on a small business is a great value. They wanted it to continue and not doing other things. For them they if they would have other jobs, they may find it difficult to be familiar with. They are just hoping that their children will continue doing their business as successors of their business. They could not force their children to do the same. They give their children freedom to do what they want and to decide on their own. They are orienting their children that their business is their own and they just need to continue doing their business.

Having a flexible time in this kind of business, they have options to sleep whenever they want, they can just leave the store open and leave the items on display and wait for customers to arrive. Customers would just come and buy their products even though they are small items displayed in their stores. Leaving the store open will let people see and come to look at their merchandise.

Product

Process starts from buying raw materials that were to be delivered by their suppliers. Their orders are in bulk, by truck especially the bamboos that are used in making the bahay kubo. They have to wait for the raw materials to be delivered for them to make the products that they are selling. They also sell some of them as raw materials which will be used for landscaping and another usage which were being displayed in the store for people to see and buy their products.

The quality of the product is also factor in sustaining the business. High quality means more costly to produce. They prefer that the materials they used in making nipa hut for example would satisfy their customers. They would want their customers to come back and to buy again rather than having a cheaper product, but the materials used are sub standard in quality that the product would not last for long.

They also provide delivery service to customers who bought their products if they purchase in large quantities. This is one way to establish good customer relations.

One way of valuing the environment is to patronize handcrafted products which are not made of synthetic materials. The raw materials came from people who plant what they sell rather than just getting the raw materials from the forest. They are from Cavite Remedios Trinidad and other mountainous places. For the raw materials that are used in 76 producing handcrafted products for them not to be extinct, they continue to plant the sources of the raw materials. These entrepreneurs are advocate of helping other group of people to earn a living and also one way of helping the environment to be productive instead of using plastic and synthetic materials.

Some of them use their spare time in making products that are made of bamboo like chicken cage for them to sell. They do it mostly at nighttime because in the morning buyers come to their store to look at their display. They have to entertain them. This is time-consuming for them. Some

of them bought products from Pangasinan. Getting discount for the items they had purchased for sale is of great help to be spent for the delivery expenses and renting of vehicles. Some of the products that are in the store are hard to sell. They have materials that last long as four years. They consider them as rejects and are not usable anymore.

Buyers always look for new products that is why their old display is left behind. They have lesser chances of selling them. As much as possible they had to preserve their stocks free from damage and if there's a need for them to repair in order that these products would be sold. Some products also are hard to maintain because of their intricate designs. They have to clean them manually with brush or dust remover.

Walis tambo and tingting for them are easy to sell. They just add a little percentage from the purchase amount as their income so that they can sell more products in large-scale rather than selling smaller quantity with a large amount of income.

Having stocks of the product is also needed. They see to it that they are replenished once the products had already been sold.

Variety of products helps the customers decide what product they are willing to buy. Their choice would depend on the price of products and their budget.

Maintaining reliable suppliers of products from different places and provinces helps you to have the right products at a low price. Having the right supplier of products also a factor that could lower your costs of the products and gain larger income.

Replenishing stocks that could last for 2 weeks up to 1 month so that there are new products that can be seen in the store that can be bought by customers.

Handcrafted native products are now used for display and for collection purposes. For these products to still be patronized by people they could of ways and means on how it can be improved

and innovated to keep abreast with the changing needs of the customers. The style, design and the technology used in producing these products may be considered.

Price

Best months and summertime when the products are high on sales because their products are less to be wet by rain on rainy seasons. These months have large number of orders like the *bahay kubo*.

From the daily income they are earning everyday they have to save money for the future. They also use them for buying other products as well maintaining the store. They also have to keep a portion of it in paying their suppliers of the products that they sell if they purchased them on credit. They had to keep their promise in order that they could purchase again. Having no vices also helps the owners to save.

Having discipline of buying things that they need for the family and the business is what they practiced. They do not follow buying things that are in current trends. What is important is their primary consideration in spending their money. Having no vices also helps the owners to save.

The expenditures being incurred in running the business is also another consideration. The entrepreneur needs to save and accepts the challenge of getting a bigger market for handcrafted products. As much as possible they try to avoid competition among their family members if they want to have the same kind of business. To avoid this situation, they find a place where they can establish their business far from the business of the members of the family. But competition is part of running the business it is real, and they need to face the reality.

The payment for the products and raw materials they are buying from their suppliers are mostly on a cash basis. They order them ahead of time and once they are delivered, they are paid

in cash. The average price they pay for truckload of bamboo that are used for making nipa hut amounts to P35,000 to P50,000 depending on the kind of bamboo that are that are delivered to them.

The products like nipa hut which they produce ranges to P15,000 and up. The prices depend on the design the customer wants. Most of the time they are asking for down payment or deposit once they agreed on the price and the design. The down payment is for the materials that are used as foundation in making nipa hut. It is only an assurance that 79 once the product is finished the buyer would pay the full price of the kubo. They avoid providing credit to their customers. Mostly it is on cash payment for the business to have cash to pay their everyday expenses and their suppliers.

Place

The positioning of the business also affects the sales. There is an advantage when people know where your business is located. As much as possible the entrepreneurs want to maintain its location so that customers could easily find where they are if they want to come back again to buy their products. If they leave the place, they need to establish again their market.

They can establish branches of their business to be located in other places.to market their products and to grow. This is done by **Milencio Estrada**, who manages the Baliwag branch which is his of employer's business. The son of the employer manages their Sampaloc, San Rafael branch. His other son manages the Caloocan branch. He had established three branches that the members of the family manage. Venturing from caravan to store is what the strategy of his employer.

They also maintaining the market of bamboo handcrafted products as a branding for their store. Almost all of their products are made from bamboo where their business is known. People

come to their store specifically for them to see made of bamboo and other handcrafted products. They don't mix other non-native products in the store.

Nelly Cruz started her business selling landscape materials located at Guiguinto, Bulacan. She decided to do business that will help the landscape business of other people 80 by selling handcrafted materials and other raw materials that were used as design for landscaping. Bamboo can be used for landscaping. Different products also come from different places. Some distributors of native products are convincing her to try them to be sold in her store. She is accepting the offer to sell them as long as these are made by the natives and handmade. But this is a trial-and-error process if the people will buy them or not. What she has done was that she put little by little the products that they would sell. It took her three years for them to establish their business and have profits and expand their business by having other products to sell like upuan and other native products.

They have future plans of expanding the business, but it should be done gradually out of the savings they have generated in selling their products.

Promotion

They don't have agent or a middleman to resell their products. The price of their products would be higher for the additional cost that would be added such as the percentage or incentive that they would give to one who sells the product. They wanted the price of their product to be affordable for the consumers.

Those who venture on online selling are resellers of the handcrafted native products. They are the ones promoting the products of the entrepreneurs and in return if there are orders from online these resellers the products were brought from them. In return these resellers are given

discounts for them to have profits from online selling and at the same time the entrepreneurs generate income from them.

The entrepreneurs avoid clients or buyers that are hard to transact with because their patience is limited. But still they wanted to maintain good customer relationship especially on customized products. What the customer's wants as much as possible they give in to their request for them not to lose their clients and maintain their good image. Having a good client for them is blessing especially in these challenging times, the pandemic crisis.

During the time that the interview was conducted the business were affected by the force lockdown by the government. Their budget was allotted to paying the rent and their everyday expenses. As much as possible they wanted that they would be free from sickness like COVID 19 since this would take a lot of their budget for medical expenses. Still they had to face the risk of running their business even though there's a threat of this disease since they are exposed to people in the store.

There is a need to have a good customer relationship, and the place should be presentable so that people will come back and buy their products again considering also the price of the product that they offer to their customer.

Waiting for customers to come to the store needs a lot of patience. The customers that went to the store were not that frequent so having a good customer relation is one way of building their market. The location, quality and price are their consideration in their business.

It takes a lot of patience in maintaining and sustaining this kind of business. Taking good care of the products that they are selling as well as having the quality are great factors that customers patronize their products.

Word of mouth is one of the means of how their products are being promoted. Recommendation of customers to others is a very good promotion for this kind of business.

Current Strategies

The principle of not comparing oneself to others is what they practiced. Everyone has his own life, timeline and dream. Be content. Dream what is only attainable, but it is better to have a dream than have no dream at all.

Maintaining good relationship to its employees. Giving them the right salary, which is also part of the budget of the business. Take good care of their employees since they were doing the hard work.

Extended service to their customer is also needed in maintaining products then the quality assurance that product quality and has warranty so that the customers will have a good impression on the products that you are doing the high quality and warranty service that you are giving.

Patience and respecting others like your customers and even your employees would help the business grow. The employees are also part of the business. Maintaining the right person that assist you in making handcrafted materials help the business grow.

Right branding also helps the business to build customers focused on handcrafted products. People who are looking for handcrafted products will go to their store and not to other stores that sells other products as well.

Government agencies should support the local industry business rather than imported products. Handcrafted businesses help the government in employment generation. In return the government should find ways on how they will be assisted in sustaining their business.

Savings

Living below the means is what is practiced by the entrepreneurs. What they do is to save for the future. What their primary concern is for them to have funds that can be used to replenish their stocks in the store and to prepare for the rainy season where sales are at its low.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discussed the findings, conclusion, and recommendation of the study titled, “Sustainability of Entrepreneurship on Handcrafted Filipino Products.”

Summary of Findings

This portion sums up the wholeness of the information, results from gathered data, and explains the business in handcrafted and native products in Bulacan is a sustainable activity that also helps in the promotion of our local products that reflect Filipino culture and values.

1. What is the business profile of the handcrafted Filipino products in selected municipalities and cities?

The business profile of the handcrafted Filipino products in selected municipalities and cities in Bulacan considered good. The community and the consumers are aware about their business existence and continue to support the business of handcrafted Filipino products. As time passed by, these businesses become a stable part of the business community, from ambulant selling to putting up their physical store. Also, different

business owners started a good competition on this kind of business which is not only limited to people from Pangasinan.

2. How do handcrafted products reflect the cultural traits of the Filipino?

Cultural traits of Filipinos like hardworking, patient, innovative, humility, and strong will to continue, are greatly presented on this kind of business. From the inherited traits to the business practices that are showing the Filipino values and culture that is unique on Filipino people. From buying materials and supply for selling, to dealing with clients, and showing great quality and variety; that somehow reflects the Filipinos in our own way.

3. How does selling of handcrafted Filipino products compete in the current business environment?

Handcrafted Filipino products compete in the current business environment very well with the satisfaction of business owners to continue this kind of business. Their income and achieved goals, the business owners show great contentment and felt proud on what their business has become. Also, providing for the needs of their families and even helping other people on continuing this kind of business. Having a good situation compared to how they started shows their fulfillment and great provision not only to them but the people around them, despite the proliferation of plastic products and surplus items, it is still existing because people love the feel of native materials, the quality and right price, and the love for the environment and the working-class society.

4. What challenges and difficulties are being experienced by sellers of handcrafted Filipino products in this present situation of competition?

The challenges and difficulties being experienced by sellers of handcrafted Filipino products in this present situation of competition is their future development, Expenses, Age 86 Challenge, Damaged Goods, Credit, and Health Issues. Challenges is part of what everyone of us experience and these businesses are coping to this changing time, from ambulant selling to putting up physical stores, from raw materials to making products that people need, this shows challenges and changes that is done to sustain this kind of business.

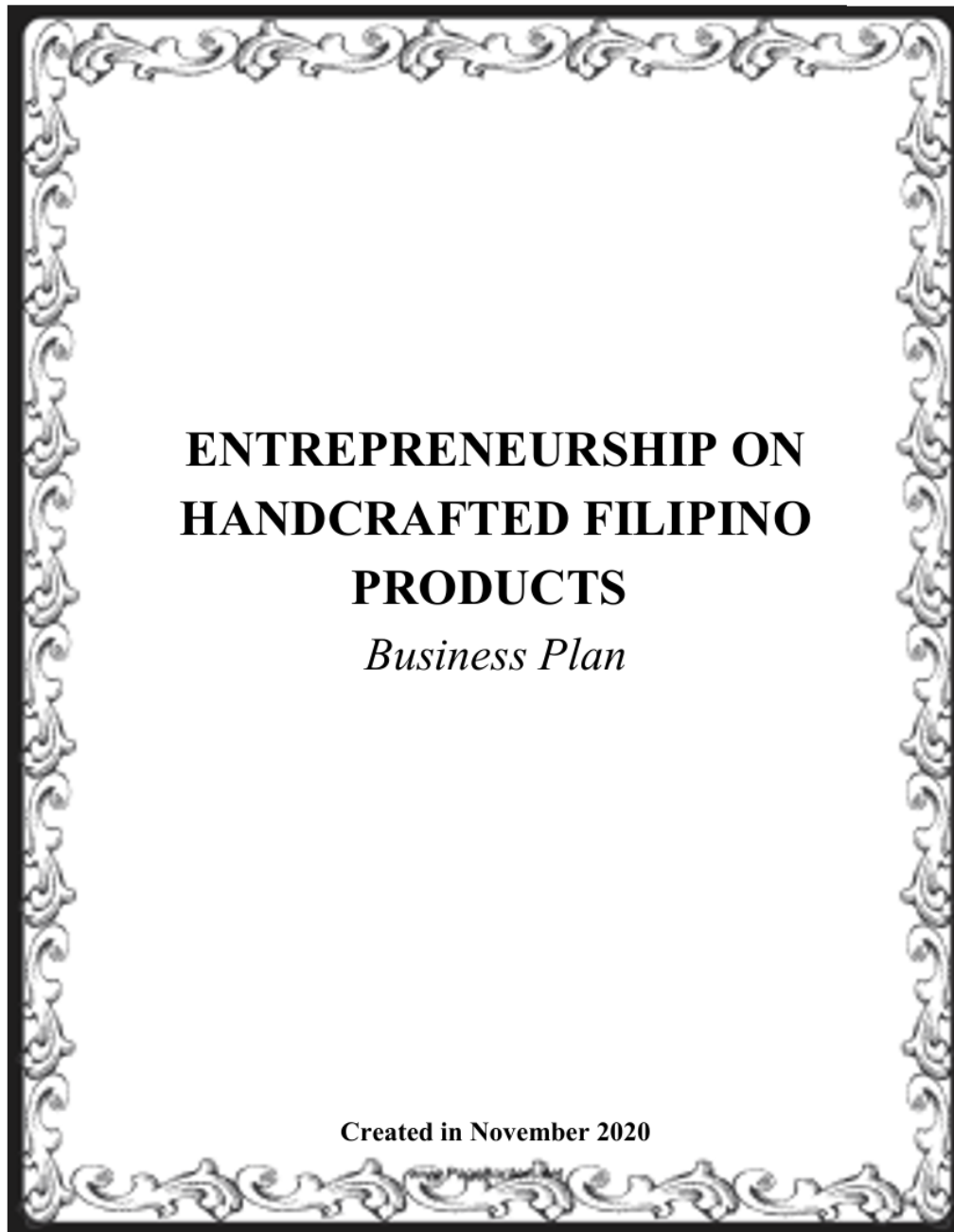
5. What recommendations may be put forward to improve and sustain this kind of business activity in Bulacan?

After examining all the information gathered, recommendations for improvement and to sustain this kind of business activity in Bulacan, the researcher recommend that; 1. For the handcrafted product makers to try innovation of product and maximizing the use of technology. Maintaining the product needs of the people and trying to innovate on products to cater new market and using of technology to produce new products in the market.; 2. For the handcrafted product merchants to maximize the use of promotions and making the store known. Having great product is good but letting the people know the products helps a lot.; 3. For the handcrafted product merchants to maintain the store branding and good display. Having the store known for its unique product serving makes it different and original in its own right as a Filipino store.

In conclusion the researcher concludes that the business in handcrafted and native products in Bulacan is a sustainable activity that also helps in the promotion of our local products that reflect Filipino culture and values.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. For the handcrafted product makers to try innovation of product and maximizing the use of technology.
2. For the handcrafted product merchants to maximize the use of promotions and making the store known.
3. For the handcrafted product merchants to maintain the store branding and good display.
4. For the Local Government to encourage local communities to support locally made products for their daily use and consumption.
5. For the Non-Government Organization to protect the environmental supply and the work to be made available to every handcraft man who are excellent on this field of business.
6. For the future researchers to find the effects of resellers on this kind of business.
7. For the future researchers to conduct similar study that seeks the life of migrating business owners going to Bulacan.



Product

Handcrafted Filipino Products produces high-quality handcrafted materials for household and daily use. Products are made mostly of Bamboo and other native materials including fibers, pots, and wood. The handcrafted products are built to be long lasting with sufficient variants and good product quality to engage buyers' interest.

Customers

The target audience for Handcrafted Filipino Products is adults, specifically house and business owners who will use it for daily activities or for display that is durable and aesthetically pleasing.

Future of the Company

Although the handcrafted manufacturing business is highly competitive, we believe that there is a place for high-quality, attractive, durable, and affordable products. The goal is to help makers build quality yet affordable products to promote Filipino culture and heritage.

Mission Statement

To build and sell high-quality handcrafted products that will be cherished and handed down from generation to generation.

Industry

Currently, Handcrafted Filipino products are considered a niche market, on which handcrafted product is focused, comprised of different sized companies. The companies sell locally either in shops, at craft fairs, or resell online.

This industry is currently suffering from the economic pandemic as consumers are spending less on non-essentials. However, industry is now going to its course of new normal era. This means there is a potential for growth as the economy recovers.

Detailed Description of Customers

The two groups that companies may plans to market are parents (age 25-55) of young children and grandparents (age 55-70) of young children. Our target customers are interested in using durable, well-made handcrafted products to help daily living pleasing. They value quality and they inquire on the variety products they buy. Our target customers are willing to spend more money on products that are of higher quality and last longer.

Company Advantages

Handcrafted Filipino Products has the following advantages compared to competitors:

- Basic, practical designs.
- Safe, non-toxic paints, parts, and accessories.
- Easy-to-use products.
- All components are manufactured in the Philippines and made with environmentally helpful bamboos, fibers, and wood.
- Delivery service is part of the business and also good amount of stock inventory.
- Humble and interactive sellers.

- Face-to-face interaction with customers.

Regulations

Handcrafted Filipino Products businesses must meet all local and national regulations concerning business operations. Specifically, (a) Tax Reform Act of 91 1997 (Republic Act No. 8424) –which amended the National Internal Revenue Code (NIRC) is the law that governs the national taxation in the Philippines and gives the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) the power and duty to assess and collect national internal revenue taxes in the country. (b) The Local Government Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7160) – is the law governing local taxation in the Philippines. (c) Labor Code of the Philippines (Presidential Decree No. 442) – is the law that governs employment practices and labor relations in the Philippines. and (d) Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines (R.A. 8293) – is the law that governs the registration of patents, trademarks and copyright, and the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the Philippines.

Product/Service

Handcrafted Filipino Products are made from solid bamboos, fibers, and wood. The products are handcrafted and designed for adults to easily use. Our line currently includes the following models:

- Walis ting-ting and tambo (broom stick)
- Duyan (hammock)
- Sala Chair Sets and Table
- Kubo o customizable
- Chicken Cage

- Baby Crib
- Flat-Bed
- Sulo
- Pots

Product Lifecycle

All current Handcrafted Filipino products are in production and inventory is being accumulated from 2 weeks to 4 months.

Research and Development

The following are suggested research and development:

- Include a feedback mechanism for ideas, suggestions, and improvements,
- Provide promotional materials for distribution, and
- Review available market identify top products and reason(s) for their popularity.

Growth Strategy

To grow the company, Handcrafted Filipino Products will do the following:

- Sell products at craft fairs.
- As business grows, advertise in target markets, especially in advance of the holiday season.
- Communicate with the Customer
- Handcrafted Filipino Products will communicate with its customers by:
- Providing a contact which will update, give product information, and promotional schedule.

- Using targeted advertisements.
- Utilizing social media such as Twitter, YouTube, Facebook.
- Providing contact information on the store.
- Adding labels on products that include company name, contact info, and address.

How to Sell

Currently, the only person in charge of sales for Handcrafted Filipino Products is the owner, and some assigned store managers. As profits increase, Handcrafted Filipino Products will look to add employees to assist with social relations and online marketing as well. The target demographic for the company will be parents aged 25 - 55. The company will increase awareness to our targeted customers through online advertising and attending craft fairs.

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