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“CREATIVE RESEARCH STRENGTHENS  
THE ECONOMY WITH CULTURAL CAPITAL”

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## Messege from The President of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts

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The 8th Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts National Conference on Research in Culture and Education and 8th Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts International Conference on Research in Culture and Education on “Creative Research Strengthens the Economy with Cultural Capital” The objective of this conference is to serve as a platform for promoting the dissemination of researches and creative works in the fields of arts and culture. It provides opportunities for faculty members, researchers, and students to present their research, share knowledge, and exchange experiences in performing arts, music, Vocal, Fine arts, visual arts, and education. Such academic engagement is expected to play a key role in developing knowledge in arts and culture, enabling its integration with the advancement of Thailand’s creative economy and society in the future.

This conference is organized by the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts, Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with 18 partner organizations and institutions as follows:

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2. Indonesia Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta
3. The Asia-Pacific Society for Ethnomusicology (APSE)
4. NORTH EAST AASHIRVAD FOUNADATION (Social and Culture Organization)
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This National and International Academic Conference presents a total of 42 papers, comprising 35 national level researches and creative works and 7 international level papers. The contributions were submitted by faculty members, researchers, and students both from within and outside the Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts, as well as by international researchers from the Republic of India, the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, the People’s Republic of China, the Commonwealth of Australia, and the United States of America. All submitted papers have undergone a peer review and revision process in accordance with the recommendations of qualified experts in relevant academic disciplines, ensuring the quality and academic integrity of the published works.

Dr. Nipha Sophasamrith

President of Bunditpatanasilpa Institute of Fine Arts

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DANCE

## THE PROSPECT OF CULTURAL TOURISM TO STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMY THROUGH THE SATTRIYA CULTURE OF ASSAM: FOCUSING ON THE REGION OF NORTHEASTERN INDIA

ARKAJA BHARADWAJ<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

This paper is providing an outline about the source of cultural tourism through Sattriya culture of Assam to develop the economic sector. The state Assam is located in the center point of Northeastern India, which has diverse cultures to study and these cultural aspects can be the greatest source of tourism. Among of those the Sattriya Culture can be called as traditional and spiritual living heritage of Assam, that have many aspects like the archaeological structure of Naamghar and Sattrra (prayer hall), Manuscript preservation in the Sattras, the inside religious practices of Sattrra like Borgeet (Prayer song or Religious song), Ghokha (Pslams), Angkiya Naat (One act play), Angkiya Geet (the songs performed with one act play), Bhaona (mythological drama), Naat (drama), Raas (dance – drama related to Lord Sri Krishna’s childhood storytelling) etc. The Sattriya Culture follows many directions like historical, geographical, anthropological and socio – cultural. These aspects can be comparatively studied with various cultures Worldwide. This research paper will give a brief idea about this living heritage and religious practice through which cultural tourism can be a viable scope for the growth of economy to the Northeastern state of India, called Assam. The methodology of this paper is historical, explanatory and analytical. By analyzing the aspects of cultural tourism through the Sattriya tradition, this research paper will provide the scope for promoting this culture globally and generating more and more domestic and international visitors to Assam for experiencing this living tradition of Northeastern India.

**KEYWORDS** : Sattriya Culture, Cultural Tourism, Community Development, Sattrra etc.

### Introduction

The Cultural Tourism is a type of tourism which reflects the cultural identity of a region with exploring the heritage, traditions, arts, architecture, festivals, and lifestyles of a particular place. The Tourists can get authentic experiences by visiting historical sites, attending local festivals, exploring traditional crafts, participating in rituals, and understanding the way of local community’s lifestyle.

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In the Context of Assam, the region located in the heart of Northeast India, is a rich cultural destination with immense potentialities to strengthen the economy. The Cultural tourism sectors of Assam are Traditional and Spiritual Heritage including Sattras of Assam, Kamakhya Temple, Guwahati, Festivals and Cultural Events like Bihu, tribal festivals Baishagu (Bodo tribe), Ali Ai Ligang (Mishing tribe), Tea Festivals, Ethnic Diversity including more than 20 indigenous Tribal Culture which have distinct languages, attires, dance forms, festivals, and beliefs; different Handicrafts including Bamboo crafts, cane crafts, pottery, jewelry and Handlooms famous for Muga silk, Eri silk, traditional weaving especially done by women; Performing Arts including Classical Sattriya dance, Borgeet (devotional songs), different Folk dances; Culinary Heritage including Assamese cuisine, with its focus on local herbs, bamboo shoots, fish, rice, offer a cultural journey through food, the Living Cultural Landscape of the River Brahmaputra, Majuli Island, the Kaziranga National Park provide not only just scenic beauty but also a living cultural ecosystem. (Barbora, S., 2015)

This research paper mainly focuses on the Sattriya Culture which has been an integral part of traditional and spiritual living heritage of Assam and it has many scope of cultural tourism to develop the economy of Assam as well as Northeast India.

### **Purposes of the Study**

1. To promote the unique traditional practices, rituals, festivals, crafts, music, spiritual customs of Assam under the Sattriya culture including, Majuli, Bordua and Barpeta Sattras.
2. To establish the academic values of Sattria tradition of Assam that will enhance the global understanding in respect of Assamese culture and will help to integrate the knowledge into international cultural studies.
3. To highlight the community participation, especially of local monks, called Bhakats in Sattriya tradition; artists, and cultural custodians that impacts in the tourism planning and implementation.
4. To encourage tourists by providing authentic cultural narratives about the Sattria tradition of Assam and significance of the heritage sites like Majuli, Bordua and Barpeta which have been strongly following this Sattriya tradition since 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### **Review of Literature**

The Sattras of Assam have been carrying a rich historical and cultural legacy since 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Goswami, M. (2001) and Bhattacharya (2010) have mentioned about the origins and evolution of Sattras with tracing their roots to the Bhakti movement led by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciples and they also have extensively documented about these socio – religious institutions based upon the principles of spiritualism.

The cultural synthesis of Sattras provide a shape to the Assamese society and identity. (Goswami, M., 2001)

The traditional monastic institution like Sattras of Assam employ the community engagement of Assamese society enduring cultural and spiritual significance. The Sattras have been serving as the centers for worshipping God and also for the cultural preservation, highlighted by Das, P. (2018) and Gohain, N. (2015). According to Bhattacharya, M. and Sharma, S. (2019) Sattras of Assam are the source of Educational Programs, vocational training which can contribute to the socio – economic sectors. These Sattras have been playing diverse and multifaceted roles in promoting sustainable development across various dimensions.

### **Context of Sattriya Culture**

The Sattras were established as monastic institutions created as a part of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement for religious practice in 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century A.D. by the Vaishnavite Saint Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciple Mahapurush Sri Sri Madhabdeva. The purpose of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva was to lead the way of awareness to the common people and develop their mindset to create a robust society. They promoted the ‘Ekxoron Harinaam Dhrama’ for preaching Vaishnav Dharma which had ‘One God, one Religion’ principle. These Sattras have been presenting as vital hubs of cultural preservation, and community engagement, deeply rooted in the Vaishnavite tradition, particularly located in Majuli (Upper Assam region), Bordua (Middle Assam region) and Barpeta (Lower Assam region). (Bezborah, C. Gogoi, D. & Sen, S., 2024) The number of Sattras presently located in Majuli is 22 out of 65 Sattras established there originally, which have some prominent names including Auniati Sattras, Dokhinpaat Sattras, Garhmur Sattras, Komolabari Sattras, Chamoguri Sattras etc. In Borduwa which is known as Batradava Thaan, divided into two main Sattras within its complex: Naruwa Sattras and Saloguri Sattras and lastly the Sattras Nagari (monastery town) of Assam called Barpeta has overall 22 Sattras in the district including seven to twelve main Sattras, namely Paatbauxi Sattras, Barpeta Sattras, Ganakkuchi Sattras, Jania Sattras, Sundaridiya Sattras, Baradi Sattras etc.

Moreover, these Sattras are the source of community development by providing educational and vocational programs. These initiatives of Sattras empower residents, enhance livelihoods, and promote social inclusion, thereby improving overall well-being. Also these Sattras can contribute to the society of Assam as it can be the source of sustainable tourism by showcasing their traditional arts, crafts, and performances, through which they attract tourists and facilitate cultural exchange with generating revenue for community projects. However,

it focuses in the responsible tourism practices that reflect the sanctity of Sattras and uphold the dignity of local communities.

The Sattriya Culture includes some unique presentation of Performing Arts and Fine Arts like Prayer practice - Ghokha, Kirtan (pslams); Sattriya Music -Borgeet, Angkiya Geet (Plain Song or Prayer Song); Bhaona, Naat, Raas, Angkiya Naat (Mythological Drama or One Act Play); Sattriya Dance; traditional Mask making Culture, Manuscript Preservation etc. and the aspect of these creations have the global socio - cultural impact as per the one and only holy biographic document ‘Katha - Guru - Charit’. According to historians, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva had been on pilgrimage for twelve years with his loyal disciples, started towards North India initially, but after sometime he alone visited Sinhaldeep (Sri Lanka), Shyam (Thailand), Kamboj (Combodia), Gandhar (Afganistan), Champadesh (Vietnam), Malay Desh (Malaysia) etc. Also, a large number of Arabian, Persian, European, Russian, Venetian and Portuguese travelers visited India in early medieval period (700 - 1200 A.D.) and later medieval period (1200 - 1700 A.D.) which impact was also significant in the art, literature and socio - cultural development of India.

### **Significance of This Study**

The significance of this study explores the unique role of Sattras in promoting the dynamic socio - cultural prospect to generate the tourism potentialities for economic growth of Assam. As these ancient socio - religious institutions have been carrying the legacy of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva which has a Global significance. Understanding the importance of this Sattriya tradition is very essential to continue and preserve this legacy with promoting sustainable tourism scopes.

### **Cultural Preservation of Sattriya Tradition**

The Sattras have been holding the cultural heritage of Assam along with the traditional art forms like music, dance, drama, literatures, crafts with preserving its own attributes and values. The whole tradition of Sattriya Culture can be explained as –

**1. Borgeet** The Borgeet is a group of lyrical songs determined on some Ragas (melodic scales) composed by Srimanta Sankardeva and that continued by his one of the main disciples Sri Sri Madhavdeba. These lyrical songs have been singing for worshipping Lord Krishna and propagating the ‘Ekxoron Hari Naam Dharma’ (Vaishnav Dharma preached in Assam). The Borgeets were structured without rhythm (Taal) initially, but later have been developed to perform with Khol and Taal to balance tradition and modernity together. Also the rhythmic part of Borgeet was developed for accomplishing other Sattriya forms like Angkiya Naat (one

act Play), Bhaona (mythological drama), Gayan – Bayan (an auspicious form of Orchestra), Sattriya Dance (a classical dance form) etc.

**2. Kirtan** A devotional form of singing which has a melodic expression of devotion to the Lord Krishna. It brings the community together for sharing experience that fosters a sense of unity and belonging among the devotees. Kirtan refers as Naam-kirtan in Assam, is meant to be a collective devotional activity and hand clapping is an essential part of this singing process. First of all, synchronized hand clapping provides the basic tala (rhythmic cycle) for the Kirtan to maintain the tempo and keeps all the participants in unison. Also, when all the devotees clap together, it symbolizes harmony, equality, and collective devotion even for those who don't sing or play instruments, but they can participate meaningfully by clapping.

**3. Ghokha** The hymns used in chanting of the name of Lord Krishna; which has a melodic and spiritual practice performed in Naamghara and Sattras (the sacred place of worship). Through this chanting process a rhythmic pattern is created for hypnotic and meditative atmosphere.

**4. Ankiya – Geet** A unique captivating music form of Sattriya Culture which is story oriented. It often narrates stories related to the lives of Vaishnavite saints, mythological characters, or historical events through singing.

**5. Bhaona** It is essentially the mythological dramatic performance which has some themes, often revolve around the lives of Krishna, Rama and other Hindu deities. It is typically staged in Sattras and Naamgharas involving elaborate costumes, masks and intricate choreography to describe the Hindu mythological characters.

**6. Naat** The term ‘Naat’ specifically refers to a unique theatrical form of Sattriya culture; which has same element of Bhaona. Another form of one act play was found as a part of Naat during the time of Srimanta Sankardeva; called as ‘Angkiya Naat’.

**7. Nritya** In Sattriya culture, the Nritya is called as ‘Sattriya Nritya’, a spiritual classical dance form; presented as the sequence in Bhaona. This dance form fulfilled in Bhaona as – Chali, Nadubhangi, Rajaghariya Chali, Jhumura Nritya etc. Today it has been developed as a standalone classical dance form in India.

**8. Raas** Raas of Sattras refers to the devotional and theatrical festival celebrated annually in the sattras of Assam which depicts the life and divine play (Leela) of Lord Krishna, especially perform with music, dance and drama. This festival is observed in the Sattras of Majuli island every year specifically as a religious ritual and a cultural performance, typically held on Raas Purnima (full moon of Kartik month, October–November) and other Sattras also celebrates this festival to showcase the synthesis of Bhakti (devotion), art, and community participation, as envisioned by Srimanta Sankardeva.

**9. Mask Making Culture** Mask-making is known as the Mukha Shilpa in the Sattras of Assam, a traditional art practice in some Sattras, especially in Majuli island Chamoguri Sattras and Bengenaati Sattras, as a part of their cultural heritage. This practice of handmade Mask making reflects the devotional expression of mask makers; usually depict the characters from Hindu epics like the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, and *Bhagavata Purana* during **Bhaona** (Hindu mythological theatrical plays) and **Raas-leela** (dance-drama related to the life of Lord Krishna). In this context, the name of Rebakanta Mahanta, has to be mentioned as he has been honored with various awards including Padmashri (January, 2025) for his craftsmanship and dedication to preserve this traditional art form. Also he demonstrates the mask-making process worldwide, provides training to the young artists and tourists in the Sattras, keeping the tradition alive.

**10. Manuscript Preservation in Sattras** The manuscripts are hand-written documents on agar-bark leaves, tulapat or handmade paper and cloth, called as ‘Xanchi-paat’ in Assamese language. These documents are considered as a source of religious texts like the *Bhagavata Purana* and *Kirtan Ghokha* of Sattriya Culture. Traditionally these manuscripts are kept in thol (wooden chests), wrapped in cloth and smeared with natural oils to protect from insects and moisture; Stored in cool, dry, inner rooms of the Sattras to minimize light and humidity damage. Also, periodically these are aired, cleaned, and recopied by trained monks (Bhakats) to ensure continuity. Now-a-days, some manuscripts have been microfilmed, digitized, and catalogued by organizations like the Department of Historical and Antiquarian Studies – Assam, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM). Also, they arrange awareness workshops, training time to time in specific places like Sattras and conduct the methods for scientific preservation of these manuscripts.

**11. Guru Aaxon** The ‘Guru Aaxon’ is the sacred wooden Throne placed in the centre of the prayer halls, called Naamghar and Sattras which has symbolic elements of Neo – Vaishnavite tradition. The ‘Guru Aaxon’ was established by Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva to reflect devotion, purity and respect towards the Guru and divine God. This throne has beautifully designed with curved wooden structure, often painted with bright red or yellow colour along with motifs like lions, elephants or other auspicious symbols. Also it hold the holy scriptures like *Bhagavata Purana* or *Kirtan Ghokha* and sometimes a small symbolic image or representation of the Guru. That means this ‘Guru Aaxon’ usually symbolizes the God Krishna, the scriptures and now the Guru Srimanta Sankardeva and his disciple Madhabdeva in the Sattras tradition.

**12. Architectural layout of Sattras** The architectural layout of Vaishnavite monastery Sattras is generally built as a rectangular or square enclosure with high earthen or brick boundary walls and gateways. The key components are symmetrically arranged in an open

courtyard inside the hall. It has a large open pillared hall where devotees can gather for prayers, singing Naam – kirtan, perform Bhaona and discourses. As we have mentioned before, the ‘Guru Aaxon’ is located inside the hall, a sanctum is placed usually at the eastern end of the Naamghara and Sattrra, known as ‘Monikut’. Sometime it has a small inner shrine and it is treated with utmost sanctity to preserve sacred texts. Another part of Sattrra architectural layout is ‘Haati’, which are the residential quarters for monks (Bhakats) either side of the courtyard in rows. It has the separate stage area for performing BHAona and Raas in the festival time. It has also the dining hall, called ‘Bhora Ghar, and a common kitchen space for the residents and guests. In the campus of Sattrra, different plantations are done with sacred plants like Tulsi (a medicinal herb) and other flowers to maintain the ecosystem. The boundaries and gateways are often made with Earthen, bamboo, brick or stone walls to enclose the compound. The main entrance is usually designed with a Gate decorated carvings or religious motifs. The notable characteristic of a Sattrra is simplicity and functionality, emphasis on open communal space which reflects equality. The architectural layout of Sattrra has the harmonious integration with nature and surroundings.

### **Role of Sattrra In Community Development**

The initiatives of Sattrra are to offer educational and vocational programs with promoting social inclusion and enhancing livelihoods. The Sattrras are not only spiritual centers, but also engines community developmental programs, which empower communities with contributing to the overall well – being and resilience. The Bhakats (monks) of Sattrra are actively involved in the crafts, traditional arts, performances, providing training to the young generation to pass on the tradition, attracting tourists and facilitating cultural exchange. The people of all the communities is actively involved who can contribute to maintain the tradition. The positions of ‘Burha Bhakata’ (older monk), ‘Sattradhikar’ (main priest), ‘Deka Sattriya’ (youngest monk), Naamghariya (manager of Naamghar), and Secretary etc. elected time to time by the society of a particular Sattrra. These specific members of community usually maintain the decorum of a Sattrra and community development programs.

### **Tourism Potentialities in Sattrra**

**Majuli:** This paper mainly highlights the Sattrras as potential tourist destination, particularly in Majuli which is known as the ‘Cultural Capital of Assam’. The tourists usually visits Majuli Island during the occasion of ‘Raas – Mahotsav’ in the month of October – November and enjoys its unique cultural and religious heritage by visiting Sattrras and museums for experiencing mask making and manuscripts preservation. Also the tourists can travel there

with an experience of cruise starting from Guwahati (capital city of Assam) via river Brahmaputra taking amusement of scenic beauty of beautiful landscape. They can also have the authentic taste of local cuisine during this journey and they can get to know about the riverside local communities and their livelihood experience.

**Bordua** The founder of Neo – Vaishnavite Movement in Assam, Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva established Bordua Sattrra in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as it was his birthplace. Therefore, this Sattrra is an important pilgrimage center and cultural hub for maintaining the teaching of Sankardeva, preserving manuscripts and the whole tradition. The Bordua Sattrra is also known as ‘Batadrava Thaan’ usually celebrates the ‘Lord Krishna Janmastami’, Rass – Leela, Sankardeva’s birth anniversary in a festival manner. The visitors can get the authentic feeling of paying homage to Sankardeva, experiencing other Sattriya traditional art and music along with the unique monastic way of life. Also, the Bordua Sattrra can be considered as a site of great historical and spiritual significance to attract researchers, historians, and interested students in Sattriya heritage.

**Barpeta** Similarly, the location of lower Assam region, Barpeta is called as ‘Sattrra Nagari’ where Sri Sri Madhabdeva, the main disciple of Srimanta Sankardeva, established the Barpeta Sattrra, known as ‘Kirtanghar’. This particular Sattrra provides the authentic experience of ‘Holi festival’, to attract the tourists every year. This festival is typically called as ‘Doul Utsav of Assam’. The significance of this ‘Holi festival’ defines the universal brotherhood, equality among devotees, surrender to the divine, harmony between nature and human beings. The unique presentation of this festival begins with *Naam-Prasanga* and recitation of Bhagavata Purana in the Sattrra premises, the idols of Krishna and Radha are placed on beautifully decorated *doul* (palanquins), which are carried around the Sattrra to the accompaniment of Khol (drums), taal (cymbals), and conch shells. The Devotees play the colored powders and flowers, symbolizing joy, equality, and love.

With these celebrations in different Sattrras, local people can be benefitted economically from visitors through guesthouse, local crafts and guiding services, promoting sustainable tourism.

### An Analytical Overview of Visitors in Sattrras of Assam

According to the Assam Tourism official report, the arrival of total tourist in Assam in the last five years as:

Financial Year	Domestic Tourists	International Tourists	Total
2020–21 (for context)	1,351,690	347	~1,352,037
2021–22	1,702,932	1,231	~1,704,163

Financial Year	Domestic Tourists	International Tourists	Total
2022–23	9,831,141	18,946	~9,850,087
2023–24	7,067,335	26,129	~7,093,464
2024–25	5,762,772	14,000	~5,776,772

Among of those tourists, very negligible percentage is counted as Sattra visitors of Assam. For example,

#### Sattra Visitors Data in 2024-25 according to Assam Tourism Department

District	Name of Sattra	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist
Barpeta	Barpeta Sattra	22,285	0
	Damodardev Sattra	13,850	0
	Shankardeva Sattra	38,488	0
	Ganakkuchi Sattra	20,222	0
	Sri Sri Chinpara Bhat Than	2,250	0
	Sri Sri Mandiya Mahapurukhiya Sattra	1,899	0
Majuli	Sri Sri Garmurh Sattra	33,800	4
Bordua	Batadrawa Than	548,286	0

As we have mentioned above that, Assam statewide total visitor’s data in 2024–25 (till date):

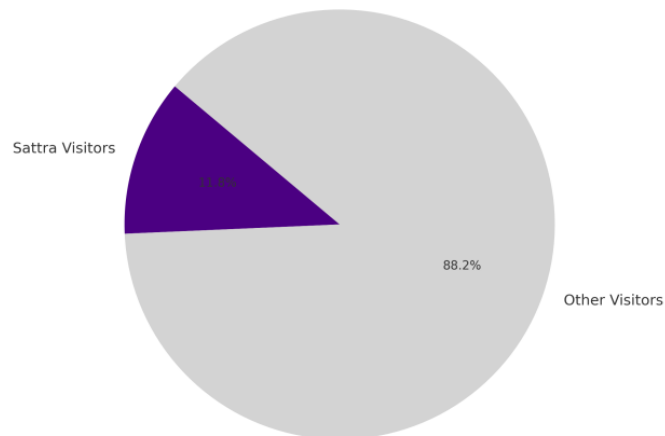
- Domestic tourists: ~5,748,772
- Foreign tourists: ~14,000
- Total tourists: ~5,762,772

#### Comparison

Category	Number of Visitors	% of Total Assam Visitors
Total Assam (2024–25)	5,762,772	100%
Total Sattra Visitors (you provided)	680,084	≈ 11.8%

So roughly around **11.8%** visitors of Assam in 2024–25 visited these listed Sattras.

Sattra Visitors vs. Other Visitors in Assam (2024-25)



### Initiative for Sustainable Tourism in Terms of Sattra

Undoubtedly, the Sattra culture is popular among the local communities, but it is very essential to promote these heritage Sattras among the Domestic and International visitors. In terms of sustainable tourism development some major initiatives should be taken for the promotion of this living heritage of Assam. The Cultural Branding through campaigns, documentaries, and websites to promote the Sattras as unique centers of Neo-Vaishnavite culture, art, and spirituality are very essential for improving awareness. Creating websites & social media profiles to showcase the history, festivals, visitor information, and testimonials will be helpful. Also to promote Sattras, the department of tourism should take initiative to collaborate with travel bloggers, influencers, and cultural tourism magazines.

Better accessibility and infrastructure should be developed like improving connectivity and transport links to these heritage Sattras especially Majuli and Barpeta. Also affordable and clean accommodation should be ensured with good hygiene, drinking water, restrooms, parking facilities for visitors and making premises more accessible for elderly and differently-abled visitors.

Enriching the visitors experience is very important with regular events, performances, Naam – kirtan and Bhaonas. Providing training to the local youth to prepare them as knowledgeable guides and storytellers to set up guided tours with explaining history, architecture, rituals and philosophies of Sattras.

Involving the local artisans for selling handicrafts, Sattra-related souvenirs, traditional food to the visitors, offering workshops or classes on Sattra culture including music, dance, mask-making for tourists can enhance both visitor experience and economic development of the community.

The Sattrra management committee should collaborate with Assam Tourism, Incredible India, and international cultural tourism boards to include sattras in official circuits for seeking government & private investment in infrastructure and promotion. Also encouraging research and documentation to keep Sattras in academic and tourism discourse will be the major initiatives for sustainable tourism development.

### **Conclusion**

The Sattras of Assam can shape the cultural tourism landscape of the region. This study highlights how these centuries-old Vaishnavite monasteries not only preserve intangible heritage – such as music, dance, crafts, and rituals, but also act as key attractions that stimulate local economies. The influx of both domestic and international tourists visiting Sattras contributes to employment generation, handicraft markets, hospitality services, and community development in surrounding areas. Despite challenges like inadequate infrastructure, limited promotion, and pressures of modernization, the Sattras have retained their authenticity, offering an immersive cultural experience to the visitors. To fully harness their economic potential while ensuring sustainable preservation, it is crucial to adopt an integrated approach that involves local communities, improves accessibility, and promotes awareness of the Sattrra heritage globally. Strengthening the synergy between cultural tourism and economic growth through the lens of Sattras can significantly enhance Assam’s identity as a vibrant cultural destination in Northeast India.

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MUSIC

## TRADITIONAL RITUAL MUSIC OF THE MON SPIRIT-BANISHING CEREMONY IN BANG KHAN MAK LOPBURI

PAPAR-ORN KAEWSAWANG<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The Mon ethnic community of Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi, continues to preserve ritual traditions and beliefs in healing practices through music. This research article aims to investigate the musical context and structural components of the ritual music performed in the Pad-Rang-Kwan (the ritual of spiritual cleansing) of the Bang Khan Mak Mon. Employing qualitative research methods, the study draws on both documentary research and fieldwork, including participant observation and interviews with Mon musicians, cultural bearers, and spiritual leaders. Findings are presented through descriptive and analytical approaches. The study reveals that the Bang Khan Mak Mon believes musical performance functions as a medium of communication with sacred entities or spirits, who are invited to possess the spirit medium (Tohng) in order to heal the afflicted. The ritual ensemble employed is the Mon Saw ensemble, consisting of Saw Duang or Saw U (two-string fiddles), Taphon (drum), Ching (hand cymbals), Chap Lek (small cymbals), and Chap Yai (large cymbals). The ritual repertoire includes Hong Thong Ram Luek, unidentified Mon melodies, Mon Du Dao, performed in two-layer rhythmic mode (Song Chan), as well as Burma Ram Khwan and Khang Khao Kin Kluay in single-layer mode (Chan Diao), culminating with the Luk Mot melody. Performers follow the sequential stages of the spirit medium's actions, particularly the spirit dance, in which single-layer melodies are cyclically repeated until the ritual concludes. In contemporary practice, sound amplification equipment has been introduced to enhance audibility during performances

**Keywords:** traditional ritual music, spirit-banishing ceremony, Mon ethnic group

### Introduction

Lopburi is recognized as a region of considerable ethnic diversity, home to at least five distinct ethnic groups. Some of these groups have resided in the province for generations, while others migrated more recently. These include the Thai Boeng or Thai Deung of Ban Khok Salung; the Lao Ngaew or Ngaew of Ban Nong Mueang; the Lao Phuan or Thai Phuan of Ban Lum Khao; the Thai-Chinese of Ban Nong Tao; and the Mon of Bang Khan Mak (Suphon Ocharoen, 1998).

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The Mon of Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi often referred to as the “Lopburi Mon” adhere to Buddhism (Dhammayut sect) alongside strong practices of ancestor and spirit worship. They are known for their persistence in preserving cultural identity, traditions, and ritual beliefs, particularly those associated with spirit veneration. Such practices permeate all stages of life, from birth to death. When breaches of spiritual taboos occur, healing rituals are conducted through spirit possession dances (Ram Phi), performed by a medium (Tohng). The Tohng occupies a central role in the family and community as a spiritual leader, since family members strictly adhere to the prohibitions and counsel delivered by spirits through the medium. In this respect, the Tohng functions as a vital mechanism in maintaining order and social harmony (Phra Khru Bai Dika Panyawut Wuttiko, personal communication, November 21, 2022).

The Mon spirit dance (Ram Phi Mon) is a ritual rooted in ancestral belief systems. It is usually performed when family members suffer from unexplained illness, or when atonement is required for the violation of customary prohibitions. Beyond healing, the ritual expresses gratitude to ancestors, reinforces morale among descendants, and provides opportunities for kinship gatherings. In contemporary society, however, the frequency of ram phi rituals has significantly declined. This is largely due to the complexity of the ritual procedure, the need for careful selection of auspicious dates, the preparation of ritual space and offerings, as well as the high financial cost, which often exceeds the means of present-day households. Consequently, the practice is gradually disappearing from the Mon Bang Khan Mak community’s way of life (Patthama Khamdee, personal communication, March 9, 2023).

Music and ritual are inseparable components of human cultural expression. Rituals, emerging from human beliefs and aspirations, serve to fulfill spiritual needs and foster reassurance. Music, like both science and art, possesses a unique capacity to penetrate human emotion, making it indispensable to ritual practice. Within community ceremonies, music consistently constitutes an essential element.

The researcher’s interest in studying ritual music arises from its significance for contemporary pedagogy as well as from the lack of systematic scholarly attention devoted to this subject. Since these rituals are transmitted primarily through oral tradition, their preservation without documentation risks eventual disappearance. With this in mind, the present study investigates the musical context and structural components of the Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual, which forms part of the Ram Phi practices of the Mon Bang Khan Mak in Lopburi Province. The research aims to contribute to the transmission of cultural heritage, sustaining traditions, beliefs, and rituals that provide spiritual solace and play a vital role in maintaining the ethnic identity of the Lopburi Mon.

### **Purpose of study**

1. To study the musical context of the Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual of the Mon ethnic community in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi.
2. To study the structural components of the ritual music performed in the Pad-Rang-Kwan ceremony of the Mon ethnic community in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi.

## Scope of Research

1. Research Site : This study focuses exclusively on the Mon community of Bang Khan Mak Subdistrict, encompassing villages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 12, which are collectively considered as a single community unit for the purpose of presenting an overall perspective. For in-depth interviews, Village 1 was selected as the representative of the Bang Khan Mak Mon community, since this area is home to spirit mediums (Tohng) who serve as spiritual leaders. Moreover, Village 1 hosts the Thai-Raman Youth Association at Wat Amphawan, Lopburi, which functions as a central institution of learning, religion, and cultural activities for the Mon community. In other respects, Village 1 shares similar cultural and social characteristics with the other villages.

2. Research Duration : Data collection concerning the general conditions of the community, traditions, and selected ritual practices was conducted from April 2023 to May 2024.

## Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach, drawing upon knowledge from academic texts, documents, previous studies, and related literature. In addition, fieldwork was conducted to obtain first-hand data through detailed observation of the target community. The research utilized participant observation, individual in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The research process was carried out as follows :

### 1. Population and Sample

The study focused on the Mon community of Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi, which includes scholars, practitioners, and community members who are involved in the traditional customs and cultural practices of the Mon community in villages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 12. These were collectively regarded as a single community unit for the purpose of this research. For in-depth interviews, Village 1 was selected as representative of the Bang Khan Mak Mon community, as this area is home to spirit mediums (Tohng) who serve as spiritual leaders. Moreover, Village 1 hosts the Thai-Raman Youth Association at Wat Amphawan, which functions as a central religious, educational, and cultural hub for the Mon community. In other respects, Village 1 shares similar characteristics with the other villages.

### 2. Research Instruments

This study employed various instruments for data collection, including structured questionnaires, interview forms, and a set of predetermined discussion topics for focus group interviews.

### 3. Data Collection

The researcher collected data through both documentary research and fieldwork, which involved on-site visits to Villages 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 12 in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi.

### 4. Data Processing and Analysis

The researcher organized and analyzed the data according to the research objectives as follows:

#### 4.1 Data Preparation

Primary data collected from documents, academic literature, and relevant sources, as well as data obtained from fieldwork, were systematically categorized in accordance with the research objectives. The data were verified for completeness and organized based on the research instruments used. The categorized data was then prepared for qualitative analysis.

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

The researcher conducted two types of data analysis: documentary analysis and field data analysis. The collected data were classified and grouped into specific themes such as the belief systems of the Mon ethnic group in Bang Khan Mak, musical components, and the analysis of ritual music.

### 5. Presentation of Findings

This research employed a qualitative methodology to study the key musical components used in the ritual of spiritual cleansing (Pad-Rang-Kwan) performed by the Mon ethnic group in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi Province. The findings are presented through descriptive analysis in accordance with the research objectives and are supported by visual documentation obtained from fieldwork.

## Results

From the findings of this study, it was found that:

1. The musical context Context of the Pad-Rang-Kwan Ritual in the Mon Community of Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi :



**Figure 1** Bang Khan Mak Community

Note. From Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning,  
<https://culturalenvi.onep.go.th/>

The Mon of Bang Khan Mak demonstrates strong commitment to maintaining their ethnic identity. While predominantly practicing Buddhism, they also continue to venerate ancestral spirits, household spirits, and other spiritual entities. One of the most important ceremonies is the Ram Phi Ram Chao ritual, held annually on the first waxing moon day of the sixth lunar month. The Bang Khan Mak Mon possess a diverse cultural tradition in which rituals, beliefs in the supernatural, and reverence for sacred forces play an integral role.

The Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual represents a major healing practice within this belief system. It functions both as a curative ritual for illness and as an act of calling back spiritual vitality (Khwan) or expressing gratitude to sacred powers. This ritual is closely related to spirit-possession practices such as the throng Chao or Phi-Fa ceremonies among Northeastern Thai (Isan) communities, in which ancestral or spiritual beings are invited to possess a medium to facilitate healing. Integral to the ritual is music performance, which accompanies the ceremonial proceedings. The banishing ritual is typically held during the daytime and is most commonly performed in association with familial or community ancestral rites—such as the veneration of household spirits (Phi Rong) and guardian deities of local shrines (Pa Ju).

In the context of the Mon community in Bang Khan Mak, the ritual is usually conducted when a family member falls ill without apparent cause, or when a vow to ancestral spirits requires fulfillment. In the ceremony, a spirit medium (Tohng) wields two swords, assisted by another medium or ritual aide who carries sprigs of Wa leaves for sprinkling holy water. Participants undergoing the ritual sit with their legs extended in the same direction. At their feet, an upturned winnowing tray is placed with a plate of ritual sweets. While a medium chants Ok-Khaek song, another traces the swords along the body of the participant, symbolically expelling malevolent forces into the offerings on the tray. The assistant medium sprinkles holy water for blessing and protection. The ritual is repeated three times, after which the tray and offerings are discarded outside the ceremonial pavilion. During the performance, the medium and assistants often enter a state of partial spirit possession, in which they lose bodily control yet continue to dance rhythmically in accordance with the Mon Saw ensemble. The Taphon in particular dictates the rhythmic framework, intensifying the sacred atmosphere of the ritual. Musicians are required to closely monitor whether medium has become possessed. During this phase, they perform an extended rendition of a fast-tempo melody characterized by a unipartite rhythmic cycle (Chan Diao), as the ancestral spirits and other entities have not yet descended upon the ritual site.

The Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual of the Bang Khan Mak Mon requires three officiants and a set of ritual implements, including:

- 1) a pair of swords, 2) a pair of ritual staffs, 3) a pair of Wa branches, 4) a pair of rice pounders, 5) a winnowing tray, 6) a boiled chicken with dipping sauce, 7) a bunch of bananas (Kluai Nam Wa), 8) a plate of sticky rice, 9) a plate of steamed rice, 10) a plate of unsweetened rice dumplings (Khanom Tom Khao), 11) a bowl of Bua Loi (rice-flour dumplings in coconut milk), 12) a spool of uncut ritual thread, 13) an offering tray of raw rice and rock salt, and 14) a Phan Khru offering tray (comprising a stick of incense, a bundle of ten candles each

weighing one baht, a bouquet of flowers, betel nut, Siad (areca palm leaf), chewing tobacco, and 159 baht as ceremony fees) per participant, along with the Mon So musical ensemble accompanying the ritual.



**Figure 2** Tohng or medium reading the Mon spirit scripture

Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.



**Figure 3** Assistant medium performing a ritual dance in the Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual

Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

## 2. Musical components in the Ban Khanmak Mon Community’s Spirit-Cleansing Ritual

The Spirit-Cleansing Ritual (Pad-Rang-Kwan) of the Ban Khanmak Mon community, located in Bang Khanmak, Lopburi, reflects the community’s enduring beliefs in the supernatural and their strong ancestral worship traditions. The ritual is accompanied by music, the principal musical components of which can be categorized into instruments, ensemble, tonal system, repertoire, and stylistic features.

2.1 Musical Instruments : the ensemble employs string instruments, specifically the Mon Saw —either Saw Duang or Saw U—which performs the melodic line as the sole melodic instrument. Rhythm is provided by percussion instruments, including Taphon (drum), Ching (small cymbals), Chap Lek (small crash cymbals), and Chap Yai (large crash cymbals).



**Figure 4** Mon Saw ensemble of Bang Khan Mak, Bandit Silpa Ensemble  
Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.



**Figure 5** Taphon, Bandit Silpa Ensemble  
Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.



**Figure 6** Chap Lek and Chap Yai, Bandit Silpa Ensemble  
Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

2.2 Musical Ensemble : the musical group accompanying the ritual is known as the Ban Khanmak Mon Saw Ensemble. This ensemble performs throughout the ritual, from its commencement until its conclusion. The ensemble’s configuration is flexible, as the performance requires only two principal performers: one on melody and one on rhythm.

Consequently, the arrangement depends largely on the available space, the ritual setting, and the participants’ circumstances. Typically, the ensemble is positioned close to the spirit medium (Tohng), since the medium relies on the ensemble’s melodies to guide the sequential stages of the ritual. The musical performance accompanies the ritual in the following stages:

- Twisting the sacred thread (Dai Jai) seven times and placing it on the patient’s head as a blessing (ensemble performs a slow melody).
- Preparing food offerings (items 6–11) arranged in three dishes.
- The patient presents a Phan Khru (teacher’s tray offering) to the three officiants (ensemble performs a slow melody).
- The three officiants pay homage to their teachers (ensemble performs a slow melody).
- The spirit of the ancestors enters the first medium (ensemble performs a slow melody).
- The spirit addresses the causes of illness (ensemble ceases performance).
- The patient sits on a rice pounder, stretching their legs westward, with an overturned winnowing tray at their feet. One medium place the first food dish on the tray.
- Two additional officiants become possessed (ensemble performs a fast melody).
- Commencement of the cleansing ritual: each food dish corresponds to three rounds of cleansing, after which the tray is discarded outside and the process repeated with the second and third dishes.
- The three mediums bite candles three times each and blow over the patient.
- The three mediums tie the sacred thread around the patient’s wrists.
- Two mediums absorb the negative spirits from the patient (ensemble performs a fast melody).
- The patient rises and leaves the ritual pavilion.
- The first medium prepares holy water.
- The second and third mediums, under spirit possession, converse and reveal the cause of illness or make demands (ensemble ceases performance).
- The first medium scatters rice grains and salt toward the second and third mediums to expel the spirits (ensemble performs a fast melody).
- After the negative spirits depart, all three mediums perform a water purification for the patient (ensembles perform a fast melody).
- The first medium, still possessed, bids farewell (ensemble performs a fast melody).
- The patient overturns the Khru tray in front of the three officiants (ensemble performs a fast melody).

- Three officiants use a cloth bundle containing the Khru tray to bless the patient’s body, thus completing the ritual (ensemble performs a fast melody, ending with a final cadence).



**Figure 7** Mon Saw ensemble of Bang Khan Mak, Bandit Silpa Ensemble

Note. by Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

2.3 Tonal System : the tonal system employed in the Mon Saw performance accompanying the Spirit-Cleansing Ritual is based on a pentatonic scale, consisting of five pitches within a single octave. This system forms the foundation of the melodic framework and signifies the unique identity of ritual music.

2.4 Repertoire : the principal piece performed during the ritual is Hong Thong Ramlueak (Golden Swan Reminiscence), composed and arranged by the late Mon musician and local master, Mr. Kri Phetchai. The researcher transcribed the melody from an archival audio file for analysis. The piece combines elements of traditional Mon melodies in two-beat meter, drawing upon phrases from an unnamed Mon tune and Mon Du Dao. In its single-beat meter sections, the piece incorporates melodic phrases from Burma Ram Khwan (Burmese Dance with Axe) and Khang Khao Kin Kluay (Bats Eating Bananas), ending with a characteristic cadential figure (Luk Mot).

2.5 Musical Characteristics : structurally, the ritual repertoire generally consists of a single-section composition, performed in a cyclical form with repeated melodic phrases. The fast-tempo passages are closely associated with spirit-possession dances and the cleansing sequence, mirroring musical practices commonly found in spirit-medium rituals across Mon and related traditions.

## หงส์ทองรำลึก

ขอมอญ บางชั้นหมาก

ประกอบพิธีกรรมปีติรั้งควาน

♩ = 56 สองชั้น

บรรเลงขอโดย: นายกรี เพ็ชรชัย

จัดทำโน้ตเพลงโดย: ผศ.ดร.ปภาอร แก้วสว่าง

The image displays the musical notation for the piece "Hong Thong Ramlueak". It consists of seven staves of music, each starting with a measure number: 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 31, and 37. The notation is written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a fast and intricate melody. The notation includes various musical symbols such as stems, beams, and note heads, all rendered in black ink on a white background.

Figure 8 Musical Notation of " Hong Thong Ramlueak ", Sheet 1

Note. By Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

The image displays a single staff of musical notation in treble clef, spanning measures 43 to 81. The notation is written in a traditional Thai style, featuring a series of rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. Measure 64 includes the Thai text "มอญตุตาว" (Mongtutaw) written above the staff. The piece concludes with a final cadence in measure 81.

Figure 9 Musical Notation of " Hong Thong Ramlueak ", Sheet 2

Note. By Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

The image displays a single-staff musical score for the piece "Hong Thong Ramlueak". The notation is written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into eight systems, each containing five measures. The measure numbers 86, 92, 97, 104, 110, 116, 121, and 126 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. A tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 69$  is placed above the first measure of the fourth system (measure 104). The Thai text "ชั้นเดียว พม่ารำชวาน" is written above the notes in the same measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the eighth system (measure 126).

Figure 10 Musical Notation of " Hong Thong Ramlueak ", Sheet 3

Note. By Papar-om Kaewsawang, 2024.

ค่างควากินกล้วย

The image displays seven staves of musical notation in treble clef, numbered 133, 139, 145, 152, 158, 165, and 171. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. The piece concludes with a double bar line on the seventh staff.

Figure 11 Musical Notation of " Hong Thong Ramlueak ", Sheet 4  
Note. By Papar-orn Kaewsawang, 2024.

## Discussion and Conclusions

1. The musical context of the spirit-cleansing ritual (Pad-Rang-Kwan) of the Mon ethnic group in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi, functions as ritual music performance intended to heal and protect community members in accordance with long-standing beliefs in the supernatural and the sacred power of ancestral spirits. Transmitted orally from generation to generation, this practice reflects the unique cultural identity and traditions of the Mon community of Bang Khan Mak. The ritual may be performed either in the context of ancestral spirit veneration or shrine-spirit offerings (Pa Ju). The transmission of ritual music occurs exclusively through oral tradition, without written notation or documented scores. This corresponds with the findings of Chanai Sonsakul (1992, pp.133), who studied the ethnic identity of the Mon people of Bang Khan Mak through the study of ancestral lineage, language, religion, rituals, beliefs, and customs. With regard to religion and ritual practice, it was found that the Bang Khan Mak Mon uniformly adhere to Buddhism (Dhammayut sect) as inherited from their ancestors, while simultaneously maintaining spirit worship. Ritual practices that remain active continuity include the ancestral spirit ceremony and shrine-spirit veneration (Pa Ju), both of which attract substantial community participation. Music and rituals are integrally interconnected in social, cultural, and religious dimensions, forming a holistic relationship that cannot be separated. The distinctive musical features associated with ritual practice thus reinforce the unity of cultural and spiritual life (Niran Phakdee, 2023, pp.93).

2. The musical components of the spirit-cleansing ritual of the Bang Khan Mak Mon employ the composition Hong Thong Ramlueak (Golden Swan Reminiscence), newly created and arranged by blending melodic fragments from Thai songs with Mon stylistic elements. This composition was authored by the late Mon musician and cultural scholar, Mr. Kree Phetchai, and performed by the Mon Saw ensemble, consisting of Saw Duang or Saw U, Ching (small cymbals), Chap Lek (small flat cymbals), Krab (wooden clappers), and Taphon (drum). Leadership of ritual performance has since been inherited by Mr. Bundit Pinwong, head of the Bundit Silpa ensemble, who also innovated the Mon Saw by adapting the Thai Saw Duang but enlarging the resonating body to create a pitch range broader than the Saw Duang yet narrower than the saw U. This adaptation corresponds with Pisan Boonphuk (2015, pp.263), who observed that the Mon community of Ban Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi, lacks hereditary transmission of knowledge in performing the Pi Phat Mon ensemble. It also aligns with Chanai Sonsakul's (1992, p.136) findings that the Bang Khan Mak Mon have assimilated effectively into the wider Thai society, with key factors of assimilation including state policy, education, occupation, intermarriage, and migration, all of which have contributed to a gradual cultural integration from Mon into Thai identity. The musical structure of Hong Thong Ramlueak

combines Mon, Burmese, and Thai stylistic elements. The melody is relatively simple, with a moderate tempo concluding in a faster rhythm, and it is performed instrumentally without vocal accompaniment. Its function is specifically for ritual performance and spirit dance of the Mo Phi or Tohng medium) during stages of the Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual. The piece is based on a pentatonic scale system, consistent with Chaloeiphon Lohamat (2008, pp.159–162), who notes that ritual musicians must observe the *tong* closely, as the ritual specialist determines the sequence of pieces. Performers must therefore display improvisational skill in shifting flexibly from one piece to another, sometimes changing pieces before a performance is completed. Following the principal ritual repertoire, the ensemble may also perform faster, more spirited pieces to conclude the ceremony.

### Suggestions

1. Further research should investigate the processes of transmitting ritual music performance in the Pad-Rang-Kwan ritual, particularly in the ancestral spirit veneration and shrine-spirit rituals (Pa Ju), which constitute distinctive cultural practices of the Mon community in Bang Khan Mak, Lopburi.

2. Comparative studies should be conducted to analyze differences in the musical components used in ritual contexts, including variations in belief systems, classifications of spirits, ritual attire, and ritual foods and offerings. Such analyses should encompass Mon communities across different regional contexts in order to illuminate both local specificities and broader ethnomusicological patterns.

### Acknowledgments

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## THE BUSEN SOK PRELUDE AND DONG CHILDREN'S FOLKSONGS: CULTURAL MUTUAL LEARNING AND PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS IN SINO-THAI TRADITIONAL MUSIC EDUCATION

CHEN YUTING<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

2025 marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand. As an important bridge for mutual understanding, cultural exchange plays a strategic role in bilateral cooperation. Since 2015, Guangxi Arts University has developed the Piphat Ensemble course, integrating Thai traditional music into its curriculum and promoting cultural mutual learning through teaching, performance, and composition.

One representative outcome is the intercultural composition *Busen Sok Prelude and Dong Ethnic Children's Songs*, which fuses Thai classical music with traditional folk elements from Guangxi, China. This work not only demonstrates aesthetic integration but also reflects a long-term educational exchange rooted in the oral transmission of Thai music and student-led co-creation. It has been recognized by Thai scholars as a model of Sino–Thai cultural resonance.

This paper reviews the historical background, institutional innovations, and curriculum mechanisms underpinning this collaboration. Through platforms like the “China–ASEAN Music Festival” and the founding of the China–ASEAN Institute of Arts Education, Guangxi Arts University has built an interdisciplinary, open, and sustainable model for traditional music education in the Belt and Road era. The case exemplifies how regional universities can play an active role in promoting international cooperation and intercultural music education.

The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand. The “Thai Piphat Ensemble” course at Guangxi Arts University traces its origins back to 2015. Over the course of ten years (2015–2025), the teaching team has established a percussion-focused ensemble curriculum based on nine core instruments, implemented a classroom music protocol aligned with the principle of separation between education and religion, promoted a semi-apprenticeship teaching reform model utilizing modern notation, compiled matching pedagogical scores of traditional repertoire, and composed/produced original works incorporating mother-tongue vocal elements from

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Southwest China. This paper reviews and summarizes the above five localized pedagogical strategies for teaching Piphat music in Chinese universities.

**Keywords :** Sino-Thai Traditional Music Education, Cultural Mutual Learning, Piphat Ensemble.

## Introduction

The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Thailand—celebrated as the “Golden Jubilee of Sino–Thai Friendship.” Over the past half-century, cultural mutual learning has served as a vital bridge for enhancing mutual understanding and deepening friendship between the two nations, increasingly demonstrating its enduring significance and strategic value in contemporary times. In 2016, China’s Ministry of Education issued the Action Plan for Promoting Educational Cooperation in the Belt and Road Initiative, which explicitly identified educational exchange as a key pathway to building people-to-people connectivity. This initiative emphasized the expansion of cultural and artistic cooperation in education to strengthen cultural understanding and foster friendly sentiments among the younger generation.

As a province with unique geographical advantages under the Belt and Road framework, Guangxi has actively promoted deeper cooperation with ASEAN countries in culture and education.

In December 2015, during the Fifth China–ASEAN Music Week, Thai ethnomusicologist Anant Narkkong and his team delivered an introductory Piphat lecture and demonstration at the “Wind and Rain Arena” of Guangxi Arts University. This event marked the beginning of the university’s gradual construction of the Thai Piphat Ensemble course. Since then, the university has developed a distinctive path integrating “cultural exchange, mutual learning, and creative fusion,” while exploring mechanisms for sustained educational exchange in traditional music between China and Thailand.

A representative outcome of this process is the cross-cultural musical work *Busen Sok Prelude and Dong Ethnic Children’s Songs*, which fuses traditional musical elements from both countries. This piece has become a vivid example of “cultural mutual learning and shared musical expression,” reflecting the proactive role of local arts universities in promoting artistic exchange. Guangxi Arts University’s initiatives—spanning mutual learning, educational collaboration, and institutional innovation—have injected new vitality into Sino–Thai traditional music education and offered a replicable model of “university-led cooperation” for broader China–ASEAN cultural exchange.

## **1. The Educational Mission in the Process of Sino-Thai Cultural Exchange: The Practice of Guangxi Arts University**

At present, China and Thailand are jointly advancing the construction of a closer community with a shared future in a new era. The deepening of Sino-Thai cultural exchanges relies heavily on robust educational cooperation. In 2024, Guangxi Arts University (GXAU) established the China–ASEAN Institute of Arts Education, actively serving the Belt and Road Initiative and the broader China–ASEAN cultural exchange strategy. This move reflects the responsibility and commitment of local universities in China’s opening-up agenda.

As a key platform for China–ASEAN arts education cooperation, GXAU has successively established the China–ASEAN Arts Talent Training Center and the China–ASEAN Consortium of Arts Universities, and has organized a series of influential regional cultural events, including the China–ASEAN Music Week, China–ASEAN Fine Arts Biennale, and China–ASEAN Dance Arts Exchange. The university has established collaborative relationships with over 30 universities and arts institutions across all 10 ASEAN countries, gradually forming an arts education cooperation mechanism that integrates Guangxi’s regional characteristics with ASEAN-oriented international collaboration.

In particular, GXAU has maintained long-term and close partnerships with Thai institutions such as Mahidol University and Mahasarakham University. From music showcases at the affiliated school’s performance halls to collaborative productions during the ASEAN Culture Week, the Sino-Thai music education partnership has steadily progressed from mutual visits to co-creation, and from basic exchange to deeper integration.

Since the launch of the Thai Piphat Ensemble course in 2015, GXAU has continuously advanced teaching reforms in areas such as curriculum development, instructional materials, ensemble performance, and intercultural music composition. These efforts have led to the formation of a localized teaching model for Thai Piphat ensemble music in Guangxi. The initiative has been widely covered by major media outlets including Xinhua News Agency, China.org.cn, HelloGuangxi, Nanguo Morning News, and Guangxi Ethnic News, and is now regarded as a model for arts education exchange between China and Thailand.

## **2. “Busen Sok Prelude and Dong Ethnic Children's Song”: A Vivid Example of Cultural Co-Creation in Higher Education**

In June 2025, the musical work Busen Sok Prelude and Dong Ethnic Children's Song was premiered during the “Piphat Curriculum 10th Anniversary Symposium and Academic Exchange” at Guangxi Arts University. This composition merges the traditional Thai piece Busen Sok Prelude with children's folk songs from the Dong ethnic group in Guangxi. Through a

creative synthesis of melodic structure, rhythmic patterns, and ensemble arrangement, the piece exemplifies cross-cultural musical integration and has received high acclaim from Thai scholars and artists.

Dr. Khomkrich Karin, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Music at Mahasarakham University, praised the piece, saying: “The two songs blend harmoniously, and it makes me see even more possibilities for Sino-Thai traditional music cooperation.” Pitsanu Boonsrianan, Chair of the Music Education Department, added, “This kind of exchange is truly special. I really love Guangxi.”

This work represents not only artistic innovation through musical fusion, but also a milestone in the decade-long development of the Piphat course at the university. It reflects the gradual advancement of cross-cultural teaching and structural reforms in music education, and encapsulates an eight-year story of Sino-Thai musical exchange—transitioning from oral transmission of a single piece to mutual cultural resonance between two nations.

In 2017, during the China–ASEAN Music Week, Thai ethnomusicologist and artist Dr. Anant Narkkong personally taught the traditional Thai composition Busen Sok Prelude to young faculty member Li Lin and his Piphat elective students. Two years later, Li Lin and students from the Class of 2017 created a new version of the piece by integrating three Dong minority folk songs from Guangxi. Upon returning to listen, Anant was moved to tears: “This seed has grown into a big tree. It has become a piece of Thai music with Guangxi’s ethnic characteristics while still preserving the essence of Thai tradition. These are not tears of sadness—but of overwhelming joy!”

At that moment, art transcended language and national boundaries. Cultural exchange in traditional music education was no longer limited to technical exchange, but became a deep resonance of the soul and a shared sense of cultural value.

The fusion within Busen Sok Prelude and Dong Ethnic Children's Song is not a superficial juxtaposition of musical elements from two regions. Rather, it reflects a comprehensive recreation—from melody to rhythm, performance to aesthetic implication. The piece narrates a story of mutual resonance in cultural expression between two countries and presents a compelling model for intercultural artistic creation.

Just as cultural confidence is a fundamental force behind national development, universities serve as cultivators and disseminators of that force. In the context of a new era of mutual cultural exchange, Guangxi Arts University has enabled the “seeds” of Sino-Thai musical collaboration to take root and flourish in cross-cultural soil through sustained educational cooperation and artistic practice. This initiative not only epitomizes the progress

of Sino-Thai music education but also stands as a practical model of how higher education institutions can contribute to the cultural connectivity of the Belt and Road Initiative.

### **3. Reframing the Value of "Cultural Mutual Learning" in Cross-Cultural Music Education**

Traditional music from China and Thailand each possesses unique characteristics in terms of modal structures, rhythmic patterns, and instrumental configurations. Yet, within these differences lies the potential for creative integration. The composition *Buson Sok and Dong Ethnic Children's Song* was developed with the goal of mutual learning and creative fusion. It combines the Thai traditional Piphat piece *Buson Sok* with children's folk songs from the Dong ethnic group in Sanjiang County, achieving organic integration across multiple dimensions—including instrumental and vocal textures, melodic structures, rhythmic phrasing, and regional vocal styles.

Leveraging Guangxi's strategic role as a cultural exchange hub between China and ASEAN countries, the project facilitated a deep dialogue between Guangxi's indigenous folk traditions and Thailand's Piphat ensemble music. On one level, the creative process reflects the successful integration of course instruction with original composition. On another, it demonstrates how student participation in Sino-Thai collaborative music creation enhances not only their musical skills but also their cultural confidence and intercultural competence.

It is especially noteworthy that the Dong ethnic songs incorporated into the piece were not merely transplanted; rather, they were co-composed and adapted by students and faculty from Sanjiang, Guangxi. The course actively encouraged students to reinterpret various Dong children's songs in performance, empowering students in the folk vocal major to express their artistic agency and creativity. This open and co-creative learning model marked a pedagogical shift—from passive knowledge transmission to active musical co-creation—infusing cross-cultural music education with a renewed and dynamic spirit of the times.

### **4. Institutional Innovation and Platform Building: Creating a New Model for the Internationalization of Higher Arts Education**

In recent years, Guangxi Arts University has gradually established a distinctive “Platform + Mechanism + Content” model for Sino-Thai music education collaboration. This framework integrates faculty and student exchanges, curriculum development, and performance practices, offering a regionally grounded pathway for the internationalization of local universities.

**First**, the university has built the China–ASEAN Music Week platform to enhance cooperation. Leveraging the influence of this long-standing event—held for thirteen consecutive years—it has become a vital window for Sino-Thai musical exchange. Since 2015, the Piphat ensemble has performed regularly during the festival, featuring dedicated concerts by Thai musicians from Burapha University as well as original works composed and performed by Guangxi composers and students. Notable examples include *Shepherding the Tiger Pass* (for Khong Wong Yai and electronic music), *Crab Song* (for Piphat ensemble and Southwestern Mandarin nursery rhymes), and *Buson Sok and Dong Ethnic Children's Song*, all of which have provided a stage for cross-cultural collaboration and co-creation.

**Second**, the university has promoted cross-departmental integration to enhance curricular synergy. The Piphat course is open to students from both the Department of Ethnic Arts and the Department of Composition, transcending disciplinary boundaries.

**Third**, faculty exchange programs between China and Thailand have been launched to enable resource sharing and mutual enrichment. Several young and mid-career faculty members have traveled to Thailand to study traditional Thai music, while Thai experts have been invited to offer guidance on the Piphat curriculum, fostering complementary strengths and raising overall instructional quality.

**Fourth**, a new educational platform was established to broaden the scope of talent development. In 2024, the university officially inaugurated the China–ASEAN Institute of Arts Education to better “tell China’s story,” promote Chinese culture, and strengthen people-to-people ties among ASEAN nations. The institute aims to serve as a regional hub for the cultivation of internationally oriented art professionals, a shared resource platform for China–ASEAN arts education, and a collaborative center for arts education exchange—demonstrating Guangxi’s ethnic cultural uniqueness and ASEAN’s artistic characteristics on the international stage.

## **5. Policy Recommendations: Enhancing Guangxi’s Role as a Strategic Hub in China–ASEAN Educational Cooperation**

As China and Thailand enter a new phase of deepened relations following the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties, it is essential to further strengthen international collaboration and cultural transmission in traditional music education. We offer the following policy recommendations:

1) Elevate Policy-Level Mechanisms: Encourage the signing of a bilateral memorandum of understanding on traditional music education between educational authorities in China and Thailand, establishing a stable and long-term policy support framework.

2) Develop Model Curriculum Systems: Use the Piphat Ensemble of Thailand course as a foundation to create an influential suite of cross-cultural courses with distinctive ASEAN features.

3) Expand International Communication Platforms: Integrate with broader China–ASEAN educational cooperation mechanisms and leverage events such as the ASEAN Culture Week to enhance the global voice and influence of local universities in Guangxi.

### **Discussion and Conclusions: Building Bridges of Understanding Through Music**

As President Xi Jinping has emphasized, “Civilizations are enriched by exchanges and mutual learning.” The decade-long development of Sino-Thai traditional music education exemplifies how Chinese universities can actively serve national strategies and foster meaningful intercultural engagement. Guangxi, as a frontier ethnic region, has transformed its geographic and cultural advantages into a driving force for high-quality people-to-people exchange.

The collaborative work *Buson Sok* and *Dong Ethnic Children's Song* resonates with the elegance of Thai classical music and the lyrical spirit of Guangxi’s mountains and rivers. It is more than a musical creation—it is a cultural bridge that spans nations, ethnicities, and languages. As Dr. Anant Narkkong once remarked, “This seed has grown into a great tree,” now deeply rooted in Guangxi, with branches that symbolize the flourishing vitality of traditional music education between China and Thailand.

Looking ahead, Guangxi Arts University should continue to leverage its strategic location, using music as a bridge, curriculum as a vehicle, and mechanism as a guarantee to deepen Sino-Thai educational cooperation. In doing so, it will contribute educational strength, cultural vitality, and youthful energy to the building of a closer China–ASEAN community with a shared future.

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## EDUCATION

## THE GUIDELINES OF ONLINE MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FOR PROMOTING THAI CULTURAL TOURISM TO CHINESE FIT TOURISTS

PHEERAWAT THAWEEWATTHANAPHONG<sup>1</sup> THACHA TAPANEEYAKORN<sup>2</sup> AND  
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### Abstract

This study investigates the development and effectiveness of online media platforms for promoting cultural tourism in Thailand to Chinese tourists. The research aims were threefold: 1) to create Chinese online media for promoting Thai cultural tourism, 2) to assess the efficiency of this media, and 3) to evaluate the satisfaction of Chinese Free Independent Travelers (FITs) with the content. This research, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, addresses the growing importance of online platforms in attracting high-quality tourists and enhancing Thailand's "soft power." A purposive sample of seven experts from the Thai-Chinese hospitality sector was selected to participate in the study. Through a methodology triangulation approach, qualitative data was collected and analyzed in depth to achieve the research objectives. The primary research tools were the developed Chinese online media platforms and an evaluation form to measure their effectiveness. The results showed that the experts' evaluation of the developed online media was consistently at a high level, confirming its potential to effectively promote Thai cultural heritage and attract Chinese FITs. These findings underscore the strategic importance of well-designed digital content in shaping tourism perceptions and fostering cross-cultural appreciation.

The quantitative research was used to evaluate the samples opinions towards the satisfaction to the Chinese online short videos promoting the cultural tourism of Thailand. The questionnaires were used to collect data from 135 Chinese FIT tourists. The overall result of Chinese FIT tourists satisfaction on Chinese online short videos obtained was at a high level. It could be concluded that the developed Chinese online short videos could enhance novelty experiences in tourism and promote cultural tourism values in Thailand very well. The positive response to the online media suggests an opportunity to create content tailored to specific Thai cultural interests. For example, develop specialized video series focusing on Thai cuisine, traditional arts and crafts, or local festivals to attract tourists with specific hobbies and passions.

**Keywords :** Guidelines; Chinese Online Media, Promoting Thai Cultural Tourism,  
Chinese FIT Tourists

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## Introduction

The global tourism industry is at a critical juncture, and for Thailand, Chinese Free Independent Tourists (FITs) are an economic cornerstone. However, recent data from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2025) reveals a concerning 32.7% decline in Chinese arrivals. This downturn is largely attributed to security concerns and the spread of negative rumors on social media, which have significantly impacted tourist confidence. This decline coincides with a notable shift in Chinese FIT behavior. While Kotler & Armstrong's (2011) Consumer Decision-making Process model still provides a framework, the process has evolved. A UNWTO (2020) report shows that for 56% of Chinese tourists, international travel is now a less critical decision, and for 39%, attractions are the primary determinant. This suggests a move toward more meaningful experiences over simple consumerism. Despite these shifts, there is a significant gap in our understanding: the specific role of media usage in the decision-making process for Chinese FITs traveling to Bangkok. The platforms and online information sources they rely on to plan their journeys are not well analyzed or understood. Therefore, this research aims to bridge this critical gap by exploring the media consumption habits of Chinese free independent tourists FITs. By identifying the social media platforms and online information sources that influence their travel decisions, this study will provide crucial insights for tourism operators and authorities. The findings will enable the development of targeted marketing strategies to restore tourist confidence and re-establish this vital market as a key driver of Thailand's tourism sector.

Public relations strategies must adapt to the evolving digital landscape, particularly when targeting the vast Chinese tourist market. With over a billion potential travelers, it's crucial for organizations to engage with this audience on their preferred social media platforms, such as WeChat, TikTok, Xiao Hong Shu, and Weibo. Thai scholars have extensively studied the cultural travel behavior of Chinese Free Independent Travelers (FITs), identifying three key areas of focus: the expectations of Chinese FIT tourists, their perspective on Thai cultural tourism, and the development of effective tourism promotion strategies tailored to this demographic. These studies underscore the importance of understanding the specific needs and desires of this influential group of travelers. The study on the cultural traveling behavior of FIT Chinese tourists in Thailand and the Chinese online media development of Thai cultural tourism to accommodate Chinese tourists are considered the issues that Thai scholars have placed their importance on. (Kaewyu, P et al., 2021; Khaosaard, 2016; Parasakul, 2016; Ratnarinthira, N., & Dujtawan, K., 2022; Sangkakorn, 2015; Tangtenglam, S., 2021; Tung, & Ritchie, 2011a; Untong, 2018; Waowaew, S et al., 2020). In this regard, from 20 studies related to Thai cultural tourism behavior of Chinese tourists, the subject can be categorized into 3 issues:

1) expectations of Chinese FIT tourists 2) cultural tourism of Thailand in the view of Chinese FIT tourists and 3) tourism promotion development for Chinese tourists. In addition, 12 research related to the method of creating digital media to promote cultural tourism provides a conclusion of 2 issues; 1) Designing to create online media for Chinese FIT tourist attractions 2) Exposure to cultural tourism in Thailand online media of Chinese FIT tourists.

According to the aforementioned studies, it was found that 1) the opinions of Chinese entrepreneurs who are involved with Chinese FIT tourists on the issue of Chinese online media development to promote Thai cultural tourism in order to accommodate Chinese FIT tourists have limited learnings due to the communication problems of Thai researchers who must be able to communicate in Chinese language. 2) Most of the research are demand-based that primarily place the emphasis on the tourists and the studies are mostly adopted quantitative research methods. For this reason, qualitative research, in the context of Thailand, has rarely been studied in the develop Chinese online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand to accommodate Chinese FIT tourists in Thailand. Therefore, it is important that the subject must be studied in the present time because if Thailand is provided with the Chinese online media, the development process can be done effectively to the target group by winning the hearts of Chinese FIT tourists. In addition, it can create the incentives for online shopping on Thai products during the present time. As a result, billions of baht can be generated into the country and solve the problem of supply of goods and services in the national tourism that exceeds demand in the country.

### **Objectives**

- 1) to develop Chinese online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand
- 2) to evaluate Chinese online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand efficiency
- 3) to evaluate Chinese FIT tourists satisfaction on Chinese online media in promoting cultural tourism in Thailand.

### **Literature Review**

The literature review is divided into three sections. Cultural and Heritage, Visual communication Theory and Online media in promoting culture and tourism involves leveraging digital platforms to enhance awareness of cultural heritage are described. Then, digital media usage behavior of Chinese FIT tourists in Thailand are outlined.

#### **1. Definition of cultural and heritage**

The Thai National Culture Act of 2010 provides a comprehensive definition of culture, encompassing a society's way of life, beliefs, values, and traditions. This aligns with global standards, such as those set by UNESCO, which emphasize the historical and social

value of cultural heritage. Understanding this definition is crucial for the tourism sector, as cultural heritage tourism is a significant driver of international travel.

Cultural heritage tourism is broadly categorized into two main types. The first is Tangible Cultural Heritage, which includes physical objects and sites that can be seen and touched. This category covers everything from movable artifacts like sculptures and clothing to immovable structures like historical buildings and archaeological sites. The second is also listed as Tangible Cultural Heritage in the provided text. To accurately reflect the standard classification, it is important to note that the second category is typically Intangible Cultural Heritage, which encompasses non-physical elements such as traditions, oral histories, performing arts, and social practices. These two classifications together represent the full scope of a culture's legacy, offering rich opportunities for tourists to engage with a destination's past and present.

## **2. Concept of visual communication**

Visual communication is a form of conveying information that relies on the mechanisms and relationship between the eyes and the brain to interpret received messages. The images present in the communication are aesthetically appealing and connected to the emotions and thoughts of the audience, facilitating a better understanding of the information conveyed (Hembree, 2006, p. 14). Humans have the ability to transcend time and language barriers, enabling the effective transmission of cultures between different countries. This is achieved through the human brain's capacity to facilitate understanding, making intercultural communication easier despite linguistic differences (Intaratayvee, 2013). The human brain is better at remembering images than words or text. Furthermore, when an image holds meaningfulness and value for the recipient, it is more likely to be remembered and stored in long-term memory, facilitating enduring retention of the information.

Advances in current technology have led to rapid growth in communication methods and the development of new formats that meet the needs of modern society, such as presenting images through various social media platforms. Huxley noted that the most effective tool for visual communication is an image, which has a powerful influence that enables recipients to remember and recall the image repeatedly. This approach enhances the interest of communication and allows for more effective and engaging presentation of information (Gale, 2015).

### 3. Online media in promoting culture and tourism involves leveraging digital platforms to enhance awareness of cultural heritage.

Online media plays a significant role in promoting culture and tourism. Cultural tourism is considered a form of high-value tourism, primarily focused on providing travelers with emotional and experiential engagement. This type of tourism emphasizes meaningful experiences that resonate on a personal level, fostering long-term growth and sustainability in the industry (TOT, 2564). Cultural tourism encompasses both tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites, such as beliefs and traditions. This form of tourism not only generates income for local communities but also contributes to the broader economic development of the country. Online media serves as a vital tool in promoting the preservation, transmission, and continuity of cultural heritage, ensuring that cultural identity remains vibrant and enduring (Bywater, 1993).

Tourism Authority of Thailand (2023) Policy recommendations for promoting high-value tourism should emphasize marketing strategies based on content creation to enhance the destination's image and expand the target market among Chinese tourists with specific preferences. It is crucial to leverage digital technologies and innovative solutions to support both the production of engaging content and the delivery of personalized services. Specifically, the use of technology to access travel information from various sources across all stages of the travel experience is essential, including: 1) Pre-travel, 2) During travel and 3) Post travel. Therefore, online media serve as an effective communication platform for presenting information. Tourists or viewers can access these information sources through multiple channels, particularly digital technologies such as social media and websites. Features of infographic media, which can deliver visually appealing, attractive, and concise information, enhance engagement and stimulate interest easily. Consequently, tourists are more likely to remember, understand, and quickly access the information, leading to more memorable and impactful communication (Kai, 2015).

Alhadi (2019) investigate the development of tourism media is crucial due to the recognition of online platforms as powerful tools capable of conveying complex information in a clear and rapid manner. Compared to traditional media that rely solely on textual content, digital media incorporate multimedia elements that facilitate easier understanding and engagement for tourists. Consequently, online media have been widely adopted as an effective means of promoting cultural heritage and tourism, enabling broader outreach and more impactful communication (Ashman & Patterson, 2015). However, the design of media aimed at promoting culture and tourism remains inadequately defined. Based on the synthesis of relevant data related to marketing communication and information dissemination,

there is a lack of clear guidelines or standardized approaches for creating effective media content in this context. (Alhadi, H., 2019; Ashman, R., & Patterson, A., 2015; Beitelspacher, Richey, & Reynolds, 2011; George, S. J., 2013; Krum, 2014; Iliinsky, 2010; Lee & Kim, 2017; Palmer, 2010.). There should be four key qualities or attributes, which are: 1) Novelty 2) Informativeness 3) Efficiency and 4) Aesthetics.

#### **4. Tourism behavior and the interests of Thai culture of Chinese Free Independent Traveler (FIT) traveled to Thailand**

Research on Chinese FITs has identified several critical areas that influence their travel decisions and satisfaction. The Consumer Decision-making Process Model (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011) serves as a valuable lens for this analysis, revealing how these travelers search for information and evaluate alternatives. A study by Liaoqun et al. (2018) and Parasakul (2022) highlights the importance of restaurants serving authentic Thai food, indicating that culinary experiences are a significant part of the overall journey. Furthermore, Parasakul (2022) found that Chinese tourists are highly satisfied with their shopping experiences in Bangkok, particularly concerning the friendliness of staff, service quality, and the cultural representation of goods. The intersection of these behaviors from pre-trip planning to on-site experiences presents a complex but understandable landscape for tourism marketers.

Understanding the decision-making process of Chinese Free Independent Tourists (FITs) is crucial for the tourism industry in Thailand. This group, primarily composed of Gen Y and new-generation travelers, is increasingly a dominant force in the market. Unlike traditional tour groups, these tourists are seeking high-quality, novel experiences and are making travel decisions with less long-term deliberation. Their choices are heavily influenced by specific factors, with attractions being the most significant determinant. However, other elements such as shopping, tourist activities, accessibility, and effective communication through digital media also play a vital role. This research will delve into these behaviors to provide a comprehensive framework for attracting and satisfying this key demographic. As a result, the analysis recommended five significant aspects of Chinese tourist behavior that should be prioritized: 1) shopping, 2) tourist activities, 3) attraction, 4) accessibility, and 5) communication and media (Chen, & Rahman, 2018; Kaewyu et al., 2018; Parasakul, L. 2022; Sangakorn, 2016; Untong, 2017; Wu and Pearce, 2014).

### **Research Methodology**

#### **1. Methodology**

This research focuses on Chinese FIT tourists traveled to Thailand, the qualitative will be applied for the First objectives, seven tourism sectors which is involved in

providing services to the Chinese FIT Tourists who traveled to Thailand including the representatives of the Thai-Chinese business sector or managers who involved in providing services to Chinese tourists have been operating the business for over 10 years, government sector, academic and the Chinese mass media sector who are related to tourism sector and policies for supporting Chinese FIT tourists have been working in the organization for over 10 years by conducting small group discussion qualitative was taken to examine for the validity and reliability through methodology triangulation method was adopted to collect data in response to research objectives (Hsu, Cai, & Wong, 2007).

In addition to the quantitative survey will be applied for the Second and Third objective, The sample was selected purposively, including seven tourism sectors which is involved in providing services to the Chinese FIT Tourists and 100 Chinese FIT outbound tourist who have experience traveled to the area of Thailand by conducting quantitative research from the primary data that was collected from the study area through interviews.

## **2. Population and sample**

A purposive sampling qualitative method will be applied for the First objective were divided into seven tourism sectors which is involved in providing services to the Chinese FIT Tourists who traveled to Thailand including the representatives of the Thai-Chinese business sector, government sector, academic and the mass media sector by conducting qualitative was applied to obtain clear data.

The quantitative research will be applied for the Second and Third objective and the population consists of seven experts selected by the purposive sampling and 100 Chinese FIT outbound tourists (non-group tour) and aged 18 or above who have experience traveled to the area of Bangkok, Phuket and Chiangmai Thailand. The final sampling method is to apply the purposive random sampling method by conducting quantitative research from the primary data that was collected from the study area through interviews.

## **3. Research Tools**

A form of semi-structured interview for small group discussion will be applied for the First objective, including the develop Chinese Online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand and evaluate Chinese Online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand efficiency to Chinese FIT tourists. The questionnaire was improved on the clarity of the questions after a pilot test which was carried out with a group of samples who had the same characteristics but not the actual sample group of this study to verify the accuracy and clarity of each question. The audio was recorded during the interviews and conversations while also

being observed and taken notes to get the most complete details during a test survey to improve data before being used.

The quantitative research tools were developed for this study including a form of structured interview will be applied for the Second and Third objective, including the critical for eliciting diverse the evaluation of Chinese Online short videos to promote cultural tourism in Thailand efficiency and the Chinese Online media satisfaction in promoting cultural tourism of Chinese FIT tourists traveled to Thailand of the research population (TATIC, 2016). Quantitative tools used to collect data have been verified for the accuracy of the questions and methods from five experts are good at both Chinese and English in the relevant field helped to check the correctness and clarify of item expressions.

#### **4. Data analysis**

For Qualitative, the information obtained from small group discussions was taken to examine for the validity and reliability through Methodology Triangulation in 2 approaches (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). 1) Verification on the data triangulation is determined by the time, place, and source information provided by a specific group of people. In this regard, the examination of the data proceeded along with the collection of the data while visiting the study area. 2) Verification on the data collection process through methodology triangulation was taken to examine the data collected from various methods whether primary and secondary data sheets in both Thai or Chinese as well as data acquired from small group discussions in accordance with the research objectives. Then, the results of the data collection were presented through content analysis with a focus on interpretation corresponding keywords, classifying data types according to the qualitative research methodology, and synthesizing the conclusions of the information from the reality phenomena.

For quantitative analysis, data are evaluated using an effectiveness assessment form and satisfaction questionnaires. The statistical analysis involves calculating the mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) to determine the overall performance and user satisfaction levels, and content analysis and expert opinions are used to assess the multimedia media's effectiveness. The interpretation of scores is categorized as follows: 4.51 – 5.00: Very High, 3.51 – 4.50: High, 2.51 – 3.50: Moderate, 1.51 – 2.50: Low (Alhadi, H., 2019; Ashman, R., & Patterson, A., 2015; Beitelspacher, Richey, & Reynolds, 2011; George, S. J., 2013; Krum, 2014; Iliinsky, 2010; Lee & Kim, 2017; Palmer, 2010.).

#### **Research Finding**

Development of Chinese Online Media for Promoting Thai Cultural Tourism to Chinese FIT Tourists are presented in detail as follows:

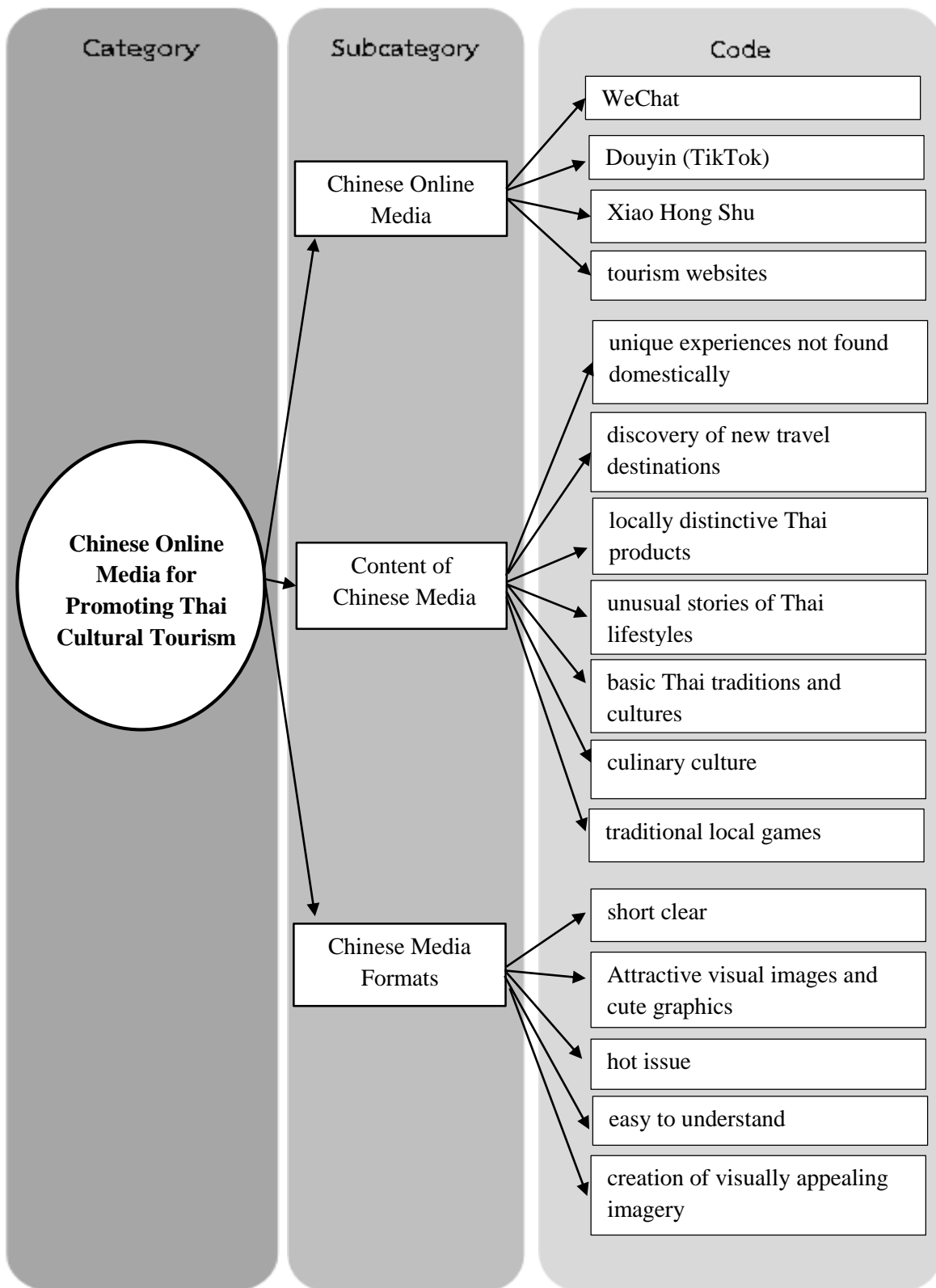
## 1. The development of Chinese online media to promote cultural tourism in Thailand

From the Figure 1, conclusions were drawn directly from synthesized data based on recurring and related terms. The data types were classified according to qualitative research methodology. These terms or codes were obtained through transcription and analysis of semi-structured small group discussions. The key informants included seven experts selected by the purposive sampling, consisted of tourism sectors which is involved in providing services to the Chinese FIT Tourists including the representatives of the Thai-Chinese business sector with over 10 years of experience in directly serving Chinese tourists and working with Chinese FIT, government sector, academic and the Chinese media sector by conducting qualitative research through methodology triangulation method in response to research objectives, as well as five relevant experts. Chinese language used in the questions and qualitative methods have been validated by the experts in the field of Chinese studies.

“谈到泰国我第一想起的就是泰国的风土人情和佛教文化，同时能让我得到在中国得不到的体验。因为在我看来，人生就是在一个不断突破与尝试的过程”。

“ 无论什么时候，中国人都喜欢用微信，看新闻或者聊天儿，就连旅游景点喜欢用小红书。现在游客来泰国玩儿都能用微信支付”。

“ 这次来泰国旅游的酒店和机票我都是用微信预订和付款的，泰国航空公司的官网还有他家的App也能用微信支付的”。



**Figure1:** The chart illustrating the categorization of data for “Development of Promotional Chinese Media for Cultural Tourism in Thailand Supporting Chinese FIT Tourists”

It can be summarized that promotional media for cultural tourism can be organized into three main subcategories: online media, content of the Chinese media and media formats. Subcategory 1: "Chinese Online Media" includes platforms such as, Douyin (TikTok), Xiao Hong Shu, and tourism websites. Subcategory 2: "Content of the Media" encompasses codes related to: unique experiences not found domestically, discovery of new travel destinations, locally distinctive Thai products, unusual stories of Thai lifestyles, simple Thai words, simple Chinese words, basic Thai traditions and cultures, attire, culinary culture, traditional local games, and Thai wisdom. Subcategory 3: "Format of the Media" includes elements such as short clear, Attractive visual images and cute graphics, and hot issue videos that are easy to understand, consistently updated information to maintain engagement, and the creation of visually appealing imagery. These data will be synthesized using qualitative research methodology to support the development and creation of online media aimed at promoting Thailand cultural tourism for Chinese FIT tourists. The results of the online media development to enhance Thailand cultural tourism are presented in detail as follows:

1.1 Online media aimed at promoting cultural tourism, consisting of examples from short video clips posted on online platforms in China over a 30-day period. These are illustrated with images in Figures 1 to 6 below:



**Figure2:** Image from video clip 1/1



**Figure3:** Image from video clip 1/2



**Figure4:** Image from video clip 2/1



**Figure5:** Image from video clip 2/2



Figure6: Image from video clip 3/1



Figure7: Image from video clip 3/2

## 2. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Chinese Online Media to Promoting Cultural Tourism

The evaluation of the effectiveness of media promoting cultural tourism, as assessed by seven experts in tourism sectors which is involved in providing services to the Chinese FIT Tourists including the representatives of the Thai-Chinese business sector with over 10 years of experience in directly serving Chinese tourists and working with Chinese FIT, government sector, academic and the Chinese media sector, is presented in Table 1 below:

Evaluation item	Level of effectiveness		
	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. Design and Photography	4.41	0.62	high level of effectiveness
2. Graphics and Animations on Media	4.18	0.83	high level of effectiveness
3. Media Quality and Narration	4.38	1.03	high level of effectiveness
4. The Impact of Media on Promoting Cultural Tourism	4.30	0.74	high level of effectiveness
5. Accuracy of Content Presented on Media	4.61	0.61	very high level of effectiveness
Mean	4.37	0.77	high level of effectiveness

**Table 1:** Frequency and Percentage Results of the Assessment of the Effectiveness of Online Media Promoting Cultural Tourism by Experts in Thai-Chinese tourism sector.

From the table 1, the results of the expert assessment regarding the effectiveness of online media, developed by the researchers, indicated an overall mean score of 4.37, reflecting a high level of media efficacy. When analyzing the evaluation across specific aspects, content accuracy received the highest mean score of 4.61, signifying excellent performance. Design and photography ranked second with a mean score of 4.41, also demonstrating strong

effectiveness. The quality of media and narration had a mean score of 4.38, indicating good performance. Additionally, the impact of the media on promoting cultural tourism was rated at 4.30, while graphics and animations achieved a mean score of 4.18, both indicating high effectiveness. Overall, the online media demonstrated very high efficacy and can be effectively utilized for promoting cultural tourism. However, a review and improvement of the graphics and animations are recommended to enhance attractiveness, stimulate interest among Chinese tourists, and facilitate easier understanding, retention, and rapid access to information. These enhancements would further optimize the media's effectiveness in engaging target audiences.

### **3. Evaluation of Chinese FIT tourists' satisfaction with media used to promote cultural tourism**

Over a 30-day dissemination period in online platforms across China, the content received no fewer than 100 likes per day and all three short videos have collectively garnered over 20,000 views on the online platform (We chat). Consequently, the researchers conducted a survey to evaluate the satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists with the online media after viewing the content. The survey was administered from November 5, 2024, to December 5, 2025. The results indicated that the majority of Chinese FIT tourists 100 respondents were female, comprising 75.18%, whereas 33 males accounted for 24.80%. The predominant age group among respondents was 26-35 years old. Regarding educational background, 6.76% had completed secondary education, 10.52% held an associate degree or vocational diploma, 57.14% possessed a bachelor's degree, and 25.56% had education higher than a bachelor's degree. The most common occupation among respondents was running a private business, followed by students. All respondents traveled to Thailand independently (non-group tour).

Based on the analysis of Chinese FIT tourists' satisfaction with the online media, as developed by the research team. The analysis revealed an overall mean score of 3.95, indicating a high level of satisfaction among Chinese FIT tourists. When examining satisfaction across different aspects, the media's role in promoting cultural tourism received the highest average score of 3.99, reflecting very high satisfaction. The accuracy of the content presented on the media ranked second, with a mean score of 3.95, also indicating high satisfaction. Design, photography, graphics, and animations on the media received a slightly lower average score of 3.94, still signifying high satisfaction. Lastly, the quality of the media and narration received a mean score of 3.90, indicating a high level of satisfaction in this aspect as well. However, it is recommended to improve the quality of the media and their accompanying narratives to better attract Chinese FIT tourists, stimulate their interest, and enhance memorability.

Improving these aspects can encourage repeat visits and foster word-of-mouth communication and sharing on Chinese social media platforms among new groups of Chinese tourists, summary results from Table 2 below:

Evaluation item	Level of satisfaction		
	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1.Design and Photography	3.94	1.05	Highly satisfied
2.Graphics and Animations on Media	3.94	1.06	Highly satisfied
3.Media Quality and Narration	3.90	1.13	Highly satisfied
4.The Impact of Media on Promoting Cultural Tourism	3.99	0.95	Highly satisfied
5.Accuracy of Content Presented on Media	3.95	1.06	Highly satisfied
Mean	3.94	1.05	Highly satisfied

**Table 2:** Frequency and Percentage of Satisfaction with Online Media Promoting Cultural Tourism Among Chinese FIT Tourists.

### Discussion and Conclusion

First, in the context of Chinese media creation for promoting cultural tourism in Thailand to Chinese FIT tourists should pay attention to make interactive media design in the form of a smartphone application that need straight forward and reliable details about schedules and public transit fees, as well as tourist information and photographs of actual new experiences attractions, food culture and local Thai wisdom to promote Thailand as one of the primary destinations for Chinese FIT tourists. These findings are consistent with Ratnarinthira, N., & Dujtawan, K. (2022) and Hathairat Butnet et al. (2018), who suggest that a good media allows viewers to clearly see the real picture and atmosphere which influences the desire for real experiences. This high-quality media could be used for public relations to effectively promote tourism. Additionally, Zi li (2018) and Wang, D., Li, X. R., & Law, R. (2018) indicates that Chinese tourists use platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and online travel agencies like Ctrip to gather information, read reviews, and make travel arrangements. Therefore, Thai entrepreneurs or managers in tourism business involved in providing services to Chinese tourists, a group of representatives from the government agencies including the tourism authority of Thailand and the Office of Culture must have seamless integration with China’s primary mobile payment platforms, such as WeChat Pay and Alipay, and offer comprehensive Chinese-language support to create a sense of cultural compatibility and convenience. This is crucial, as Chinese tourists use platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Ctrip to gather information, read reviews, and make travel arrangements.

Second, in the context of Evaluation of Chinese FIT tourists' satisfaction with media used to promote cultural tourism in Thailand. Researchers conducted a comprehensive survey to gauge the satisfaction levels of Chinese tourists after engaging with online media content related to Thailand. The findings revealed that the majority of the 100 respondents were women, highlighting a strong female interest in digital cultural promotion. Many of these respondents were self-employed individuals operating private businesses, embodying a segment of independent travelers who preferred exploring Thailand on their own rather than through organized group tours. Untong (2017) was conducted most of the Chinese FIT tourists use applications for booking flights and hotel accommodation in China. Additionally, over 80% were classified as Free Independent Travelers (FIT) who spent more than 5,100 baht per day and traveled for 9 days per trip on average (Siam Commercial Bank, 2019). Zou, Y., & Jariangprasert, N. (2021) revealed that the channels for searching information are divided into four parts, namely: popular tourist destinations, interesting tourist activities, shopping, and travel. This group of tourists prefers to use smartphones to find information for their self-compiled traveling plan. Therefore, Thai entrepreneurs, whether operating a small and medium-sized or large business, must adapt and understand these systems to successfully target this growing group of Chinese tourists.

Third, in the context of analyzing the evaluation across specific aspects, content accuracy received the highest performance. Design and photography ranked second with a demonstrating strong effectiveness. Compared to traditional media that rely solely on textual content, digital media incorporate multimedia elements that facilitate easier understanding and engagement for tourists. Consequently, online media have been widely adopted as an effective means of promoting cultural heritage and tourism, enabling broader outreach and more impactful communication (Ashman & Patterson, 2015). Based on the synthesis of relevant data related to marketing communication and information (Alhadi, H., 2019; Ashman, R., and Patterson, A., 2015; Richey, and Reynolds, 2011; George, S. J., 2013; Krum, 2014; Lee & Kim, 2017). There should be four key qualities or attributes, which are: 1) Novelty 2) Informativeness 3) Efficiency and 4) Aesthetics. Therefore, effectively boost Thailand's tourism industry among Chinese travelers, a key strategy is to harness the power of social media platforms. The content strategy should move beyond polished, government-produced videos. The application should feature high-quality, authentic photographs and videos of new experiences, local cuisine, and genuine Thai wisdom, while actively encouraging user-generated content.

## Recommendations

### 1. Recommendations to the ministry of tourism of Thailand

1) Data-Driven Policy Recommendations: The research provides empirical evidence of Chinese tourists' satisfaction with online media. The findings support the strategic prioritization of creating and consistently updating digital content to promote tourist attractions, schedules, and public transit information. This moves the focus from general promotion to a data-backed, user-centric approach.

2) Enhancing "Soft Power" and Brand Image: The research demonstrates that well-designed digital content not only attracts tourists but also subtly cultivates Thailand's "soft power." By fostering a deeper appreciation for Thai culture, heritage, and artistry, the initiatives described contribute to a more positive and influential global image for the country, which can have long-term benefits beyond tourism.

3) Improving the Tourist Experience: By focusing on providing straightforward and reliable information, the study's recommendations directly address key pain points for Chinese FITs. This leads to a more seamless and satisfying travel experience, which in turn encourages positive word-of-mouth and repeat visits, creating a sustainable loop of tourism growth.

4) Strategic Alignment: The findings align government-level initiatives with the specific behaviors and preferences of a crucial market. This ensures that resources allocated to tourism promotion are used efficiently and effectively, leading to a higher return on investment for both the public and private sectors.

### 2. Recommendations to Entrepreneurs in Thailand's tourism industry

1) Improved Communication and Accessibility: The study underscores the importance of Chinese language support across all customer touchpoints. By translating promotional materials, signs, and online content, entrepreneurs can make it easier for Chinese tourists to navigate and enjoy their trips. This directly contributes to a better customer experience and can lead to increased engagement and satisfaction.

2) Development of Digital Tools: The research highlights the need for a user-friendly smartphone application. Entrepreneurs can use this finding to prioritize developing apps that provide real-time, accurate information on schedules, transit, fees, and attractions in key cities like Bangkok, Chiangmai, and Phuket. This digital tool can be a significant competitive advantage, positioning their businesses as top choices for Chinese tourists.

3) Enhanced Digital Marketing and Sales: The study emphasizes the strategic use of popular Chinese online platforms. This provides entrepreneurs with a clear directive to focus

their marketing efforts on these digital spaces. By effectively showcasing travel products and information on platforms favored by Chinese tourists, businesses can expand their reach and boost sales. The research validates the effectiveness of these digital channels, helping entrepreneurs to invest their resources wisely.

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## NEPALI CULTURE DEVELOPED THROUGH ETHICAL AWARENESS

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### Abstract

Nepali culture has evolved on the foundation of ethical awareness. This ethical consciousness originated from our ancient philosophical traditions. Over generations, this awareness was passed down informally, gradually shaping our culture. The philosophy here is often referred to as Eastern spiritual philosophy or Vedic philosophy. It developed in ancient *Bharatvarsha*.

Today, *India* is known as a specific country, but in ancient times, *Bharatvarsha* referred to the entire region south of Tibet and the Himalayas, stretching all the way to Sri Lanka — a collective name for the entire subcontinent. Therefore, *India* and *Bharatvarsha* are two fundamentally different concepts.

In that ancient *Bharatvarsha*, many sages and philosophers engaged in deep contemplation and established the principles of Vedic philosophy. Various sacred texts such as the *Vedas*, *Vedanta*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanishads*, *Brahmanas*, and *Puranas* shaped diverse cultural forms in this region. These texts are known as *Uvajivya Granthas* — scriptures derived from one another. From them, languages like Sanskrit and Pali developed, and modern languages and literature gradually expanded and carried forward cultural traditions.

In the process of language development, Pali emerged as a significant language in this region. Siddhartha Gautama, born in Tilaurakot of Kapilvastu, Lumbini in central Nepal, realized that there was a reality of human life and the world different from what Vedic philosophy described. In pursuit of this truth, he practiced intense meditation, study, research, and reflection, ultimately presenting the philosophy known as Buddhism.

Today, cultures and lifestyles based on Buddhist philosophy have flourished in societies from Tibet, Nepal, and India to Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, South Korea, Japan, and many other countries around the world. As peace and non-violence were his core messages, Gautama Buddha is known as a *messenger of peace* for this world.

In this way, Nepal became a land where both Vedic Sanatan Hindu culture and Buddhist culture developed. In addition to these, the cultures of the Kirat, Newar, and Tharu communities are also authentic creations of the Nepali people. There are countless forms of culture here, but one significant characteristic of Nepali culture is the presence of harmonious relationships among them. Nepal can truly be called a *garden of cultures*, where, for

generations, people of different cultures have lived side by side in the same villages, maintaining mutual respect and close social ties.

### Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To present the connection between Nepali culture, ancient philosophy, and ethics.
- 2) To briefly explain the development of Nepali culture based on ethical awareness.
- 3) To introduce the ethical consciousness inspired by various philosophies and the culture built upon it in Nepal.
- 4) To present representative examples that reflect the breadth of Nepali culture.

### Scope

Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural nation. Numerous cultural traditions exist within its borders. As it is not possible for this brief study to encompass such a wide field, this paper is limited to presenting a short introduction to certain aspects of Nepali culture.

### Main Discussion

In the process of studying all aspects of human life, it is ultimately in philosophy that one finds guidance about the direction of life. Thus, in the endeavor to study the many dimensions of human existence, philosophy was born. It is the only discipline that thoroughly examines the human world and life.

As people continuously sought to understand the vastness of human life, different philosophies emerged. Among them, Eastern philosophy is the oldest and is grounded in rational thought. Modern studies and research have shown that in the continuous course of human development, contemporary human society is facing significant challenges. In areas such as education, healthcare, employment, public awareness, peace and order, progress, harmony with nature, and overall well-being — humanity is struggling.

People today live in an environment marked by scarcity, unrest, fear, corruption, misconduct, immorality, illness, and numerous other difficulties. However, our ancestors, even more than five thousand years ago, sought solutions to these problems and discovered many ways to achieve a life free from such adversities. At the heart of these solutions lies *ethical awareness*.

When every member of society upholds a high level of ethical consciousness, they naturally devote themselves to their duties without selfish motives. As a result, society

becomes civilized, cultured, and responsible. From the very beginning — as seen in ancient texts like the *Rigveda* — the development of a refined society is based on ethical awareness.

*The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* are prime examples of this principle. The glory of Lord Rama lies in his unwavering commitment to ethics. His sacrifices, dedication, and flawless fulfillment of duty without hesitation are unparalleled models of ideal character. The source of Rama's strength was his unwavering ethical principles.

Similarly, *The Mahabharata* is an immense and intricate epic. The outcome of its legendary war was determined by adherence to or disregard for ethical principles. These texts have shown the way for the formation of Nepali culture through the guidance of ethical awareness.

In Buddhism too, the *Dhammapada* teaches the importance of high moral awareness. Likewise, in Western philosophy — from Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, and Feuerbach to Marx — the message is clear: one must never abandon ethical conduct. All these philosophies have provided important guidance for the shaping of culture.

In today's human society, the valuable legacies left by our ancestors are gradually being forgotten. As we continue to lose these fundamental values, human society is becoming increasingly troubled.

If we could properly make use of the valuable treasures in our heritage for the welfare of humanity, our lives would become more advanced and cultured. This has already been proven by the positive impact seen when Baba Ramdev revived Patanjali's Hatha Yoga.

In the same way, the courage to combine Marxist ideals with an open economy in China, according to their culture of development in India, Japan, Thailand and many more countries were possible to increase their economy because of the strategic wisdom of their leadership. We know these possibilities were thought through their culture.

Our ancient sages and saints have given us countless blessings. Just as a royal swan can separate milk from a mixture of milk and water, we too must learn to use these teachings according to our capacity and needs.

The development of awareness begins in childhood. Therefore, it is the duty of human society to include such important topics in school education and to guide children towards the right path from an early age.

### **Regarding the creation of the universe**

In the distant past, the ancient text *Rigveda* discusses in detail the origin of the universe. Later texts such as the *Smritis*, *Samhitas*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanishads*, and *Puranas* also widely address this subject, all based on the *Rigveda*.

According to the *Taittiriya Brahmana*, which follows the *Rigveda*, in the beginning, there was neither heaven nor earth. Nothing existed. The seed of the universe’s creation was desire itself. When Prajapati wished for offspring, creation took place to fulfill that wish. This is considered the essential belief regarding the creation of the universe.

However, this idea is entirely different from the modern scientific explanation of the origin of the universe. The two do not match.

According to the *Shatapatha Brahmana* (2:5,1,1-3), in the beginning, only Prajapati existed. He reflected upon how he might expand himself. After deep meditation, he created living beings.

In the *Nasadiya Sukta*, it is described that in a state of absolute void, the Supreme Being sowed a seed. From that seed, a golden embryo appeared — Brahma, the creator of the universe. In the *Manusmriti* (5:9), it is written: “I myself am Hiranyagarbha. Being the Supreme Soul, I manifested as Hiranyagarbha.”

Thus, from the very beginning, two companion elements developed together from one fundamental existence. The *Nasadiya Sukta* provides a detailed explanation of this. The scholar Max Müller has translated it in his *Six Systems of Philosophy*, pages 65 and 66, as follows:

“At that time, neither the existent nor the non-existent was there. Neither the sky nor the space beyond existed. Who then could shelter all of them? Was there a great water reservoir where everything existed? There was no death then, nor immortality. There was no sign of night or day. Only the One breathed, without breath, by its own will. Apart from that, there was nothing. All was darkness, and everything was hidden in darkness.

In the beginning, through the power of penance, a seed of desire arose. The sages discovered through deep contemplation that there is a bond between the existent and the non-existent. That force was active above and below, and was bright and powerful enough to sustain the seed of creation.

The question then arose: who truly knows this? Who declared how the creation happened? Even the gods came after the creation. So, who knows how this vast universe came into being, how it was created? He who is watching from the highest heaven, perhaps only He knows — or perhaps even He does not.”

This remains the oldest known belief about the creation of the universe. When the universe was created and living beings came into existence, each of them began to engage in their own activities within their boundaries.

In this way, Eastern philosophy believes that from the very beginning of creation, moral consciousness has existed and continues to sustain the universe.

## The Influence of Ethics in Culture

Nepali culture is fundamentally rooted in morality. The development of this culture has been greatly influenced by ancient ethical philosophy. Upon delving into classical scriptures, we understand that ethical awareness is essentially the understanding of human duty. All aspects of our culture are based on fulfilling one's responsibilities, while prohibiting actions deemed inappropriate.

The earliest detailed discussions of human duty can be found in the Brahmana texts. These texts emphasize the protection of Dharma through high moral consciousness and elevated human sentiment. According to the Brahmanas, every individual carries certain debts in life: to the gods, sages, ancestors, humanity, and even lower forms of life. Our culture provides appropriate guidance for releasing oneself from these debts. In modern times, an additional debt to nature and the environment has been recognized, as environmental imbalance increasingly threatens humanity.

To free oneself from these obligations, righteous deeds (satkarmas) are essential. Only through virtuous actions can a person live a good and successful life. Ethical conduct is necessary to perform these deeds. Our tradition teaches that during daily meals, a portion should be offered to the gods, ancestors, those in need, and animals, before partaking ourselves. Similarly, daily routines — personal hygiene, bathing, meditation, chanting, and religious observances — are considered indispensable aspects of Nepali culture. These practices lead both body and mind towards righteousness.

Maintaining equality in all relationships within one's environment is considered true humanity. Human life is regarded as an ideal and the highest of achievements, and is therefore a continuous cycle of duties and responsibilities. The Bhagavad Gita advocates living selflessly, while the Shatapatha Brahmana describes the renunciation of all material desires and attachments — known as ‘Sarvamedha’ — as the key to ultimate liberation. Mere mechanical performance of rituals does not constitute true devotion to the divine; only virtuous deeds, which arise from moral awareness, can lead to divine grace. Striving for divine qualities itself is an act of worship. Agni (fire) is considered the lord of vows, and speech is governed by Vāk (goddess of speech), thus speaking the truth is an essential element of devotion. According to the Shatapatha Brahmana (1.1, 1.4), if truthfulness is absent in a person's conduct, both are displeased and divine devotion becomes futile, as ethical duties remain unfulfilled. The first rule of the divine realm is truth, which is attained through moral duty.

The Shatapatha Brahmana (10.5.4.15) states that offerings made in rituals alone do not lead to the afterlife; neither does knowledge-less penance. Only those who possess wisdom about their penance can attain the afterlife. Even the gods are believed to have attained

divinity through penance. The system of life stages (Ashram Dharma) is also said to have originated during the Brahmana period. The word ‘Ashram’ comes from the root ‘Shram,’ meaning labor or effort, indicating that even then, the people of the Himalayas recognized that progress comes through hard work.

Vedic philosophy divides human life into four stages:

**1) Brahmacharya (Student life):** The period of learning and discipline under a teacher, where ethical awareness is first cultivated.

**2) Grihastha (Householder’s life):** A stage dedicated to family, marriage, and social responsibilities.

**3) Vanaprastha (Hermit’s life):** A stage of retreat and penance.

**4) Sannyasa (Renunciation):** A stage of complete detachment from material possessions, dedicated solely to seeking the divine.

These stages align with the Vedas, Samhitas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads. Even within worldly knowledge — religious rituals and ceremonial practices — it is the underlying moral and virtuous sentiment that brings peace to the human heart. Despite various societal weaknesses, it is this moral foundation that kept Brahmanical Dharma alive for so long. It emphasized not only external purity but also the inner sanctity of the human mind and spirit. Truthfulness, patriotism, reverence for parents, compassion for animals and insects, humanitarianism, abstaining from theft, violence, and immorality — these religious virtues became an indelible part of the Aryan people's hearts and minds, embedded in their culture.

Caste-based discrimination later developed as a social system. Originally based on profession, it gradually became hereditary. In today’s era of globalization, as humanity becomes increasingly interconnected, this system is losing relevance. Disparities in opportunity and ability have also fueled dissatisfaction. Ancient Nepali culture did not contain caste-based untouchability. According to Atharva Veda (5.17.7), during the Purusha Sukta period, Aryans and Dasyus intermarried. However, to prevent racial mixing, the Aryans began advocating for separation. These social customs gradually took on religious significance, and discrimination only began after it was religiously sanctioned.

Initially, there was no rigid caste identity — it was based on one’s profession. In ancient Vedic times, anyone could become a priest (purohit) through education and ritual knowledge, regardless of being Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra. The concept of caste hierarchy based on birth emerged later, driven by power struggles and pride. This fragmented the collective cultural unity. As rigid social boundaries developed, dissent was punished, and individuals were ostracized. The doors of higher religious knowledge were closed to the Shudras, even though they were forcibly classified into the lowest caste.

This led to the sowing of seeds of social hatred, which gradually intensified and took the form visible today. The collective culture that had developed over centuries also fractured. Moral obligations attached to caste now manifest as unethical restrictions. This was an unnatural classification, defying nature’s laws, and is now being rejected due to increased social awareness. As a result, cultural bonds are being restored with a sense of intimacy and unity. Much of the credit for this transformation goes to the spread of modern education.

In Shatapatha Brahmana 8:1,4,10, it is stated: “This is a word of the Kshatriyas.” This phrase reflects the way Brahmins would refer to people of different castes, showing how — over time, especially during the feudal era — the original natural and moral foundations of ancient Vedic culture were gradually dismantled. In their place, artificial and rigid social codes and discriminatory structures became increasingly powerful. As a result, severe inequalities emerged in the fields of education, occupation, and social status, which also influenced the distribution of the benefits of progress. Today, however, such forms of discrimination are being rejected, and society is steadily moving toward a cultural revival of its ancient Vedic roots.

Eastern philosophies have always contained inspiring messages about morality, duty, and virtuous character. Nepali culture itself was built upon these very traditions. Teachings such as *Guru Devo Bhava*, *Mata Devo Bhava*, *Pitri Devo Bhava*, and *Atithi Devo Bhava* — meaning ‘the teacher, mother, father, and guest are like gods’ — are profound value systems found in our ancient civilization. When moral ideals decline, so too does culture; and when culture deteriorates, a community loses its identity. Culture serves as a crucial marker of a community’s identity. It shapes and reflects differences in traditions, customs, behavior, cuisine, clothing, and ways of living. Such diversity in turn defines a community’s unique identity, and cultural differences are indeed the markers of human identity.

Culture develops upon the foundation of moral ideals, ensuring that children within every family understand their duties and responsibilities. When this occurs, each member of society becomes accountable. The joint family system — which was a longstanding source of pride in our society since ancient times — has, over the past three to four decades, begun to decline and is now nearly extinct. Due to the influence of electronic media, globalization, and blind imitation of Western social practices, the joint family tradition, once cherished as a cultural legacy, has fragmented into the nuclear family model. This has weakened familial intimacy and transformed the social fabric. Consequently, values such as affection, compassion, mutual assistance, and service between generations are gradually disappearing.

In the traditional Nepali family system, parents dedicate their entire lives to raising, educating, and supporting their children, even dividing their property among them for their wellbeing. This represents an extraordinary degree of sacrifice and devotion, as parents

surrender their own joys for the sake of their children. It is a proud cultural tradition. In many other societies around the world, parents are not expected to financially support their children after the age of eighteen; young people are expected to become self-reliant and pursue higher education through their own efforts. The difference between these two approaches is significant. That said, culture evolves gradually over time and is a community’s cherished, self-earned inheritance.

There is no dispute that the *Rigveda* is the foundational text of Nepali culture. The authors of the Vedic scriptures remain unknown — these texts are products of the wisdom of ancient sages, passed down through oral traditions. Folk literature too is not attributed to individual authors but is collected from the community itself. Based on the fact that the *Rigveda* was composed over five thousand years ago, it is evident that Eastern Vedic culture has been developing since ancient times. Cultural evolution follows a cyclical pattern. Great institutions like Nalanda and Takshashila served as centers for the study and contemplation of Vedic culture in ancient times. The traditions established by our ancestors, passed down through generations, continue to shape all aspects of daily life.

### **Geographically, Nepali culture:**

Formal cultural studies first began in modern times in the United Kingdom. In 1964, the Department of English at the University of Birmingham pioneered the field under the name ‘Cultural Studies,’ making the West the birthplace of formal cultural studies. It later spread to other European countries, the United States, Australia, India, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and elsewhere. In Nepal, too, formal academic study began at Tribhuvan University with the establishment of a Department of Culture. Yet, informally, practices of preserving, promoting, developing, and transmitting folk culture have continued in society since ancient times. Beliefs, languages, handicrafts, dance, musical instruments, vocal traditions, dress, customs, social etiquette, rituals, religious events, behaviors, social relationships, films, literature, history, warfare, peace traditions, occupations, attitudes, cuisine, and lifestyles are all cultural elements — and within them, Nepali culture holds its own distinctive identity and legacy.

Nepal is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multicultural nation, home to over 127 different ethnic groups since ancient times, each with its own language and culture. As a result, this country is often likened to a beautiful garden of diverse languages, religions, cultures, and ethnic communities. Nowhere else in the world can one find such unity within diversity in such a small geographical area as in Nepal.

There are three main regional communities based on geography, each comprising various ethnic groups, languages, religions, and cultures:

**1. Himalayan Community** South of the Himalayas, ethnic groups such as the Sherpa and Bhotiya reside, each with their own cultural traditions and values. This region predominantly follows lifestyles and cultural customs based on Buddhist philosophy, though variations exist among different ethnicities. Within this community are groups whose cultures resemble Tibetan and Chinese traditions. According to Chinese scholar Prof. Wang Ho Wei, the cultural relationship between Nepal and China extends over two thousand years.

**2. Hilly Community** This area covers the majority of Nepal’s territory and population. The residents of the hilly region display a remarkable variety of customs, traditions, and cultural practices, often differing from valley to valley and even between neighboring settlements. Most people in this region practice Hinduism, with significant Buddhist communities as well. Around Pokhara and nearby areas in Mid-Western Nepal, a small number of Muslims also reside, whose language, dress, and many customs align with those of the Hindu community. The Newar community, which has lived here since ancient times, maintains its own distinct language and cultural traditions. Their festivals, rituals, clothing, and unique customs — such as the *Mha Puja* and distinctive musical traditions like the *Dhime Baja* — are unlike any others in the world.

**3. Madhesi Community** Stretching along the southern plains of Nepal, from east to west, lies the fertile Terai region — a narrow strip of land forming part of the larger Gangetic plain. South of this lies India. Nepal and India share an open border — a rarity only found elsewhere between the United States and Canada. This open border has facilitated easy movement of people and goods, resulting in deeply interwoven social and cultural ties. Communities on both sides share language, attire, cuisine, and religious practices. Cross-border marriages are also common. The culture of the Madhesi people is closely aligned with that of northern India, though certain distinct traditions have been preserved. The Maithil community forms the largest group in this region. While predominantly Hindu, their cultural customs are unique. Festivals such as Diwali (Tihar) and Holi are especially significant. Group dances and communal songs are vital expressions of their cultural identity. While most people here follow Hinduism, there are also small Muslim and Buddhist populations, along with indigenous ethnic groups such as the Tharu and Dhimal, who have preserved their own distinct religious and cultural traditions.

## Philosophical Values Embedded in Nepali Culture

The greatest achievement of human civilization is philosophy. There exist various schools of philosophy in the world, and even more cultures shaped by those philosophies. Some of the major ones are:

### 1. Eastern or Vedic Philosophy and the Culture Shaped by It

This culture, rooted in ancient India, spread from the Himalayas to the countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. Primarily, Nepal and India are the main followers of this tradition, while people from neighboring countries and immigrant communities around the world also practice it. For instance, Brazil has a Hindu-majority community, and adherents live as immigrants in various countries.

In Nepal, a majority of people follow this culture, embracing Hindu religious and cultural values. Major festivals like *Dashain* and *Tihar* are central to their social life. From birth to death, sixteen sacred rites (*Sanskaras*) are performed. Other customs and traditions are followed according to their ethnic heritage.

According to the 2021 National Census of Nepal, 81.19% of the population adheres to Vedic religious and cultural traditions. Almost all Nepalis are nature worshippers in some form, offering respect and worship to rivers, ponds, forests, air, fire, sky, hills, trees, birds, and animals.

Among the Vedic communities, including Brahmins, the *Masto* deity is especially revered. Every caste and family lineage has its own *Kul Masto* (ancestral deity) regarded as their protector. There are a total of 82 kinds of *Masto* deities, worshipped differently by various ethnic groups. Due to the sheer diversity of customs and traditions, it is impossible to list all cultural identities in detail here.

### 2. Culture Based on Buddhist Philosophy

Since Nepal is the birthplace of Buddha, it naturally has a Buddhist population, though comparatively small. They observe distinct customs and traditions, although some of their cultural practices also resemble those of the Hindu community.

### 3. Muslim Community

The Muslim population in Nepal is relatively small. They celebrate festivals like *Eid* and *Bakrid*. In hilly regions, they often participate alongside local communities in other festivals and social events.

### 4. Kirat Community

This is one of Nepal's ancient ethnic communities, consisting of various castes, languages, religions, cultures, and values. They have their own unique cultural traditions. Major

festivals like *Ubhauri* during Baisakh (April/May) and *Udhauri* during Kartik (October/November) are celebrated with significance. Traditional dances like *Dhan Naach*, *Chyabrung Naach*, and *Sakela Naach* are performed in large groups with singing and dancing.

### 5. Nature, Bon, and Badhe Communities

These indigenous groups, though small in number today, are among the country’s earliest settlers.

### 6. Christian Community

Recently, some native Nepalis have converted to Christianity.

### 7. Jain Community

A small number of adherents of Jainism, originally from India, have also made Nepal their permanent home.

According to Nepal's 2021 National Census, the religious and cultural demographic distribution is as follows:

Religion/Culture	Population Percentage
Hindu	81.19%
Buddhist	8.21%
Islam	5.09%
Kirat	3.17%
Christian	1.76%
Nature Worshipper	0.35%
Bon	0.23%
Jain	0.01%
Badhe	0.00% (537 individuals only)
Sikh	0.01%

(Source: Nepal Government, Central Bureau of Statistics, Census 2021)

### Cultural Festivals Based on Ethnic Traditions in Nepal :

Nepal is home to numerous festivals rooted in caste and ethnic traditions. Some major examples include:

**1. Dashain** This is Nepal’s most significant festival and is regarded as a national celebration. Given the country’s mixed cultural communities, many festivals have become shared occasions. Dashain is celebrated according to the lunar calendar for fifteen days. Various forms of the Goddess are worshipped, beginning with *Ghatasthapana* on the first day. On this day, sacred seeds of barley, wheat, and maize are sown to grow *Jamara* (sacred grass). On the tenth day, Goddess Durga is worshipped and offerings are made. Elders bless younger family members with *Tika* (a mixture of red vermilion and rice grains) and *Jamara*. This continues for

five more days, ending on the full moon day. The government grants public holidays for most services during this time.

**2. Tihar** Tihar is a festival of nature worship and the celebration of the intimate bond between sisters and brothers. It spans five days from Kartik Krishna Trayodashi (13th lunar day of the waning moon) to Shukla Dwitiya (2nd day of the waxing moon). Each day involves unique rituals:

- Day 1: Worship of crows
- Day 2: Worship of dogs
- Day 3: Worship of cows and, in the evening, Goddess Lakshmi with illuminated homes (*Deepawali*)
- Day 4: Worship of oxen
- Day 5: *Bhai Tika*, when sisters bless brothers with multi-colored *Tika* and garlands of marigold and globe amaranth flowers. The government grants a public holiday for one day for all citizens, and additional days for women.

**3. Teej** Teej is a festival highlighting the bond between married women and their maternal homes. It is observed from Bhadra Krishna Aunsi (new moon) to Shukla Panchami (fifth day of the waxing moon). Married daughters return to their parental homes to gather with sisters and relatives. On the eve of fasting, families serve special delicacies called *Dar*, and on the main fasting day, women refrain from eating or drinking, worship Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, and break their fast in the evening. On the sixth day, they perform rituals in honor of ancient sages (*Rishi Panchami*). The government grants public holidays for women during this festival.

### Other Major Cultural Festivals

Apart from these, Nepal celebrates festivals like *Maghe Sankranti*, *Saune Sankranti*, *Holi*, *Chhath Puja*, *Ubhauri*, *Udhauri*, *New Year*, *Nwagi*, *Khlo Puja*, *Goth Puja*, *Bhoome Puja*, *Shree Panchami*, *Guru Purnima*, *Rakshabandhan*, *Buddha Jayanti*, *Swosthani Brata*, *Ram Navami*, *Ram-Sita Bibaha Panchami*, *Balachaturdashi*, *Krishna Janmashtami*, *Harelo*, *Mhapuja*, and many others. Given Nepal's diverse ethnic groups, with their own customs, beliefs, and values, it is impossible to detail all their traditions in a brief document. This summary highlights only the major festivals celebrated nationwide.

Additionally, ethnic groups like the Magar and Gurung communities of the mid-hill regions celebrate their distinct festivals and religious traditions, many of which share similarities with Vedic Hindu customs.

In this region, both marriage and funeral customs show a mix of similarities and differences across communities. Various forms of marriage exist, such as *magi bibaha* (arranged marriage where the boy formally requests the girl’s hand from her parents), *love marriage* where couples choose each other, *jari bibaha* (marrying someone else’s wife), and *chori bibaha* (abducting a girl by force during fairs, markets, or other opportunities).

Funeral rites also differ. While the Vedic tradition observes a 13-day mourning period (*kriya*), other communities complete the rituals within 3, 5, or 7 days, or adjust according to convenience and custom.

In terms of traditional healing practices, various spiritual rituals and beliefs have been passed down. These include *tantra-mantra*, *jogi bhogi*, *oja bijuwa*, *dhami jhankri*, *lama rimpochhe*, *yuma saam*, *budhi bajyu*, *padri*, *mata*, *baba*, *mundhum*, *bunghim*, and many others, each rooted in their respective communities.

Numerous festivals of great cultural significance are celebrated here, especially within the Newar community, where traditional festivals and rituals are preserved with care. Major festivals include the *Thimi Jatra*, *Bhot Jatra* (the ceremonial display of Matsyendranath’s vest), *Trishul Jatra*, *Indra Jatra*, and *Bisket Jatra*, many of which are celebrated within the Kathmandu Valley.

This region is also rich in diverse traditional musical instruments, such as *madal*, *dholak*, *damphu*, *murchunga*, *binayo*, *murali*, *bansuri*, *narsingha*, *sanahi*, *damaha*, *tyamko*, *radung*, *gyaling*, *nga*, *sangha*, *shankha*, *ghanti*, *mridang*, *nagara*, various types of *dhime*, *chyabrung*, *dhyangro*, *sarangi*, *jhyamta*, among others. These instruments are traditionally made by local communities in their own homes.

Among these, the *madal* is the most popular folk instrument used across all communities in Nepal. It can produce 16 distinct rhythms, making it suitable for accompanying all kinds of traditional songs and musical performances.

Some examples of Nepal’s folk traditions include proverbs, sayings, folktales, folk songs, *dohori* (antiphonal songs), *chachari* songs, *sangini* songs, *ganyap jiko dhulaulo*, *deuda* songs, *Sakela* dance and music, *hakpare* songs, *chyabrung* songs and dance, *Tamang selo*, *Gurung’s Rodhi Ghar* traditions, *Dhimali* dance, *Dhangad* dance, *Deusi*, *Bhailo*, *Asare* songs, *Maruni* dance and songs, *Balan*, *Silok*, *Phagu* dance and music, *Chhath* songs and dances, *bhajan kirtan* (devotional singing), *Tharu* dances, *Surya* dance, *Hurra* dance and music, *Dasi* dance, and many more. Each of these dances has its own distinctive style and accompanying melodies, performed with different musical instruments. Notably, all folk dances are performed collectively in groups.

## Festivals and Folk Traditions of Nepal

Many traditional festivals of cultural significance are celebrated in Nepal. These festivals, especially prominent within the Newar community, have long-standing cultural traditions. Among these are the Thimi Jatra, the Bhoto Jatra of Matsyendranath (in which the sacred vest is displayed), Trishul Jatra, Indra Jatra, and Bisket Jatra, with many of them primarily observed in the Kathmandu Valley.

The region also boasts a wide variety of traditional musical instruments. These include the madal, dholak, damphu, murchunga, binayo, murali, bansuri, narsingha, sanai, damaha, tyamko, radung, gyaling, nga, sanga, conch shells, bells, mridang, nagara, and various types of dhimay drums, chyabrung, dhyangro, sarangi, and jhyamta, among many others. These instruments are traditionally crafted within local communities, often produced in homes.

Among these, the madal is the most popular folk instrument, widely played by communities across the country. It can produce sixteen different rhythmic patterns, making it a versatile accompaniment for all types of cultural and folk songs.

## Examples of Nepali Folk Traditions

Nepal can be described as a garden of diverse folk traditions. Various cultural customs have been passed down through generations, including proverbs, folk tales, folk songs, dohori songs (sung in a call-and-response style), chanchari songs, sangini songs, gunyapji ko dhulaulo, deuda songs, sakela dance and songs, hakpare songs, chyabrung songs and dances, Tamang selo, Gurung’s Rodhi culture, Dhimal dance, Dhangad dance, Deusi and Bhailo, asare songs, Maruni dance and songs, balen, silok, phagu dances and songs, chhath dances and songs, bhajan and kirtan sessions, Tharu dance, Surya dance, Hurrey dance, and Dasee dance, among many others. Each dance form has its distinct musical style and rhythm, often accompanied by different traditional instruments. Notably, these folk dances are typically performed collectively.

## Some Examples of Folk Songs

### Eastern Nepali Folk Tunes:

#### 1. Solo Song:

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
1.1. “What is the use of wealth and gold purses earned through impure means, It is far better to live a peaceful life with a content heart, eating nettles and simple greens.” (Source: Muna Madan)	<i>Haatako maila sunako thaila ke garnu            dhanale,            Saaga ra sisnu khaeko beshha aanandi            manale</i>

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
1.2. "Villagers call me every day, And your love grows stronger by the moment. The field laborers sing in the lowlands, Spreading love and affection in the village. Let's meet and smile next year, And keep these memories close."	Gaule malai bolanchha din din, Timro maya lagdai chha chhin chhin. Khetalale besima gaeko, Maya priti gaugharmai laeko. Aundo sal bhetera has aula, Samjhanama rākhera basaunla, Gaule malai.....

2. Dohori Song (sung in a playful question-answer style between boys and girls):

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<b>Boy's side:</b> "Ilam is beautiful, with its tea gardens and golden sunrise in the east. The hills and valleys call us for dohori gatherings. During Asar, the drums and instruments gather in the fields, We youths feel drawn toward the girls Yes, my dear – we feel drawn toward the girls."	<b>Boy's side:</b> Ilam ramro tyo chiya bari purbama jhulke gham, Danda ra pakha, lek ra besi dohori khelna aam, Asarai maas naumati baja thariko bethima, Umer badhyo tanneri bhaiyo man janchha ketima, Ho ni baini man janchha ketima
<b>Girl's side:</b> "In Baisakh's fairs and markets, the cool breeze blows. Do not wander carelessly, brother, keep your heart steady. Make offerings to the gods and don't gaze around unnecessarily. Appreciate inner beauty, don't be swayed by appearances. Yes, dear lad – don't be swayed by appearances."	<b>Girl's side:</b> Baisakako bela bazar mela hawa chha sirsir, Barala bani nahind daju rakh hai man thir, Devi ra deuta bhakal garnu bhetima nahernu, Sundar phul saundarya linu manle nabernu, Ho ni daju manle nabernu

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<p><b>Boy’s Side:</b>            At the hilltop fair in the month of Mangsir,            shall we wait for each other, my dear?            That sweet voice of yours — it’s so            enchanting, it feels like magic.            Let neither the sun nor the moon see us, and            let no bird overhear.            May the gods never let our love and bond be            forgotten.            Yes, my dear — may the gods never forget.</p>	<p><b>Boy’s side:</b>  <i>Dandako mela mangsirko bela            parkhula bahini,            Tyo timro boli kya mitho ho ni lagdai            chha mohani,            Gham ra junale nadekhun ani            panchhile nasunun,            Timro ra hamro maya ra pirati            ishwarle nabhulun            Ho ni bahini ishwarle nabhulun</i></p>
<p><b>Girl’s Side:</b>            In the lowlands, golden earrings sway as my            heart flutters.            When I think back to the day we met, my eyes            well up with tears.            In the grasslands, the forests, and the hills —            we’ll meet at the fair.            Who can stop young hearts when youth is in            full bloom?            Yes, dear lad — when youth is in full bloom.</p>	<p><b>Girl’s side:</b>  <i>Besima jhule sunaka bala manaka            tareli,            Samjhera lyaunda bhethbako dina            bhijdachhan pareli,            Ghasa ra daura, bana ra pakha bheth            hunchha melama,            Kele po chekkchha man ustai            hunchha baisko belama,            Ho ni daju baisko belama</i></p>
<p><b>Boy’s Side:</b>            It’s gotten hot down in the lowlands, while            mist covers the hills.            The day we were to meet — I carelessly let it            slip from my mind.            The wild berries might prick you, so eat them            gently, my dear.            And while walking lost in memories, watch            your step.            Yes, my dear — be careful as you go.</p>	<p><b>Boy’s side:</b>  <i>Garmi hai badhyo tyo besi tira            lekama husse chha,            Timro ra mero bheth garne dina            bhusukkai birsechha,            Ainselu dana kandale ghochchha            hosale khanu hai,            Samjhanda hindda khutta thes lagla            hosale janu hai.            Ho ni bahini hosle janu hai</i></p>

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<p><b>Girl’s Side:</b>                      In the woods, colorful flowers bloom, but my longing keeps growing.                      When there’s no shelter for hope, the heart burns like fire.                      Which flower is truly beautiful? Even the bees go searching.                      But even the prettiest bloom feels dull when loneliness darkens your heart.                      Yes, dear lad — when loneliness darkens your heart.</p>	<p><b>Girl’s side:</b>  <i>Banama phulchha naurangi phoola                      biraha chaldachha,                      Aasako baasa nabhaepachhi man                      aago baldachha,                      Kun phoola ramro bhanera mauri                      sungera hinddo ho,                      Phoolako shira urath lagdo andhero                      siundo bho.                      Ho ni daju andhero siundo bho</i></p>

*(Collected by Hem Adhikari)*

3. Sakela Dance Song:

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<p>“<i>Soisoila ho hurra ha ha</i>                      Let’s gather at the Sakela shrine and offer our prayers through dance,                      Let’s smile, dance, and celebrate, leaving all worries behind.  <i>Soi dhole soi, arko dhole khoi (Play the drum drummer, where’s the next drummer?) x 2</i>  <i>Soisoila ho hurra ha ha x2</i>                      Beat the drums and cymbals as we honor the Ubhauri festival,                      May the gods and the land and our ancestors always be joyful.  <i>May they be joyful</i>                      Soi dhole soi, arko dhole khoi (Play the drum drummer, where’s the next drummer?) x 2                      Soisoila ho hurra ha ha x2”</p>	<p><i>Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Sakela thanma milera puja garaun                      hai nachera                      Haasera nachaun ke lanu chha ra                      samjhana saanhera                      Soi dhole soi arko dhole khoi                      Soi dhole soi arko dhole khoi                      Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Nachaun ra gaaun dhol jhyamta                      thoki ubhauri parvama                      Devi ra deuta sime ra bhume rahun                      hai harshama                      Ae hajur rahun hai harshama                      Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Soi soila ho hurra ha ha                      Soi dhole soi arko dhole khoi                      Soi dhole soi arko dhole khoi</i></p>

*(Collected from the community)*

#### 4. Asare Song:

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<p><i>(Sung during rice planting in the fields)</i>            “Hey... hey... it’s the month of Asar, the rice we planted — when will it grow?            When will it grow...?            Hey... hey... when will it grow?            Youth comes only once, wild and lively — it makes the whole world smile.            Hey... hey... it makes the world smile.”</p>	<p><i>Ae ha... hai.. Asarai maas, ropeko ropo kebela pasauncha</i>  <i>Ke bela pasauncha.....</i>  <i>Ae ha.. hai..... ke bela pasauncha.</i>  <i>Ekpalta aauchha allare joban duniya hasauncha</i>  <i>Ae ha... hai..... duniya hasauncha.</i></p>

*(Collected from the community)*

#### 5. Gurung Folk Song:

English Translation	Romanized Nepali
<p>“ Look up there, at that dark mountain            Look down here, the river flows            I wonder if it’s a mother’s love I feel            Or is it the pain of separation...            Five hundred sheep            And five rivers crossing            My beloved has taken me around            Sleeping in the forest            Eating in the forest            What has my beloved written? Hey... ah...            ah...            Crack crack crack (sound of the <i>damphu</i> drum)”</p>	<p><i>Umbho ta heraun tyo Kali lek</i>  <i>Undho ta nirah</i>  <i>Ki lagchha malai aama ko maya</i>  <i>Ki chalchha birah.....</i>  <i>Panch saya bhedi</i>  <i>Panch khola tari</i>  <i>Ghumayo bhawile</i>  <i>Ban banai sutnu</i>  <i>Ban banai khanu</i>  <i>Ke lekhyo bhawile he... a.. a..</i>  <i>Tring tring tring (damphu ko awaj)</i></p>

*(From tradition)*

### In Conclusion

Culture itself is a vast and comprehensive domain. It includes everything from language to all aspects of human community life. Occupations and professions are also parts of culture. The construction of culture spans many generations. Tracing the history of Nepali culture, one can go back as far as five thousand years. Another important aspect is that Nepal is home to 127 known ethnic groups and castes, with ongoing research to discover more. These are not immigrants but indigenous peoples of this land. Their linguistic communities are diverse, and cultural traditions are just as numerous. Exploring this vast garden of culture requires significant time and resources.

The collective name for the cultures of all these ethnic and linguistic groups is Nepali culture. Culture, as the heartbeat of human life, is preserved by all. It has many sources. The primary sources of Nepali culture are the diverse ethnic communities of Nepal themselves. The secondary sources include numerous texts from Vedic literature to contemporary folk life. There is a noble moral message in Nepali culture: Guests who arrive in the evening should be respectfully hosted and not left hungry; whatever is available at home should be offered to them. This custom still continues in villages. There are many examples of morality and good conduct, such as respecting elders, loving the young, and the idea that only where women are respected does God remain pleased.

This brief overview merely touches the surface of Nepali culture. In essence, Nepali culture is inspired and animated by moral virtue and good conduct.

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# TRANSFORMING SECONDARY EDUCATION THROUGH CONSTRUCTIVIST STRATEGIES: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSETS AS CULTURAL CAPITAL

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## Abstract

This conceptual article aims to explore how constructivist pedagogical strategies can transform secondary education by cultivating entrepreneurial mindsets as a form of cultural capital. It synthesizes theories of constructivist learning, entrepreneurship education, and Bourdieu’s cultural capital to frame entrepreneurial dispositions—such as creativity, opportunity recognition, and resilience—not merely as economic skills but as culturally embedded competencies. The article highlights key strategies, including project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, design thinking, and business simulations, with illustrations from the Thai educational context. It addresses critical challenges such as curriculum rigidity, teacher readiness, and assessment misalignment. The discussion provides practical guidance for teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers in embedding entrepreneurial learning into secondary education. Ultimately, the article contributes a conceptual framework for reconceptualizing secondary schooling as a space for inclusive value creation and culturally responsive transformation.

**Keywords :** transforming secondary education, constructivist strategies, entrepreneurial mindset, cultural capital, entrepreneurship education

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## Introduction

### 1. Rethinking Secondary Education in a Transformative Era

In an era shaped by economic uncertainty, rapid technological disruption, and growing social inequities, traditional education systems face mounting pressure to cultivate learners who are not only knowledgeable but also adaptable, creative, and resilient (OECD, 2018). Academic knowledge alone is no longer sufficient. There is growing consensus among scholars and policymakers that education must prioritize the development of entrepreneurial mindsets—defined by creativity, opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and persistence—as critical life competencies for navigating a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world (Bell, 2019; Gibb, 2008). Secondary education represents a pivotal stage for fostering these capacities. It is here that learners begin forming identities, aspirations, and the foundational skills that shape their future pathways. Entrepreneurial mindsets are not limited to business creation; they reflect a proactive orientation toward value creation across personal, social, and economic domains (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020). However, such mindsets do not emerge from traditional didactic models. Instead, they require pedagogical approaches that emphasize student agency, inquiry, real-world engagement, and reflective thinking. Constructivist learning theory—rooted in the works of Piaget (1950) and Vygotsky (1978)—offers a compelling foundation for this transformation. Its emphasis on learner-centeredness, social interaction, and authentic problem-solving aligns closely with the core elements of entrepreneurial learning (Jonassen, 1999; Loyens & Gijbels, 2008).

### 2. From Economic Utility to Cultural Capital

This article goes beyond viewing entrepreneurial education as an economic tool. Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of cultural capital, we argue that entrepreneurial mindsets can be understood as culturally situated competencies—dispositions, skills, and values that empower learners to navigate and reshape their environments. In this framing, entrepreneurship becomes not merely a means of income generation but a form of agency and cultural expression, particularly relevant in diverse and resource-constrained settings (Yosso, 2005; Jeerapattatorn, 2023). When entrepreneurial learning is embedded in constructivist pedagogy, it contributes to both personal transformation and community empowerment. This dual lens—entrepreneurial mindset as cultural capital—allows for a richer understanding of how students can become agents of innovation, grounded in local wisdom yet capable of engaging global challenges.

### 3. Scope, Purpose and Structure of the Article

This is a conceptual article that synthesizes key theories and pedagogical approaches related to constructivist learning, entrepreneurial mindset development, and cultural capital. It draws from international literature and Thai case illustrations to explore how constructivist strategies—such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, design thinking, and business simulations—can be integrated into secondary education to foster entrepreneurial mindsets in culturally responsive ways. Rather than presenting new empirical findings, the article builds a theoretical framework to guide educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in reimagining secondary education as a space for inclusive value creation. The article is organized into six main sections:

3.1 Theoretical Foundations – introduces core frameworks underpinning constructivist learning, entrepreneurship education, and cultural capital.

3.2 Constructivist Strategies for Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets – analyzes key pedagogical methods with global and Thai illustrations.

3.3 Entrepreneurial Mindset as Cultural Capital – reframes entrepreneurial learning through a sociocultural lens.

3.4 Practical Applications in Secondary Education – provides actionable strategies for curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

3.5 Challenges and Considerations – discusses barriers and proposes solutions.

3.6 Conclusion and Recommendations – synthesizes key insights and offers guidance for stakeholders.

Therefore, this article aims to conceptualize how constructivist pedagogical strategies can foster entrepreneurial mindsets as a form of cultural capital within secondary education. By framing entrepreneurial dispositions not merely as economic skills but as culturally embedded competencies, the article highlights the potential of schooling to serve as a space of inclusive value creation and cultural sustainability. This conceptual contribution is intended to guide educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers in rethinking secondary education to meet the complex demands of the 21st century.

#### Theoretical Foundations

This section synthesizes three foundational theoretical domains—constructivist learning theory, entrepreneurial mindset development, and the sociological concept of cultural capital—to provide a coherent framework for transformative education in secondary schools.

### 1. Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism views learning as an active, context-dependent process wherein individuals construct knowledge through experience, social interaction, and reflection. Piaget (1950) emphasized the cognitive development of learners through processes of assimilation and accommodation, while Vygotsky (1978) introduced the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), highlighting the social nature of learning and the importance of scaffolding. Contemporary constructivist pedagogy builds on these ideas to promote student agency, inquiry, and real-world problem-solving (Jonassen, 1999; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2006). Approaches such as project-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based learning (IBL), flipped classrooms, and design thinking reflect these principles by fostering deeper engagement, collaboration, and reflective thinking (Loyens & Gijbels, 2008; Krečar & Coric, 2016). Importantly, the role of the teacher shifts from transmitter of knowledge to facilitator of learning, resonating with the entrepreneurial ethos that values experimentation, iterative thinking, and learner autonomy.

### 2. Entrepreneurial Mindset in Education

The entrepreneurial mindset encompasses a set of competencies and dispositions—such as creativity, opportunity recognition, resilience, and initiative—that enable individuals to navigate uncertainty and create value (Gibb, 2008; Bell, 2019). In educational contexts, this mindset is increasingly framed as a transversal skill essential for lifelong learning and civic engagement. The EntreComp Framework (European Commission, 2016) identifies fifteen interrelated components of entrepreneurial competence across three areas: Ideas and Opportunities, Resources, and Into Action. These competencies include ethical thinking, planning, mobilizing resources, and reflecting on outcomes—traits that can be deliberately cultivated through experiential and constructivist learning environments. Research suggests that early exposure to entrepreneurial learning—particularly during secondary education—can foster students’ self-efficacy, risk tolerance, and creative agency (Rodriguez & Lieber, 2020; Suwistika et al., 2024). When pedagogically aligned, entrepreneurial education equips students not only for economic activity but also for proactive problem-solving in diverse contexts.

### 3. Cultural Capital and Its Relevance to Entrepreneurship

Bourdieu (1986) introduced the concept of cultural capital to describe the non-financial resources—such as skills, habits, and dispositions—that confer advantage in social systems. He identified three forms: embodied (e.g., dispositions, ways of speaking), objectified (e.g., books, tools), and institutionalized (e.g., degrees, credentials). Traditionally, schools have reinforced dominant cultural capital while marginalizing others. However, cultural capital can also be

developed and transformed. Entrepreneurial mindsets, when cultivated through inclusive pedagogy, represent a form of emergent cultural capital—especially in contexts where learners’ existing cultural assets are under-recognized (Yosso, 2005). In Thailand, for example, youth entrepreneurship initiatives increasingly integrate local knowledge, family traditions, and community problem-solving, reinforcing cultural continuity while enabling innovation (Jeerapattanatorn, 2023). This reconceptualization positions entrepreneurship as a socially embedded practice—one that connects economic activity with identity, values, and cultural agency.

#### 4. Integrative Framework

Bringing these three domains together yields a robust theoretical foundation for reimagining secondary education:

4.1 Constructivist pedagogy provides the means—active, experiential learning strategies.

4.2 Entrepreneurial mindset defines the ends—developing competencies for value creation and agency.

4.3 Cultural capital offers the contextual lens—ensuring that learning is rooted in, and responsive to, cultural realities.

Figure 1 illustrates this integrated framework, showing how constructivist strategies enable entrepreneurial learning, which in turn becomes a form of cultural capital contributing to personal and collective transformation.



Figure 1. Theoretical Integration for Entrepreneurial Education

Together, these perspectives reveal that entrepreneurial mindsets are not simply economic tools but forms of cultural capital that can be cultivated through constructivist strategies. This provides the basis for analyzing how specific pedagogical approaches may transform secondary education.

### **Constructivist Strategies for Fostering Entrepreneurial Mindsets**

Constructivist pedagogies offer fertile ground for developing entrepreneurial mindsets by emphasizing active, inquiry-driven, and socially situated learning. This section outlines key strategies that support entrepreneurial competencies, with examples from both international and Thai secondary education settings.

#### **1. Project-Based Learning (PBL)**

Project-Based Learning (PBL) engages students in tackling complex, real-world challenges through sustained inquiry, collaborative problem-solving, and public dissemination of outcomes. This approach not only deepens content knowledge but also fosters essential entrepreneurial traits, including opportunity recognition, creativity, perseverance, and effective teamwork (Krečar & Coric, 2016). In the Thai context, an illustrative example comes from Chiang Mai, where secondary students designed biodegradable packaging solutions for local artisans. The project involved direct field engagement, iterative prototyping, and collaboration with community stakeholders, integrating ecological awareness with entrepreneurial innovation (Jeerapattatorn, 2023). This example underscores how PBL can serve as a powerful conduit for entrepreneurial learning rooted in local relevance and sustainability.

#### **2. Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)**

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) emphasizes student-driven questioning, active exploration, and iterative reflection, positioning learners as agents in their own knowledge construction. This approach cultivates key entrepreneurial attributes such as curiosity, critical thinking, and self-directed learning—skills that are foundational to effective opportunity assessment and innovation (Deveci, 2022). In Thailand, a notable example comes from Ubon Ratchathani, where students engaged in an enterprise-oriented science unit by investigating the potential of agricultural waste. Through experimentation and community consultation, they developed biochar products, merging environmental consciousness with entrepreneurial initiative. This case illustrates how IBL can empower learners to identify problems, generate solutions, and translate inquiry into socially and economically relevant actions.

### 3. Flipped Classrooms and Business Simulations

Flipped learning reconfigures the conventional instructional model by shifting content acquisition to outside the classroom, thereby freeing class time for collaborative problem-solving and experiential engagement. This approach enhances student agency and deepens understanding through active participation. Business simulations extend this model by immersing learners in dynamic, real-world entrepreneurial contexts that require budgeting, marketing, and strategic decision-making under conditions of uncertainty (Alkaabi, 2023). In Thailand, several magnet schools in Bangkok and Khon Kaen have adopted the “Young Biz” simulation platform, enabling students to operate virtual startups. Through this process, learners gain practical insights into market behavior, team coordination, and entrepreneurial risk, making abstract concepts tangible and fostering essential business acumen.

### 4. Design Thinking and Socio-Scientific Argumentation

Design Thinking provides a structured yet adaptable framework that guides students through phases of empathizing with users, generating ideas, prototyping, and iterative testing. When integrated with Socio-Scientific Argumentation (SSA), this approach enables learners to critically examine and respond to complex ethical, social, and environmental challenges. Together, these pedagogies promote both innovative problem-solving and reflective judgment. In the Thai context, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) has implemented the “Design for Community” program, which tasks students with addressing tangible local issues—such as water contamination and malnutrition—through user-centered design processes. These projects often involve collaboration with community mentors, thereby bridging classroom learning with civic engagement and fostering a sense of agency grounded in real-world impact.

### 5. Experiential Learning and School-Based Enterprises (SBEs)

Grounded in Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle, these approaches emphasize concrete experience, reflection, and experimentation. SBEs enable students to run real microenterprises within school, learning from both success and failure. *Example (Thailand):* In northeastern provinces, students produce and sell herbal wellness products based on family recipes, integrating traditional knowledge with modern branding and customer feedback (Jeerapattanatorn, 2024).

**Table 1.** Constructivist Strategies and Associated Entrepreneurial Outcomes

Strategy	Key Features	Entrepreneurial Mindsets	Thai Example
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Real-world problem solving, teamwork	Creativity, perseverance	Eco-packaging for artisans (Chiang Mai)
Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL)	Student questioning, guided discovery	Critical thinking, curiosity	Biochar innovation (Ubon Ratchathani)
Flipped Classrooms & Simulations	Active classroom use, scenario immersion	Decision-making, adaptability	Young Biz simulations (Bangkok)
Design Thinking + SSA	User empathy, ethical reasoning	Innovation, civic engagement	“Design for Community” (OBEC)
SBEs & Experiential Learning	Authentic enterprise experience	Resilience, planning, cultural linkage	Herbal products from local knowledge (Isan)

## 6. Pedagogical Principles Across Strategies

While diverse in form, these strategies share five pedagogical principles essential to entrepreneurial learning:

- *Authenticity* – Problems are meaningful and context-based.
- *Collaboration* – Learning is social and cooperative.
- *Iteration* – Risk-taking and experimentation are encouraged.
- *Reflection* – Learners evaluate outcomes and process.
- *Agency* – Students make choices and take ownership.

These principles are best reinforced through formative assessment tools such as journals, peer reviews, digital portfolios, and entrepreneurial rubrics (European Commission, 2021; Jeerapattanon, 2024).



*Figure 2.* Constructivist–Entrepreneurial Learning Cycle

These strategies, while diverse in form, converge in their potential to reframe entrepreneurial dispositions as culturally embedded competencies. The next section therefore considers how entrepreneurial mindsets can be understood and cultivated explicitly as cultural capital.

### **Entrepreneurial Mindset as Cultural Capital**

Reframing the entrepreneurial mindset as a form of cultural capital provides a powerful lens to understand how entrepreneurial education contributes not only to individual development but also to collective cultural and social transformation. This section examines how entrepreneurial dispositions function as culturally embedded competencies and how schools can nurture them as part of broader equity and sustainability goals.

#### **1. From Economic Skillset to Cultural Disposition**

Although entrepreneurship is frequently conceptualized within the framework of economic activity and market-based value creation, the entrepreneurial mindset extends far beyond commercial interests to embrace rich cultural and social dimensions. Key attributes commonly linked to entrepreneurship—such as creativity, initiative, and resilience—should not be regarded solely as instruments for economic gain. Rather, they represent culturally mediated dispositions that shape how individuals perceive and act upon opportunities in their social worlds (Berglund & Johansson, 2007). This perspective aligns with Bourdieu’s (1986) influential theory of cultural capital, which articulates how cultural resources function as forms of power and social mobility. He identifies three primary forms of cultural capital: embodied capital, which refers to internalized dispositions such as confidence and leadership; objectified capital, represented by material tools and resources, including entrepreneurial technologies;

and institutionalized capital, which is manifest in formal recognition, such as credentials and qualifications.

When schools adopt culturally responsive pedagogies that foreground the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, they contribute to a profound transformation in the nature of educational outcomes. Specifically, such pedagogical approaches enable students—especially those from historically marginalized or under-resourced communities—to reframe their local knowledge, cultural practices, and lived experiences as legitimate and valuable forms of capital. In doing so, these students are not only acquiring entrepreneurial competencies, but also engaging in a process of cultural revalorization, where their identities and social contexts become central to the construction of knowledge and innovation.

## **2. Reproducing and Transforming Culture through Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurial learning performs a dual cultural function by simultaneously reproducing and transforming existing cultural practices. On one hand, it facilitates cultural reproduction, as students engage with and sustain local knowledge systems—such as traditional crafts, agriculture, or indigenous wellness practices—by applying entrepreneurial strategies to preserve and revitalize these traditions. On the other hand, it enables cultural transformation by empowering students to reimagine their identities and societal roles, fostering agency, creativity, and aspirations that transcend conventional norms. A compelling example can be found in northern Thailand, where youth-led initiatives use digital platforms to market traditional textiles, thereby not only preserving local heritage but also creating new forms of economic value in a modern context (Jeerapattanaorn, 2023). These dynamics affirm that entrepreneurial education, particularly when grounded in constructivist learning strategies, can reposition students as cultural contributors whose innovations reflect both continuity and change, challenging the narrow view of entrepreneurship as merely economic in function.

## **3. Cultural Capital in Thai Secondary Schools**

Thailand’s educational culture has historically emphasized academic performance, deference to authority, and centralized curricula (Hallinger, 2010). However, the recent shift toward competency-based learning offers opportunities to redefine what counts as “success.” Programs like “นักเรียนไทยหัวใจเป็นผู้ประกอบการ” (Thai Students with Entrepreneurial Hearts) exemplify this shift. Students across urban and rural schools develop businesses rooted in community resources—from herbal products to eco-tourism—transforming everyday practices into recognized and marketable forms of cultural capital. These projects redefine status and opportunity: a student who rebrands a family recipe or revitalizes a community craft gains not only entrepreneurial skills but also social legitimacy and confidence.

#### 4. Recognizing Marginalized Capital

Traditional interpretations of cultural capital have often privileged dominant, Eurocentric forms of knowledge, marginalizing the cultural assets of non-dominant communities. In response, scholars such as Yosso (2005) argue for a broader conceptualization that includes the community cultural wealth of historically marginalized groups, encompassing assets such as navigational skills, familial knowledge, and linguistic capital. In Thai contexts, students from low-income, rural, or indigenous communities frequently hold underrecognized forms of expertise—ranging from local production techniques to embedded community networks. When educators adopt constructivist strategies that surface and validate these strengths, such assets are reframed as sources of both epistemic and economic value. For instance, in northeastern Thailand, students have launched school-based enterprises utilizing indigenous plants, transforming informal home-based knowledge into formal learning experiences and entrepreneurial recognition (Jeerapattatorn, 2024). This process not only democratizes knowledge production but also affirms the legitimacy of diverse cultural contributions within entrepreneurial education.

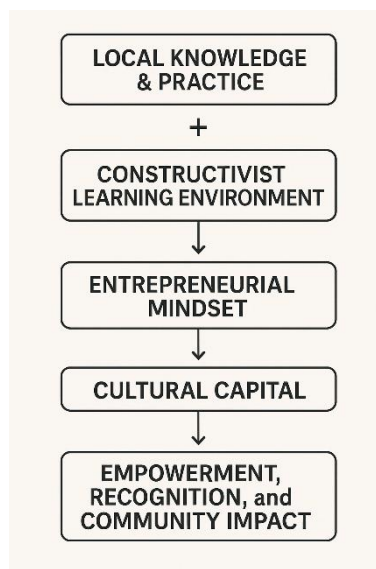


Figure 3. Entrepreneurial Mindset as Emergent Cultural Capital

#### 5. Implications for Equity and Sustainability

Viewing entrepreneurial mindsets as cultural capital reorients the purpose of education toward equity, inclusion, and relevance. It challenges deficit narratives by affirming that all students possess culturally grounded potential that can be cultivated into recognized forms of success.

*Key implications:*

- *Equity* – Validates diverse learner assets and pathways
- *Cultural sustainability* – Connects innovation with heritage preservation
- *Social mobility* – Expands definitions of achievement and opportunity

By positioning entrepreneurial learning as cultural capital, the implications extend beyond individual skill-building toward equity and sustainability. The following section illustrates how these ideas can be practically embedded in secondary schools.

## **Practical Applications in Secondary Education**

While the theoretical rationale for integrating constructivist strategies and entrepreneurial mindset development is compelling, effective implementation requires contextual sensitivity, institutional alignment, and cross-stakeholder collaboration. This section outlines actionable approaches for embedding entrepreneurial learning into secondary education systems.

### **1. Curriculum Integration: Embedding Entrepreneurship Across Subjects**

Entrepreneurial learning should not be confined to business or vocational education alone but must instead be embedded across subject areas as a transversal competence. This integrative approach requires a reimagining of curricular goals to emphasize creativity, value creation, and learner agency within diverse disciplinary contexts. For instance, in science classes, students might investigate environmental problems and prototype sustainable technologies such as solar dryers or water filtration systems. In social studies, learners can explore local economic systems and propose community-based enterprises. In language arts, students may develop brand narratives or pitch business ideas, strengthening persuasive communication. In Thailand, the Ministry of Education’s Active Learning Curriculum Reform has supported such interdisciplinary integration. Schools in the OBEC Smart School Network, for example, have implemented entrepreneurship units that connect classroom learning to pressing local challenges, including food preservation and flood resilience (Ministry of Education, 2020). This model not only promotes entrepreneurial competencies but also anchors learning in real-world relevance and community engagement.

### **2. Teacher Professional Development: Enabling the Shift to Facilitation**

Teachers play a pivotal role in transforming entrepreneurial education, yet many have been trained within traditional, didactic paradigms that emphasize content delivery over learner agency. To support this pedagogical shift, professional development must equip educators to assume constructivist roles—as facilitators, learning designers, and co-learners. Effective strategies include workshops on inquiry-based and experiential methods such as PBL,

IBL, and flipped learning; mentorship in entrepreneurial pedagogy frameworks like EntreComp; collaborative design of interdisciplinary modules and engagement in action research cycles; and the cultivation of peer learning communities for mutual reflection and growth. In Thailand, the Jeerapattana Learning Lab exemplifies such an approach by offering blended professional development to teachers in northeastern provinces. This model combines online learning modules, school-based coaching, and structured reflective practice, fostering teacher capacity to deliver contextually responsive entrepreneurial instruction (Jeerapattana, 2024).

**Table 2.** Teacher Roles in Entrepreneurial Learning Environments

Traditional Role	Constructivist Role	Entrepreneurial Impact
Knowledge transmitter	Learning facilitator	Student agency, autonomy
Classroom manager	Environment designer	Risk-taking, inquiry
Grader and evaluator	Reflective mentor	Growth mindset, feedback culture
Curriculum follower	Co-creator of learning	Innovation, responsiveness

### 3. Learning Environments: Creating Spaces for Innovation

To cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets, learning environments must be reimagined as dynamic, inclusive, and resource-rich spaces that support experimentation, collaboration, and creativity. Such environments move beyond static classrooms to incorporate open-layout configurations and dedicated maker spaces equipped with tools for prototyping and digital design. Access to real-world data and entrepreneurial simulation platforms enhances experiential learning, while an atmosphere of psychological safety encourages students to take intellectual risks and share emerging ideas. In the Thai context, Satit Kasetsart School exemplifies this approach through its Innovation Studio model, where students engage in agriculture-technology and social enterprise projects. By applying design thinking and digital storytelling tools within these flexible spaces, learners are empowered to connect innovation with real-world relevance, cultivating both technical competence and social awareness.

### 4. Assessment: Recognizing Process-Oriented Learning

Traditional assessment practices often fall short in capturing the depth and dynamism of entrepreneurial learning, which privileges iterative processes, reflective inquiry, and value creation over static end products. To authentically evaluate such learning, assessment models must be expanded to incorporate formative and process-oriented tools that foreground growth and agency. Effective strategies include digital portfolios that document students’ learning

trajectories, rubrics aligned with the EntreComp Framework to assess transversal competencies, and the use of peer- and self-assessment to promote metacognitive awareness. Public exhibitions or community pitches further provide authentic audiences and reinforce the social relevance of student work. In Thailand, schools in Chiang Rai have adopted e-portfolios as part of their entrepreneurship programs, enabling students to record project development while receiving feedback from both teachers and local entrepreneurs. This dual-evaluation approach validates student learning in real-world contexts and encourages meaningful engagement with external stakeholders.

### **5. Community Engagement: Bridging Classrooms and Contexts**

Community engagement is essential for grounding entrepreneurial education in real-world relevance and cultural authenticity. By forming partnerships with local entrepreneurs, artisans, cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations, schools can co-create learning experiences that extend beyond classroom walls. Such collaborations offer students access to real-world mentorship, exposure to authentic community-based challenges, and opportunities to validate and apply local knowledge as a valued learning asset. These engagements not only enrich the curriculum but also cultivate civic responsibility and place-based innovation. A compelling example comes from Udon Thani, where students worked with a local textile cooperative to rebrand traditional fabrics for youth markets. The initiative integrated marketing strategies, cultural storytelling, and principles of social entrepreneurship, illustrating how education that bridges classrooms and communities can foster both economic and cultural vitality.

### **6. Policy and Systemic Support: Enabling Ecosystemic Change**

For entrepreneurial education to thrive sustainably, innovation at the classroom level must be supported by coherent national policy and systemic alignment. Policymakers play a crucial role in creating enabling conditions that prioritize flexibility, equity, and experimentation within education systems. Key recommendations include embedding entrepreneurial competencies within national curriculum standards, legitimizing alternative forms of assessment that capture process-oriented learning, investing in teacher development and innovation laboratories, and fostering cross-sector partnerships with private industry and civil society. In Thailand, the Ministry of Education has articulated these priorities in recent reform agendas; however, implementation has remained inconsistent across regions and school types. Programs such as the Entrepreneurial Sandbox Schools represent promising models for piloting and scaling innovative practices, offering pathways for systemic transformation grounded in local relevance and national coherence.

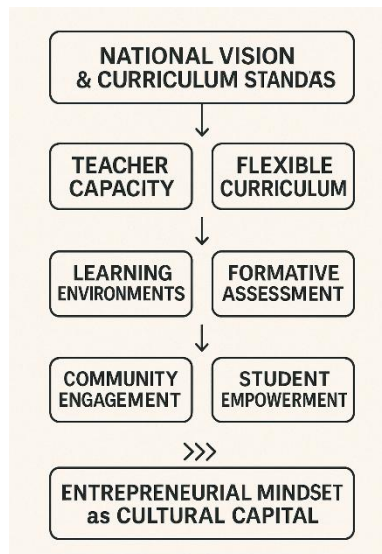


Figure 4. Ecosystem for Entrepreneurial Secondary Education

In summary, embedding entrepreneurial learning in secondary education requires an ecosystemic approach—integrating pedagogy, policy, teacher agency, and cultural context. When thoughtfully implemented, such an approach equips students to become not only job creators, but also culturally rooted innovators and agents of community transformation.

### Challenges and Considerations

Despite increasing advocacy for entrepreneurial education through constructivist approaches, widespread implementation remains challenging. Barriers arise at multiple levels—from national policy to classroom practice—and often reflect deep-rooted structural, cultural, and epistemological constraints. This section identifies key obstacles and offers strategic considerations for addressing them.

#### 1. Policy-Level Constraints: Misalignment Between Vision and Practice

Despite increasing references to 21st-century skills and entrepreneurial competencies in national education policies, these concepts often remain peripheral within curricular standards, instructional priorities, and school accountability systems. A key challenge lies in the structural misalignment between visionary policy rhetoric and ground-level implementation. Rigid curriculum frameworks frequently constrain project-based and experiential learning, while high-stakes examinations continue to dominate student evaluation. Moreover, institutional rigidity limits the integration of interdisciplinary innovation and alternative pedagogies. In the Thai context, although entrepreneurship is mentioned in various policy documents, its enactment is often relegated to elective or extracurricular domains,

lacking formal recognition within core assessment and promotion criteria. To address this gap, strategic responses should focus on embedding entrepreneurial competencies into national standards, enabling flexible timetabling, supporting cross-subject learning modules, and broadening definitions of academic achievement to encompass diverse learner pathways and creative problem-solving capacities.

## **2. Teacher Readiness: Transitioning to Constructivist Roles**

Implementing constructivist entrepreneurship education necessitates a fundamental shift in the role of teachers—from transmitters of knowledge to facilitators, mentors, and co-learners. However, many educators remain underprepared for these roles due to systemic and professional barriers. Common challenges include insufficient access to sustained professional development, a lack of mentorship or exposure to exemplary practices, and apprehension about managing open-ended, student-centered learning environments. These limitations hinder the adoption of entrepreneurial pedagogies that require flexibility, improvisation, and reflective practice. Addressing these challenges demands a move beyond one-off training workshops toward more embedded and ongoing forms of capacity-building, such as peer coaching, teacher learning communities, and school-based action research. In the Thai context, showcasing successful implementation models—particularly those rooted in local schools and teacher-led innovation—can help build confidence, reduce resistance, and support a cultural shift toward facilitative teaching.

### **6.3 Resource Gaps and Inequity**

A significant barrier to implementing entrepreneurial education equitably lies in the uneven distribution of resources across schools, particularly in rural, remote, or underfunded areas. Many institutions lack the basic infrastructure, learning tools, and digital connectivity necessary to support experiential and innovation-driven learning. Moreover, the reliance on costly simulation platforms or the assumption of startup capital can inadvertently reinforce educational inequality by privileging schools with greater financial or institutional support. To counter these disparities, strategic responses should prioritize low-cost, high-impact approaches that leverage locally available materials, community-based problem-solving, and mobile or offline learning innovations. Collaborations with local entrepreneurs, artisans, and cooperatives can further enrich the learning experience while bridging material and contextual resource gaps, ensuring that entrepreneurial education remains inclusive, adaptable, and grounded in real-world relevance.

#### **4. Cultural Barriers: Resistance to Risk and Innovation**

Cultural norms embedded within traditional schooling systems—particularly in contexts such as Thailand—often emphasize conformity, deference to authority, and rote content mastery. While these values may contribute to classroom order and academic discipline, they can also pose significant obstacles to entrepreneurial learning, which relies on behaviors such as risk-taking, creative experimentation, and critical inquiry. Students may internalize messages that discourage questioning or innovation, while teachers may hesitate to relinquish control in favor of more open-ended, student-driven learning. To navigate these tensions, a gradual and culturally sensitive introduction of constructivist strategies is essential. Starting with collaborative group projects and community-based entrepreneurial activities allows for innovation within familiar social structures. Moreover, emphasizing collective over individualistic models of entrepreneurship—such as family enterprises or community impact initiatives—can align entrepreneurial learning with culturally valued notions of interdependence and social harmony.

#### **5. Assessment Incompatibility**

The dominance of summative and standardized assessments in many educational systems presents a fundamental misalignment with the goals of entrepreneurial education, which emphasizes creativity, iterative learning, and process-based competencies. When success is narrowly defined by test scores and content recall, there is limited space to evaluate the development of entrepreneurial traits such as initiative, problem-solving, and value creation. Consequently, teachers may perceive entrepreneurial learning as marginal, risky, or incompatible with institutional accountability measures. To address this challenge, educational systems must adopt more formative, competency-based assessment models that capture the complexity and dynamism of entrepreneurial growth. Tools such as rubrics aligned with the EntreComp framework, digital portfolios, peer and self-assessment, and public exhibitions of student work can provide more authentic and multidimensional evaluations. These methods not only validate diverse learner strengths but also reinforce the legitimacy of entrepreneurial learning within mainstream assessment structures.

**Table 3.** Summary of Challenges and Strategic Responses

Challenge	Strategic Response
Curriculum rigidity	Integrate entrepreneurship into core subjects and learning goals
Teacher capacity gaps	Build communities of practice and sustained mentorship
Resource disparities	Use local, low-cost tools and community partnerships
Cultural resistance to innovation	Align pedagogy with collective values and scaffold risk-taking
Assessment misalignment	Implement formative, process-based evaluation frameworks

In sum, while barriers to constructivist entrepreneurial education are significant, they are not insurmountable. Addressing them requires coordinated action at all system levels—policy, school leadership, teacher development, and community engagement. When these challenges are approached as design constraints rather than limitations, they can spark innovative, locally grounded solutions that strengthen educational equity and cultural relevance.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

### Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that entrepreneurial mindsets, when cultivated through constructivist strategies, can be reconceptualized as cultural capital that empowers secondary students to become active creators of social and cultural value. By synthesizing theories of constructivist learning, entrepreneurship education, and cultural capital, the analysis highlighted how strategies such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, design thinking, and business simulations create opportunities for students to link knowledge with action in culturally meaningful ways. Key insights include the need for teachers to act as facilitators, for curricula to embed entrepreneurship across subjects, and for schools to engage communities as co-creators of learning. The analysis further identified systemic challenges—including rigid curricula, teacher readiness, and misaligned assessments—that must be addressed through policy support and institutional innovation. Ultimately, the article positions secondary education not merely as a site of knowledge transmission but as a dynamic space for inclusive value creation, equity, and cultural sustainability.

## Recommendations

To translate the vision of entrepreneurial education into sustainable practice, coordinated actions across stakeholder groups are essential.

**1. Curriculum Designers.** Curriculum designers should embed entrepreneurial learning objectives across academic disciplines, treating them as interdisciplinary competencies rather than isolated subjects. This includes developing modular units centered on real-world problem-solving and community-based challenges that promote relevance and agency. Constructivist pedagogies—such as inquiry-based learning and design thinking—should be integrated as foundational instructional strategies to cultivate creativity, collaboration, and value creation.

**2. Teachers and School Leaders.** Teachers and school leaders must reconceptualize their roles as facilitators, co-designers, and reflective practitioners within learner-centered environments. Professional development should emphasize experiential and entrepreneurial pedagogies, enabling educators to guide open-ended, iterative learning processes. Furthermore, school cultures must be nurtured to normalize risk-taking, embrace failure as part of growth, and elevate student voice and autonomy.

**3. Policymakers and Educational Authorities.** At the policy level, alignment is needed between national curriculum frameworks and entrepreneurial competencies to ensure coherence and accountability. Authorities should allocate funding to support teacher-led innovation, school-based enterprises, and community-integrated learning projects. Special attention must be given to ensuring equity by providing targeted support for under-resourced schools and regions, thus bridging systemic opportunity gaps.

**4. Community Stakeholders.** Community stakeholders—including entrepreneurs, artisans, NGOs, and cultural leaders—should collaborate with schools to co-create learning opportunities grounded in local realities. Their involvement can offer students authentic mentorship, access to meaningful challenges, and recognition of cultural knowledge as a learning asset. Additionally, communities can reinforce youth entrepreneurship by supporting local platforms and collaborative initiatives that validate student contributions to cultural and economic development.

## Final Reflection

Constructivist entrepreneurship education is not a universal template—it must be locally rooted, culturally aware, and pedagogically grounded. When implemented with intentionality and equity, it becomes a catalyst for social transformation, identity development, and inclusive innovation. As Jeerapattanatorn (2024) aptly states, “*When students build*

*something that matters—to them and to others—they are not just learning; they are becoming.”* This transformation—from passive recipients to active, culturally empowered creators—is the true promise of integrating entrepreneurial mindsets into secondary education.

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## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION PROCESS TO DEVELOP PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS’ LEARNING MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

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### Abstract

This academic article employs a documentary research approach with the objective of examining the appropriate instructional supervision process to enhance the learning management competencies of pre-service teachers. It was found that instructional supervision is a collaborative process between the supervisor and the supervisee, intended to assist, support, and guide teachers in improving and developing their instructional management for greater effectiveness, thereby positively impacting student achievement. A synthesis of instructional supervision processes from various scholars revealed that the appropriate supervision process for developing pre-service teachers’ learning management competencies consists of five stages: 1) Pre-Conference involves a meeting between the supervisor and the teacher to collaboratively determine the details of the upcoming classroom observation, focusing on clarifying the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the observation, 2) Observation observes the teacher's instructional behaviors in the classroom to gain a clear understanding of the elements discussed during the preconference, 3) Analysis and Planning for Post-Conference involves analysis the collected data and formulates a plan for the post-conference. This step serves as a foundation for providing structured feedback and supporting the teacher’s professional development, 4) Post-Conference involves the supervisor and the teacher engage in reflective dialogue regarding the observed teaching practices. The supervisor provides feedback that the teacher can use to inform future instructional planning and improvement, and then 5) Critical Review of the Instructional Supervision Process involves a joint review by the supervisor and the teacher of the entire supervision process.

**Keywords :** Instructional Supervision Process, Learning Management Competencies, Pre-service Teachers

### Introduction

According to the Teachers’ Council of Thailand, individuals pursuing a teaching profession are required to complete a practicum in an educational institution as part of a degree program in education. This includes no fewer than 540 hours of professional practice during the course of study, with at least one full semester of teaching practicum in a specific

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subject area. During this period, pre-service teachers must be assigned to teach their specific subject for no fewer than four periods per week, along with other teaching-related duties as assigned by the school—whether within or outside the school premises. These activities must be supervised and assessed by both mentor teachers and university supervisors, and pre-service teachers must meet the evaluation criteria specified by the Teachers’ Council of Thailand. This requirement makes the teaching practicum an integral component of the Bachelor of Education curriculum. It enables pre-service teachers to apply theoretical knowledge and skills developed throughout the program in real-world educational settings. The practicum helps them respond to situational challenges, understand the multifaceted roles of teachers, select appropriate instructional methods, develop a positive attitude toward the teaching profession, gain insights into school administration, collaborate with school administrators, faculty, and staff, and work effectively with others. (Teachers’ Council of Thailand Announcement on the Accreditation of bachelor’s degrees in professional education Standards, Four-Year Curriculum (No. 2), 2021) Thus, pre-service teachers' learning management competencies are a highly important indicator for ensuring effective and efficient learning. Moreover, Learning management competencies refer to the behaviors that indicate the ability to apply knowledge and practical skills in organizing learning through the use of appropriate and diverse instructional strategies. It also includes the ability to utilize media and learning resources, as well as to measure and evaluate learning outcomes, along with possessing personal attributes that support effective teaching. Therefore, learning management competencies are a behavioral capability of teachers, arising from the application of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes to manage learning in a way that effectively develops students and achieves the established standards. (Prayoon Boonchai, 2020) According to Skonwan Paruang (2018) conducted a study on the pedagogical competencies of pre-service teachers and identified twelve key areas of competency. These include: 1) the analysis and development of curricula and instructional courses, 2) learner analysis and an understanding of individual differences, 3) content organization and subject matter management, (4) the design and management of conducive learning environments, 5) the utilization of instructional media and information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance learning, 6) the selection and application of appropriate pedagogical approaches, 7) effective classroom management and organization, 8) the planning and implementation of learning activities, 9) a conceptual understanding of learning and commitment to continuous professional development, 10) the assessment and evaluation of student learning outcomes, 11) communication and collaboration with parents and the wider community, and 12) language proficiency and cultural awareness. The development of pre-service teachers' learning

management competencies can be achieved through various approaches. An effective approach that supports pre-service teachers in improving and enhancing their learning management competencies is instructional supervision. Sullivan and Glanz (2013) stated that instructional supervision is a collaborative process carried out with teachers, with the primary aim of enhancing instructional practices and ultimately improving student achievement. This perspective aligns with the view of Wachira Kruekam-ai (2015), who proposed that instructional supervision is a process for developing and improving teachers' instructional practices. It involves identifying specific learning units or topics that require development or problem-solving, in order to enable teachers to deliver instruction that effectively meets the intended learning objectives. In addition, Glickman et al. (2018) proposed that instructional supervision is a process aimed at enhancing teachers' professional responsibilities within the classroom, as well as the activities conducted within the school setting. Similarly, Hallinger (2015) emphasized that the supervision and evaluation of teaching are integral components of instructional leadership. School administrators should therefore prioritize the improvement of instructional practices through effective supervision and evaluation, with the ultimate goal of advancing student learning and ensuring academic success. Therefore, instructional supervision serves as an effective approach for developing pre-service teachers, which ultimately has a positive impact on their learning management competencies. This academic article aims to examine an effective instructional supervision process designed to enhance the learning management competencies of pre-service teachers. The study is structured to address the following key components: 1) the definition of instructional supervision, 2) the objectives of instructional supervision, 3) the principles of instructional supervision, 4) the instructional supervision process, and (5) the conclusion and implications derived from the study

### **The Definition of Instructional Supervision**

Instructional supervision is a process in which the supervisor and the teacher collaboratively engage in the development and improvement of teaching practices. Together, they identify specific learning units or areas in need of development or problem-solving, with the aim of enabling the teacher to deliver instruction that aligns with the predetermined objectives. The ultimate goal of this process is to enhance student learning outcomes. (Wachira Kruekam-ai, 2015) Furthermore, Rungchatchadaporn Vehachart (2016) stated that instructional supervision is a process that supports teachers in enhancing the effectiveness of their instruction, thereby improving students' academic achievement. Similarly, Pariyaporn Tungkunan (2019) concluded that instructional supervision involves observing teachers' instructional practices by school administrators and fellow teachers, with the primary aim of

improving teaching practices that emphasize student learning outcomes. In addition, Sullivan and Glanz (2013) asserted that instructional supervision is a collaborative process carried out with teachers, aimed at improving instructional practices and enhancing student achievement and then Glickman et al. (2018) stated that instructional supervision is a subset of educational supervision, functioning as a process to develop teachers’ professional responsibilities within the classroom and the various activities conducted within the school setting.

According to the conceptualizations of numerous scholars, instructional supervision can be understood as a subset of educational supervision. It constitutes a collaborative process between supervisors and supervisees aimed at facilitating, supporting, and providing pedagogical guidance to teachers in order to improve and develop instructional practices. This process seeks to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning management, ultimately leading to improved student academic achievement.

### **The Objectives of Instructional Supervision**

The objectives of instructional supervision are to facilitate teachers in setting long-term professional development goals, thereby maximizing the quality of instructional management. This development process relies on a system grounded in trust and support, aiming to assist teachers in effectively improving classroom instructional practices. (Sergiovanni et al., 2014) Moreover, Wachira Kruekam-ai (2015) stated that the objective of instructional supervision is to assist teachers in the continuous professional development across academic knowledge, practical skills, and participation. The ultimate goal is to enhance student quality in the classroom through improvements in teaching and learning resulting from the supervision process. Similarly, DiPaola and Wagner (2018) stated that the objective of instructional supervision is to collaborate with teachers to improve instructional management. The purpose of supervisors is not merely to assist teachers in problem-solving but to work jointly with them in examining the processes of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the improvement of instructional management is a long-term and continuous process that is jointly determined by both supervisors and teachers.

Based on the perspectives of various educators, it can be concluded that the purpose of instructional supervision is to promote the professional development of teachers, particularly in instructional management. This enables teachers to perform their teaching duties effectively, which in turn contributes to enhancing the quality of student learning outcomes.

## The Principles of Instructional Supervision

Many scholars have proposed concepts regarding the principles of instructional supervision as follows:

Wachira Kruekam-ai (2015) outlined the principles of instructional supervision as follows:

1. Instructional supervision is related to administration and requires the acceptance that every teacher possesses unique and diverse characteristics. Supervisors must acknowledge that each teacher has inherent potential, which will manifest when motivated internally to develop for the growth and advancement of the teacher, students, school, and community.

2. Instructional supervision operates systematically, where every step can be monitored, corrected, and improved based on cause and effect. Therefore, instructional supervision is scientific in nature and democratic, founded on appropriate and accurate changes aligned with global transformations in the era of globalization.

3. Effective instructional supervision should foster creativity and encourage teachers to engage in self-development, improve their teaching practices, and develop the ability to independently seek knowledge, create knowledge, and find instructional strategies that promote 21st-century learning. This process empowers teachers to make effective decisions, leading to professional teaching practice.

Sergiovanni et al. (2014) outlined the principles of instructional supervision as follows:

1. Instructional supervision must focus on the improvement of teaching and learning processes in general, including the provision of adequate physical and material resources.

2. Instructional supervision is closely interconnected with educational administration.

3. Effective instructional supervision must be grounded in philosophy, science, and democratic values.

4. In situations where scientific methods cannot be applied, effective instructional supervision may employ approaches involving study, improvement, and evaluation of outcomes.

5. Good instructional supervision should encourage initiative and creativity.

6. Effective instructional supervision requires systematic planning, collaborative coordination, and the organization of continuous activities.

7. Instructional supervision should be regarded as a professional practice.

Peretomore (2004) states that principles of instructional supervision are statements of fundamental truth that serve as guides to activities which are designed by designated officials to improve instruction and consequently to facilitate the teaching-learning process at all levels of the school enterprise. Thus, principles of instructional supervision include the following:

1. Supervision of instruction is directed toward both maintaining and improving the teaching-learning process of the school. Supervision is highly instruction related.

2. The instructional supervisor's role is that of supporting, assisting and sharing, rather than directing the teacher.

3. Good instructional supervision is based on philosophy and science. This implies that supervision has to: 1) be sensitive to the ultimate aims and values, to policies, with special reference to their adequacy in education, and 2) should be permeated with the experimental attitude, and engage constantly in re-evaluation of aims and values, of policies, of materials and methods.

4. Good instructional supervision is based upon the democratic philosophy. This entails: 1) Respect for personality and individual differences between personalities, and seeking to provide opportunities for the best expression of such unique personality, 2) Basing supervision upon the assumption that teachers are capable of growth and accepting idiosyncrasies, reluctance to cooperate, and antagonism as human characteristics, just as it accepts reasonableness, cooperation, and energetic activity, 3) Providing full opportunity for the cooperative formulation of policies and plans, 4) Stimulating initiative, self-reliance and individual responsibility on the part of all persons in the discharge of their duties, 5) Cooperatively, determining functional groupings of the staff, with flexible regrouping as necessary, and inviting specialists when advisable.

5. Good instructional supervision will employ scientific methods and attitudes and utilize and adapt to specific situations, scientific findings concerning the learner, the learning process, the nature and development of personality.

6. Good instructional supervision, either by scientific method or through orderly thought processes will constantly derive and use data and conclusions which are more objective, more precise, more sufficient, more impartial, more expertly secured, and more systematically organized than are the data and conclusions of uncontrolled opinion.

7. Good instructional supervision will be creative and not prescriptive : 1) It will determine procedures in the light of the needs of each supervisory teaching - learning situation, 2) It will provide opportunity for the exercise of originality and the development of unique contributions, and 3) It will deliberately shape and manipulate and create a physical social and psychological climate or environment available to the teaching-learning process.

8. Good instructional supervision is judged by the results it secures.

9. Good instructional supervision will enlist the cooperation of all staff members in serving their own needs and those of the situation; will provide ample, natural opportunities for growth by all concerned in the correction and prevention of teaching difficulties, and growth in the assumption of new responsibilities.

10. Supervision is flexible. This principle demands that instructional supervision should be flexible and adaptive and adopt an eclectic rather than adhering to a single technique in the supervision of instruction.

11. Good instructional supervision strives to enhance the job satisfaction of teachers and also improve their morale.

12. Good instructional supervision proceeds by means of an orderly, cooperatively planned and executed series of activities.

Based on the perspectives of educators, it can be concluded that the principles of instructional supervision serve as a guideline for supervisors to perform their duties effectively. This process must be conducted democratically, acknowledging that each teacher possesses unique and diverse characteristics, as well as creative thinking. It also aims to encourage teachers to engage in self-development, improve their teaching practices, and cultivate the ability to independently seek knowledge. Furthermore, the supervision process should involve systematic planning and be driven by clear objectives.

## The Process of Instructional Supervision

Several scholars have proposed various conceptual frameworks regarding the instructional supervision process as follows:

Jurairat Sudrung (2016) proposed that the instructional supervision process comprises four main stages:

1. Pre-Conference: This stage involves a meeting between the supervisor and the teacher to review the following aspects prior to classroom observation: 1) the rationale and objectives of the observation, 2) specific areas of focus for the observation, 3) the methods, forms, and tools to be employed during the observation, 4) the duration of the observation session, and 5) the scheduled time for the post-observation conference.

2. Teaching Observation: During this stage, the supervisor observes the teacher's instructional behaviors in the classroom to gain insights consistent with the objectives and details outlined during the pre-conference. The supervisor may utilize one or multiple observation methods depending on the context and purpose.

3. Observation Analysis: After completing the observation, the supervisor proceeds to analyze the data collected using the selected tools. This may involve quantifying the frequency of certain predetermined variables, categorizing key variables that emerged during the observation, and identifying new or absent indicators. The supervisor must maintain objectivity and neutrality throughout the analysis and interpretation of the data.

4. Post-Conference: Upon completing the analysis and identifying appropriate strategies for instructional improvement, the supervisor conducts a follow-up meeting with the teacher. This stage allows the teacher to reflect on their teaching practices, while the supervisor provides constructive feedback and facilitates a discussion based on the collected data. The outcomes of this conference can inform future instructional planning and, if appropriate, mark the beginning of a new cycle of observation and improvement.

Acheson and Gall (1997) identified the supervision process as comprising three key stages:

1. Planning Conference: This initial stage involves a collaborative meeting between the supervisor and the teacher, during which both parties are encouraged to express their perspectives on areas they wish to improve or develop in instructional practice. The supervisor's role at this stage is to assist the teacher in gaining a clearer understanding of their current teaching practices and to jointly explore new techniques that the teacher is interested in implementing to enhance instruction.

2. Observation: This stage entails the systematic observation of classroom teaching. It requires prior planning, including the determination of specific aspects to be observed, the scheduling of the observation session (date and time), and the selection of appropriate methods for providing feedback.

3. Feedback Conference : In this final stage, the supervisor and the teacher engage in a follow-up meeting to analyze the outcomes of the classroom observation. Together, they discuss the identified issues and collaboratively determine solutions and strategies for improving instructional practices in future teaching sessions.

Sullivan and Glanz (2013) proposed that the instructional supervision process consists of four key stages:

1. Planning Conference: This stage involves mutual agreement between the supervisor and the teacher on the specific focus of the classroom observation. The supervisor

selects an appropriate supervision approach, which may include directive informational supervision, collaborative supervision, or self-directed supervision. In addition, both parties must determine the methods and forms to be used during the observation to collaboratively address instructional challenges and develop a suitable professional development plan. This stage also requires scheduling the observation and follow-up feedback conference.

2. Observation: Observation takes place after the selection and preparation of appropriate supervision tools. Upon completion of the observation, the supervisor is responsible for providing a copy of the completed observation instrument to the teacher prior to the feedback conference.

3. Feedback Conversation: This stage can be conducted through three distinct approaches:

3.1 Directive Informational: The supervisor identifies the problem or instructional goal and provides clear, direct information. Solutions are suggested by the supervisor, who also asks for the teacher’s input to offer additional options and perspectives. The supervisor summarizes the discussion, solicits the teacher’s final decision, and establishes a follow-up schedule for implementing and reviewing the plan.

3.2 Collaborative: In this model, the teacher identifies the problem, and the supervisor provides feedback. Prior to the conference, brainstorming and preliminary dialogue between the supervisor and teacher are encouraged. Problem-solving is achieved through joint discussion and mutual agreement. A shared action plan is developed, and a follow-up meeting is scheduled for progress review.

3.3 Self-directed: The supervisor initially listens to the teacher’s perspective and provides feedback to help identify the root problem. The teacher then independently develops solutions and explores the results of different instructional practices. The teacher is responsible for making final decisions regarding the action plan, while the supervisor reviews the plan and schedules a follow-up meeting to monitor its implementation.

4. Collaborative Reflection: The final stage involves a joint review of the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement across all stages of the supervision process. This reflective analysis aims to inform and enhance future instructional supervision practices.

Glickman et al. (2018) identified a five-step process for instructional supervision, as follows:

1. Preconference : In this initial stage, the supervisor meets with the teacher to collaboratively establish the details of the upcoming classroom observation. This includes: (1) the rationale and objectives of the observation; (2) the specific focus of the observation; and (3) the procedures and instruments to be used. This step is also an opportunity to build a positive working relationship between the supervisor and the teacher. During the conference, both parties discuss the lesson plan, any concerns the teacher may have, and the teacher behaviors that will be observed. The meeting concludes with a review and confirmation of the agreements made prior to the observation.

2. Observation: This step involves the supervisor observing the teacher’s classroom behaviors to gain insights aligned with the predetermined focus areas. During the observation, the supervisor must avoid interrupting or influencing the teacher in any way, such as by giving signals or making comments.

3. Analysis and Planning: After the observation, the supervisor analyzes the collected data and synthesizes key findings. This analysis serves as a basis for planning the subsequent post-observation conference.

4. Postconference: In this stage, the supervisor and the teacher engage in a reflective discussion based on the observation data. The supervisor provides constructive feedback, which is then used by the teacher to inform the planning of instructional improvements.

5. Critique : The final stage involves a joint reflection between the supervisor and the teacher on the entire supervision process. Together, they evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement across all four previous steps. This reflection informs future enhancements to the instructional supervision process.

Based on the perspectives of various educational scholars, the instructional supervision process can be synthesized into five key stages: 1) Pre-Conference is a crucial stage in which the supervisor and the supervisee engage in a collaborative discussion to establish a mutual agreement prior to the classroom observation. This step involves clarifying the rationale and objectives of the observation, identifying specific needs or areas for improvement, and determining appropriate observation tools or forms. Additionally, the timing of the observation

and the subsequent feedback session are also scheduled during this phase, 2) Observation involves the supervisor entering the classroom to observe and monitor the teaching behaviors of the supervisee, as well as to collect data related to the teaching and learning process. This is conducted during the time period previously agreed upon during the preconference, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the specified aspects. Following the observation, the supervisor is required to provide the supervisee with a copy of the completed observation instrument prior to the feedback conference, allowing the supervisee to review the evaluation in advance, 3) Analysis and Planning for Post-Conference involves the supervisor organizing and synthesizing the data collected from the classroom observation. The information is categorized, analyzed, and interpreted to identify key findings, which serve as a foundation for planning the post-conference. The supervisor may present the results of the observation in the form of percentages, graphs, charts, or diagrams to facilitate a clearer understanding and more effective discussion during the feedback session, 4) Post-Conference is a phase in which the supervisor and the supervisee engage in a reflective discussion. During this session, the supervisee is encouraged to express their reflections on their own teaching practices, while the supervisor provides constructive feedback based on the observed lesson. The supervisor also offers recommendations and strategies for improvement to enhance the supervisee's instructional effectiveness in future teaching, and 5) Critical Review of the Instructional Supervision Process involves a collaborative review between the supervisor and the supervisee of all four preceding stages of the supervision process. This includes evaluating the criteria used during the supervision, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and determining areas for improvement within each phase. Additionally, the supervisee provides feedback on the supervisor's instructional supervision skills. The insights gained from this reflective evaluation serve to enhance the effectiveness of future supervision practices.

## Conclusions

Instructional supervision is a collaborative process involving supervisors and supervisees, designed to facilitate, support, and provide pedagogical guidance to teachers with the goal of improving and developing instructional practices. Moreover, this process aims to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning management, thereby contributing to improved student academic achievement. Furthermore, the five-stage instructional supervision process : namely, 1) Pre-Conference involves a meeting between the supervisor and the teacher to collaboratively determine the details of the upcoming classroom observation, focusing on clarifying the purpose, objectives, and procedures of the observation,

2) Observation observes the teacher's instructional behaviors in the classroom to gain a clear understanding of the elements discussed during the preconference, 3) Analysis and Planning for Post-Conference involves analysis the collected data and formulates a plan for the post-conference. This step serves as a foundation for providing structured feedback and supporting the teacher's professional development, 4) Post-Conference involves the supervisor and the teacher engage in reflective dialogue regarding the observed teaching practices. The supervisor provides feedback that the teacher can use to inform future instructional planning and improvement, and then 5) Critical Review of the Instructional Supervision Process involves a joint review by the supervisor and the teacher of the entire supervision process. Therefore, instructional supervision process can enhance pre-service teachers' learning management competencies. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Ratchanee Nokthet (2022), entitled “Development of an Instructional Supervision Process Based on a Feedback Approach to Enhance Growth Mindset in Instruction of Pre-service Teachers.” The results revealed that, after participating in the developed instructional supervision process, the mean scores on the assessment scale of growth mindset in instruction among pre-service teachers significantly increased at the 0.05 level. Overall, all participants demonstrated instructional behaviors that more clearly reflected a growth mindset compared to before their participation in the supervision process. In addition, Suppawan Satjapiboon (2017) conducted a study on the development of a teacher professional experience supervision model to enhance instructional competency among pre-service teachers. The results indicated that the participants showed a statistically significant improvement in learning management competency at the 0.01 level. Additionally, their attitudes toward the supervision process were significantly higher than the established good-level criterion, also at the 0.01 level.

In sum up, this Instructional supervision process can be effectively applied by supervisors, including educational supervisors and university instructors, in supervising teaching practices. Furthermore, this process serves as a practical framework for enhancing pre-service teachers' learning management competencies.

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