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FOREWORD

I am pleased to put into the hands of readers Volume-7; Issue-2: 2025 (March-April 2025) of “**Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED)** (ISSN: 2581-8651)”, an international journal which publishes peer reviewed quality research papers on a wide variety of topics related to, Humanities and Education development. Looking to the keen interest shown by the authors and readers, the editorial board has decided to release print issue also, journal issue will be available in various library also in print and online version. This will motivate authors for quick publication of their research papers. Even with these changes our objective remains the same, that is, to encourage young researchers and academicians to think innovatively and share their research findings with others for the betterment of mankind. This journal has DOI (Digital Object Identifier) also, this will improve citation of research papers.

I thank all the authors of the research papers for contributing their scholarly articles. Despite many challenges, the entire editorial board has worked tirelessly and helped me to bring out this issue of the journal well in time. They all deserve my heartfelt thanks.

Finally, I hope the readers will make good use of this valuable research material and continue to contribute their research finding for publication in this journal. Constructive comments and suggestions from our readers are welcome for further improvement of the quality and usefulness of the journal.

With warm regards.



Dr. Manoj Kumar

Editor-in-Chief

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A Review of Research on Multimodal Metaphors in Different Genres

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Abstract— *This paper reviews the research on the application of multimodal metaphors in major genres such as advertisements, comics and movies, as well as emerging genres such as documentaries, posters and operas. It is found that the importance of multimodal metaphor research has become more and more prominent in the academic field, and the expansion of the scope of genres studied has not only enriched the application of metaphor theory, but also provided new perspectives and tools for cultural communication and international image building. Finally, this paper discusses the problems existing in the current research on multimodal metaphors in different topics, for example, the current research often faces the problem of small sample capacity, which limits the wide applicability and depth of the research results, and many of the studies still remain in the stage of superficial application analysis of theories, failing to dig deeper into the deeper mechanism and complexity of the interaction between multimodal metaphors and audiences, and puts forward suggestions for the future research.*

Keywords— *multimodal metaphors; advertising; movies; comics*

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of multimodal metaphors has become an increasing focus of attention in the academic field. In 1996, the publication of the work *Pictorial metaphor in advertising* marked a key turning point in the study of multimodal metaphors. In this work, Forceville (1996) provided an in-depth analysis of nonverbal images and constructed a theoretical framework for analyzing image metaphors. Subsequently, in 2009, Forceville and Urios-Aparisi published

Multimodal Metaphors, which further broadened the research horizons by systematically exploring cases of multimodal metaphors in a variety of domains such as advertisements, movies, and comics (Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, 2009). Since then, the field of multimodal metaphor research has been expanding, involving an increasing number of types of research genres.

Currently, Han Yanfang (2024) has reviewed the developmental history of multimodal metaphor research from the perspective of the

developmental background of multimodal metaphor research, and reviewed the latest progress in its theory, methodology, and research genres. Although the study mentions the diversity of modalities and genres in its exploration of genres, it fails to provide an in-depth categorized review of the current status of the major research genres and other newer genres. In view of this, this paper starts from the study of multimodal metaphors in different genres, systematically reviews the current research status of each genre, and puts forward corresponding development suggestions, aiming to provide clear ideas and directions for future research.

II. RESEARCH ON THE APPLICATION OF MULTIMODAL METAPHORS IN DIFFERENT GENRES

2.1 Research on multimodal metaphors in major genres

2.1.1 Advertising

Among many genres of communication, advertising occupies a central position with its remarkable attractiveness, and the diversity of its forms is remarkable, including static print ads, dynamic TV and online ads, as well as commercials and public service ads. Currently, scholars are trying to identify the specific features of multimodal metaphors and their salience in various types of advertisements, with a special focus on how advertisements affect viewers' cognition and emotions through multimodal metaphors.

In terms of public service advertisements, scholars Hu Fang and Liu Shimeng (2018) studied the multimodal metaphor representation and the cognitive construction of meaning in public service advertisements for protecting water resources. They found that the dynamic narrative,

vividness and universality of multimodal metaphors make the advertisements more informative and leave the audience with a more intuitive and deep impression, thus achieving better public welfare publicity effects.

In the field of commercial advertising, foreign scholar Paula Pérez Sobrino (2016) conducted the first large-scale study of a multimodal corpus containing 210 commercial advertisements to explore the distribution of multimodal metaphors and metonymy in advertisements and their impact on the conceptual complexity of advertisements, so as to analyze how they affect the communication of brand messages to the audience. Domestic scholars Chen Min and Sun Weiwei (2018), on the other hand, analyzed TV advertisements of L'ORÉAL men's and women's skincare product between 2011 and 2015, outlining the multimodal metaphorical scenes and their usage characteristics that constructed these advertisements, and exploring how to convey the product usage characteristics to the viewers through these scenes.

In addition to the above studies on single advertising genres, some scholars have also conducted comparative studies on multi-genre advertisements. For example, Cheng Jintao and Liu Shisheng (2021) used a qualitative research method to explore the interaction mechanism of multimodal metaphor, metonymy and narrative in advertisements across time and genres by analyzing print advertisements of American ICT companies and video advertisements of Huawei cell phones. This cross-genre approach provides a new perspective for understanding the complexity of multimodal metaphors in advertising.

Meanwhile, a few scholars have also focused on the identification methods of multimodal metaphors in advertisements. For example,

Charles Forceville (2024), a foreign scholar, focuses on how to identify and interpret visual and multimodal metaphors in commercial advertisements and feature films, points out the limitations of the FILMIP method, and emphasizes that the identification and interpretation of metaphors should be based on relevance rather than inconsistency.

In conclusion, the current research on multimodal metaphors in advertising involves a rich variety of advertising genres, and these studies not only enhance our understanding of advertising communication mechanisms, but also provide theoretical support and guidance for advertising creation and communication practices. However, there are still some problems, such as the lack of consideration of cultural differences, the research on multimodal metaphors is often limited to specific cultures or regions, and there is a lack of cross-cultural comparative analysis, which restricts the understanding of the universality and specificity of advertising metaphors. In the future, it can be strengthened toward the following points. First, cross-cultural comparative studies can be strengthened to explore the use and effects of multimodal metaphors in different cultural contexts in order to enhance the global adaptability of advertising. Second, long-term studies can be conducted to track the long-term effects of multimodal metaphors on audience perceptions and emotions, and how they shape brand and product images. By addressing existing shortcomings and looking ahead to future research directions, the understanding of multimodal metaphors in advertising can be further deepened to provide more effective strategies and methods for advertising practice.

2.1.2 Comics

The study of comics in multimodal metaphors has

also become a widely explored topic. In the current academic field, comics studies mainly include political comics, news comics, and other types of comics. Although the comics selected by scholars relate to different themes and backgrounds, most of them strive to identify the metaphors in cartoons to reveal the meanings behind the metaphors, such as ideologies and political positions, and to explore how cartoons can reflect and shape the public's views on social and political events through multimodal metaphors.

In the study of political comics, Zhao Xufeng and Wu Yuxin (2024) selected the energy crisis political comic as an object, and analyzed how the creators consciously used cognitive tools for multi-dimensional interactions in the multimodal metaphorical scenario of “health and disease” to construct cognitive evaluations of the roles and relationships of the energy crisis and its related actors. In addition, they also analyzed the discourse strategies and socio-pragmatic functions behind the metaphorical scenes, explored how the comics reflected and shaped the public's perception of the energy crisis as a socio-political event through the multimodal metaphors, and revealed the role of comics in transmitting ideological and political stances. In another study, Ma Tinghui and Gao Yuan (2020) took the trade war between China and the United States as the background of their research and selected 100 American political comics with the theme of trade war. They revealed the ideologies and political stances behind the metaphors in these comics from both social and cognitive perspectives.

In the field of news comics, Chen Sunfu (2022) analyzes 104 news comics on “China-US relations” to explain the construction mechanism of metaphors and metonymy in these multimodal

discourse pieces, to further clarify the attitude of the domestic mainstream news media towards China-US relations, and to reveal how news cartoons can convey information and shape the public's perception of China-US relations to the readers through multimodal metaphors. It reveals how news comics convey information to readers through multimodal metaphors, shaping the public's cognition and perception of the important sociopolitical event of China-US relations.

For the mainstream American comic book genre—superhero comics, foreign scholars Neil Cohn et al (2017) conducted an in-depth analysis. He analyzed the visual and linguistic features in American superhero comics, explored these features explored how these features work together to express multimodal metaphors, and found that the narrative structure in superhero comics has gradually shifted from text-based to visually-based over time, and that this shift has enabled such comics to more effectively convey deep social and political messages to readers. This study somewhat complements the research of foreign scholars Miloš Tasić and Dušan Stamenković (2015), who studied multimodal metaphors in numerous comics published by mainstream and independent publishers in the U.S. In addition to finding that comics are dominated through image dominance, text-dominant and complementary types of multimodal metaphors to convey information to readers, but also pointed out that mainstream American comics (mainly superhero comics) were found to have fewer multimodal metaphors due to their realism, and the way they were presented so that the metaphorical content was mostly conveyed through text.

All in all, these studies demonstrate the unique role of comics as a multimodal discourse in

communicating complex social and political issues. However, as with research on advertising genres, there are still some limitations in the existing research on comics, such as the lack of audience analysis, and the lack of exploration of the comics creator factor for the construction of metaphoric interpretations and educational applications of comics metaphors. In the future, audience research can be strengthened by conducting more studies on how audiences interpret comic book metaphors, including cross-age and cross-cultural studies, in order to understand the social acceptance and influence of comic book metaphors. In addition to this, explore the application of comics in education, such as language learning, history education and cultural understanding, and how comics metaphors can be utilized to enhance learning. Once again in-depth interviews and research can also be conducted with comics creators to understand their motivations, sources of inspiration and self-awareness of metaphor use, which can help to understand metaphors in comics in a more comprehensive way.

2.1.3 Movies

In the field of multimodal metaphor research, movies, as a core genre, have attracted extensive attention from international and domestic scholars. While there are differences in the focus and perspective of the current research on multimodal metaphor in movies, most of them have explored how to enhance the audience's interpretation and understanding of the movie through multimodal metaphor.

For example, foreign scholar Rohdin (2009) focuses on the role of film technology in guiding the interpretation of metaphors, and his study mainly focuses on the role of film technology in multimodal metaphors, revealing how technical

means such as parallel editing, superimposition, editing and camera angles are carefully designed to guide the audience's interpretation and understanding of metaphors. This suggests that the movie provides the audience with clues and frameworks for understanding the metaphor through the skillful arrangement of technical aspects. In contrast to Rohdin, Kappelhoff and Müller (2011) emphasized the foundational role of the audience's sensory experience in the construction of metaphors. The study, on the other hand, takes a sensory experience perspective and argues that multimodal metaphors are based on the dynamic nature of sensory experience. They found that watching expressive actions in movies triggers the same sensory experience in the viewer as the expressive actions of the body accompanying speech, and this experience provides an "embodied" basis for the construction of metaphors, emphasizing the importance of the viewer's sensory involvement and emotional experience in watching a movie for the understanding of metaphors. The study by Urena Gomez-Moreno and Jose Manuel (2017) further expands the perspective of multimodal metaphors by combining the principles of psycho-cinematography with multimodal metaphors and expressive movement models to explore the process by which moviegoers construct metaphorical meanings within the dynamics of time. This study not only focuses on how viewers gradually understand metaphors during the viewing process, but also emphasizes the role of psycho-cinematics in complementing and enriching the study of multimodal metaphors in areas such as visual attention allocation, eye-movement fixation, motion and image-frame perception, and the mental activities behind emotional and narrative experiences.

In terms of domestic research, Wang Jin and Pan Lei (2020) provided a detailed interpretation of multimodal metaphors in the film *Joker*, analyzing the use of linguistic modal metaphors in the film, such as persona metaphors and diary metaphors, and found that the use of these metaphors significantly enhanced the audience's cognitive ability and emotional experience of the film. Duan Rongjuan and Li Xin (2019), on the other hand, analyzed the sci-film *The Wandering Earth* in four dimensions: metaphorical narrative, multiple symbols, imaginative world, and imaginative transcendence, on the basis of exploring the four basic hierarchical structures of multimodal metaphors and their philosophical connotations. Their research shows how the movie embodies the philosophical thinking of science fiction movies through multimodal metaphors, so that the audience can smoothly enter into the world of imagery, perceive the transcendence of meaning, and deeply interpret the oriental philosophy of the movie. These studies have not only enriched the connotation of multimodal metaphors, but also provided new perspectives and analytical frameworks for understanding the complex meanings in movies. In conclusion, in the comparison of domestic and international studies in this genre, domestic scholars are mostly case studies, with a small sample capacity, and only selected a certain film to analyze the multimodal metaphors in it, etc. In the future, the use and function of multimodal metaphors in different movie genres (e.g. comedy, tragedy, sci-fi, horror, etc.) can be explored at the same time, as well as how they shape the styles and audience experiences of different movies. In addition to this, the study of multilevel metaphors can be strengthened by analyzing in depth the interaction of metaphors at multiple levels in the

film, such as visual, auditory, and narrative, and how they work together to construct the meaning of the film. Through in-depth research in these directions, the complexity and diversity of multimodal metaphors in movies can be more comprehensively understood, as well as their role in cultural communication and audience experience. This can not only promote the development of film theory, but also provide new perspectives and tools for film creation and criticism.

2.2 Researches on Multimodal Metaphors in Other Genres

In recent years, the scope of multimodal metaphor research has been significantly expanded to cover diverse genres such as documentaries, posters, operas and theme covers. Based on this, this study will briefly review from these four genres briefly. Among these emerging research fields, multimodal metaphor analysis of documentaries is relatively rich and has been studied mainly by domestic scholars, but the sample capacity selected is small, as in the case of film genres. Through in-depth case studies of specific documentaries, researchers have revealed the key role of multimodal metaphors in national image shaping and communication, specifically the image of cultural China, the image of Chinese diplomacy, and the image of China in economic exchanges (Chen Wei, Peng Zijing, 2020; Zhao Yuqian, 2020; Sun Xiaomeng et al.)

Compared to documentaries, although the number of studies on multimodal metaphors in posters and themed covers is relatively small, their research focus is similar to that of documentary studies, mainly focusing on exploring the deeper meanings behind multimodal metaphors and their role in image construction. For posters, for example, Liu Man (2022) selected the poster of

the WeChat public number of the People's Daily, a mainstream media in China, as the research object, and applied the conceptual integration theory and combined it with the analysis of the poster's image composition to examine in depth the types of multimodal metaphors used by the mainstream new media in the poster of epidemic prevention and control, the characteristics of the discourse of epidemic prevention and control, and their roles in the construction of the country's image. Thematic covers such as Liu Yi and Zhang Wenye (2020) utilized the qualitative research software Nvivo12 to conduct a multimodal metaphor analysis of 94 economic thematic covers of Beijing Weekly from 2015-2019, aiming to reveal the types of multimodal metaphors and affective attitudinal tendencies in the graphic information of the covers, and then exploring the national economic image they portrayed.

In the field of opera, multimodal metaphor research is still in the initial exploration stage, and only a few master's thesis have made preliminary attempts. The research in this field needs to be further developed and deepened.

In conclusion, the genre scope of multimodal metaphor research is expanding, and corresponding studies can be further added to these more emerging genres mentioned above, which not only can enrich our understanding of the application of metaphors in different media, but also is of great significance to the shaping and dissemination of various images, such as the image of the country. The study of documentaries shows the important role of multimodal metaphors sound, visual and other modalities in shaping the national image, while the study of posters and thematic covers reveals how the mainstream media construct and disseminate

specific images through visual rhetoric. Although the study of multimodal metaphors in the field of opera is still in its preliminary stage, its exploration provides new perspectives and possibilities for future research. The development of these studies also shows that multimodal metaphors are not only an object of study in linguistics and semiotics, but also a non-negligible component in the study of cultural communication and international relations. With the advancement of technology and the diversification of media, the study of multimodal metaphors will become more in-depth, and their role in cross-cultural communication and international image building will become more significant. Future research can further explore the diversity and complexity of multimodal metaphors in these genres and how they affect the cognitive and emotional responses of the audience, thus providing deeper insights into cross-cultural communication and international communication.

III. CONCLUSION

The study of multimodal metaphors has become increasingly important in the academic field, and the expansion of the scope of its research genres has not only enriched the application scenarios of metaphor theory, but also provided new perspectives and tools for cultural communication and international image building. From advertisements, comics, movies to documentaries, posters, operas and other diversified genres, the research on multimodal metaphors has been deepening, revealing the uniqueness and complexity of the application of metaphors in different media. From a macro perspective, despite the expanding field of multimodal metaphor research, current studies often face the

problem of small sample capacity, which limits the broad applicability and depth of the findings. In addition, many studies remain at the stage of superficial application and analysis of theories, failing to dig deeper into the deep mechanism and complexity of the interaction between multimodal metaphors and audiences, a situation that leads to the problem of research duplicity. For example, similar research methodologies and theoretical frameworks have been repeatedly applied to different research cases, while innovation and in-depth exploration are lacking. Future research on individual genres can start from in order to expand sample capacity, deepen theoretical applications, innovative research methods, interdisciplinary research, refinement and expansion of theoretical models, educational applications, and creator research. Through these efforts, multimodal metaphor research can be promoted to a deeper level, providing richer and deeper perspectives for understanding and applying multimodal metaphors.

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Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture of Ethnic Minorities in Tourism Development in Tuyen Quang Province, Vietnam

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Abstract— Preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority communities will contribute to enriching their cultural heritage, strengthening unity and solidarity among ethnic groups, and creating a significant internal driving force for sustainable national development. Currently, ethnic minorities in Tuyen Quang Province still maintain their unique customs, traditions, and cultural practices. These are potential strengths and favorable conditions that contribute to the sustainable tourism development of Tuyen Quang Province, creating an appealing attraction for visitors to explore, discover, and experience the cultural tourism of Tuyen Quang.

Keywords— Traditional culture, ethnic minorities, tourism development, Tuyen Quang Province, Vietnam.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tuyen Quang is a mountainous province in the northern region of Vietnam, endowed with favorable geographical conditions, natural resources, and a rich cultural identity characterized by the diversity and abundance of ethnic groups. This land is home to 22 ethnic communities, each having created distinctive and diverse cultural heritages that contribute to the rich treasury of Vietnamese folklore. Currently, the ethnic minorities living in Tuyen Quang Province still preserve their unique customs, practices, and many distinctive traditional cultural features of their communities. These are potential strengths and favorable conditions that contribute to the sustainable tourism development of Tuyen Quang Province, creating an appealing attraction for visitors to explore, discover, and experience the cultural tourism of Tuyen Quang.

The traditional culture of ethnic minorities in the mountainous provinces of Vietnam has been studied by researchers across various aspects of cultural life, including customs, beliefs, environment, livestock farming, crop cultivation, and healthcare. To date, numerous research projects have directly or indirectly

addressed the traditional culture of ethnic minorities residing in Tuyen Quang Province, such as: Research on the Languages of Vietnamese Ethnic Minorities, (Doi, 1999) Traditional Culture of the Tay and Nung Ethnic Groups, (Quyet., Bang, 1993), Then Singing of the Tay People, (Yen, 2006), Folk Beliefs of the Tay – Nung Ethnic Groups, (Yen, 2009) Culture of the Dao People in Tuyen Quang, (Doan., Trieu, 2019) Livelihood Changes and Cultural Adaptation of the Dao Community in the Resettlement Area of Tuyen Quang Hydropower Reservoir, (Binh, 2020) The Cao Lan Ethnic Group, (Bang, 1982) Traditional Culture of the Tay, Dao, and San Diu in Tuyen Quang, (Do, 2003) Traditional Culture of the Cao Lan People, (Ninh., Thinh, 1999) Festivals of the Cao Lan People in Tuyen Quang, (Thong, 2012) Spring Festival with the “Fire Jumping” Ceremony of the Pa Then People, (Binh, 2003) The Beauty of Pa Then Women’s Attire, (Van, 2003) Traditional Culture of the Pa Then Ethnic Group, (Tuan, 2004) Traditional Costume of Pa Then Women, (Chung, 2005) Pa Then New Year Celebration, (Cu, 2005) Unique Beliefs of the Pa Then People in Tuyen Quang Province”, (Hoa., Hinh, 2021)... Research projects on the traditional culture of ethnic

minorities in Tuyen Quang Province mainly focus on studying and introducing certain aspects of cultural and social life such as folklore, traditional arts, customs, beliefs, and festivals. The research projects have approached the issue of the cultural values of ethnic minorities from various perspectives, examining the unique cultural features in both their material and spiritual lives, the current status of preserving and promoting their cultural heritage values, and the challenges faced in these preservation efforts. These studies have all recognized that the ethnic minorities residing in Tuyen Quang province possess a rich and diverse traditional cultural identity that requires further research.

The challenge in the preservation and promotion of the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities in the tourism development of Tuyen Quang Province today lies in maintaining and enhancing the positive values of cultural and social life while effectively utilizing them for tourism development. At the same time, it is essential to eliminate outdated customs, strengthen internal resources, and build resilience for the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities, thereby contributing to the construction of an advanced Vietnamese culture rich in national identity. This article employs several fundamental research methods, including the method of analysis and synthesis, sociological investigation methods, statistical methods, and comparative methods to assess the current state of preserving and promoting the cultural values of ethnic minorities in Tuyen Quang Province. Based on these findings, the article proposes solutions to preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of some ethnic minorities in the tourism development of Tuyen Quang Province, Vietnam.

II. RESULTS

Traditional Culture of Some Ethnic Minority Groups in Tuyen Quang Province

Traditional Culture of the Tay People

The Tay people are the second-largest ethnic group in Tuyen Quang. They are also one of the ethnic groups with the longest settlement history in the province. As a result, the Tay people have created a distinctive cultural identity that is reflected in their daily lives and has contributed to the development of prosperous villages, enhancing the cultural richness of Tuyen Quang Province. The Tay people typically reside in the mountainous districts of Tuyen Quang Province, settling in valleys near rivers, streams, or clean water sources that flow down from the mountains for convenient daily use. They live in closely-knit village communities and primarily engage in wet rice cultivation and shifting cultivation. Today, the Tay people

in Tuyen Quang Province still maintain many unique and distinctive cultural traditions that are deeply rooted in their community.

The Tay people's cultural heritage holds numerous distinctive spiritual values, notably the mesmerizing Then singing melodies. With their rich, diverse cultural traditions deeply rooted in ethnic identity, the Tay people in Tuyen Quang take great pride in their beautiful and profoundly humanistic cultural values. As a result, the awareness of preserving these cultural values is ever-present in the hearts of the Tay community, contributing to the conservation, promotion, and dissemination of their cultural heritage. Among these traditions, Then singing accompanied by the "dan tinh" is a unique performing art of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang. Then singing is both a form of folk art and a long-standing cultural and spiritual practice that reflects human aspirations for happiness and peace. It serves as a spiritual anchor, instilling confidence and strength to help people overcome difficulties and hardships in life. Then singing has become an indispensable spiritual practice in the cultural and religious life of the Tay people in Tuyen Quang. Today, this art form is not only a valuable cultural heritage that preserves and promotes traditional values and connects generations in modern society but also offers economic potential for local communities. In 2019, Then singing was officially inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This recognition is a source of pride and motivation to further promote this beautiful cultural art form both domestically and internationally. Currently, in several districts and communes within Tuyen Quang Province, Then singing clubs have been established, attracting participants of all ages and genders.

The Tay people hold numerous traditional community festivals, expressing their hopes and prayers for favorable weather, thriving nature, and a prosperous, happy life for all. Among these, the "Long Tong" Festival stands out as a unique cultural and spiritual practice that embodies the rich cultural identity of the Tay ethnic group. This invaluable cultural heritage reflects the deep aspirations and sacred beliefs of the Tay people in pursuit of peace, abundance, and well-being. The festival also encapsulates the essence of Tay cultural heritage, including culinary traditions, folk singing, customs, and traditional games. Before the festival, families clean their homes and villages to welcome guests. On the day of the Field-Going Festival, each household prepares a feast based on their means. Traditional dishes such as "banh chung" (square sticky rice cake), "banh day" (round sticky rice cake), "che lam" (sweet sticky rice cake), puffed rice cake, grilled meat, grilled fish, and five-colored sticky rice

are carefully prepared and beautifully presented. Each offering tray also includes two pairs of colorful fabric balls stuffed with sand and cotton, decorated with vibrant tassels. The ceremony begins with a ritual in which the village deity is asked for permission to hold the festival, followed by prayers to Heaven, the God of Agriculture, the Mountain God, and the Stream God. The Mo priest performs the offering ritual by tossing “blessed tokens” to the villagers. Finally, the Mo priest recites prayers and invokes the protection of the God of Agriculture, the Mountain God, and the Stream God for abundant crops, good health, and peace for the community. The festival continues with various traditional folk games such as “Tung con”, “Then” singing, “coi” singing, “danh yen”, stilt walking, and stick pushing. With its unique cultural features preserved and passed down through generations, in 2013, the “Long Tong” Festival of the Tay ethnic group in Tuyen Quang Province was recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The traditional attire of the Tay people is typically characterized by indigo or black colors, without elaborate patterns. The indigo dye is derived from natural materials, specifically the indigo plant, which is commonly grown by ethnic minority communities. This plant is an essential material used to create the traditional clothing of the Tay people. Tay women usually wear a short blouse paired with a skirt. The blouse is designed with a front opening, a round neckline, and a fitted waist, featuring two small pockets on the front flaps. Younger women often wear ankle-length skirts, while older women prefer knee-length skirts. When wearing long blouses, Tay women use a silk sash tied around their waist, with the ends hanging down the back to knee level. Young women typically wear sashes in bright colors such as green or red, while older women opt for indigo or black sashes. The traditional attire of Tay men includes straight-cut trousers with a wide crotch and a waistband known as “cap la toa”. The short shirt is designed with five panels and features a standing collar. Additionally, Tay men also have a four-paneled shirt, which features a front opening, a high round neckline without shoulder seams, side slits, fabric buttons, and two small pockets at the front. During festivals or special occasions, Tay men wear a five-paneled long tunic with a right-side slit, fastened with fabric or brass buttons. Their pants are made from the same indigo-dyed cotton fabric as their shirts. The pants are cut with a loose crotch, moderately wide, and extend down to the ankles. The pants feature a wide waistband without a drawstring and are secured with an external tie. Tay men also traditionally wear a dark indigo beret.

Traditional Culture of the Dao People

The Dao people are the second-largest ethnic minority group residing in Tuyen Quang Province. The Dao people are distributed across most districts and cities within the

Tuyen Quang Province, forming various subgroups. Each subgroup tends to coexist with other ethnic groups in specific regions. Currently, the Dao people in Tuyen Quang Province still preserve many distinctive traditional cultural features of their community.

The Dao people in Tuyen Quang possess a rich spiritual and cultural life, featuring numerous distinctive customs, rituals, and artistic practices. Among these, the “Cap Sac” has been recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage, while “Pao Dung” singing is considered one of the cultural treasures of the Dao ethnic group. This is a form of love duet singing, widely performed during traditional weddings, festivals, or social gatherings. To perform “Pao Dung”, the singer must first compose poetic verses. In the Dao community in Tuyen Quang, it is generally believed that everyone has the ability to spontaneously compose a quatrain in seven-syllable verse and sing it immediately. The practice of singing “Pao Dung” inspires them to form sentences, adjust rhymes, and transform these into melodies. “Pao Dung” singing expresses the thoughts, emotions, and aspirations of the Dao people in their daily lives. In each Dao subgroup, “Pao Dung” singing is performed differently, some regions feature deep, prolonged tones, while others present high-pitched, soaring melodies. The art of “Pao Dung” singing is divided into several forms: “Pao Dung” for daily life (including lullabies, recreational songs, and courtship songs), “Pao Dung” in religious ceremonies, “Pao Dung” combined with “Le Mien” dance (accompanied by appropriate musical instruments and props used in “Cap Sac” ceremonies, weddings, and funerals), and “Pao Dung” in labor, consisting of songs that praise productive work and the beauty of nature. With its distinctive features, the art of “Pao Dung” singing has been recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The “Cap Sac” ceremony is one of the most unique and ancient rituals preserved for thousands of generations within the Dao ethnic community. According to Dao beliefs, the “Cap Sac” ceremony is an essential rite of passage for Dao men. Only after undergoing this ceremony is a Dao man recognized as an adult with the full authority to participate in community affairs such as serving as a shaman or a village matchmaker. The “Cap Sac” ceremony is considered one of the most distinctive traditional cultural values of the Dao people in Tuyen Quang. This ritual is typically held at the end of the lunar year or during the first lunar month. The “Cap Sac” ceremony consists of several levels: 3 lamps, 7 lamps, and 12 lamps. The officiating master in the “Cap Sac” ceremony must be a highly skilled shaman. The date for

the ceremony is carefully selected, and the participant must be well-versed in the traditional rituals and customs. The ceremony can be conducted for one individual or multiple individuals at the same time, but the number of participants must always be an odd number. Before the ceremony, the participant undergoing the *Cấp Sắc* ritual must observe certain abstinences, such as refraining from using foul language, avoiding sexual relations, and not paying attention to women. The “*Cap Sac*” ceremony typically takes place over 3 days. On the first day, the ceremony is conducted outdoors. On the second day, the participant enters the house to listen to the head shaman read various ritual scriptures and the “*Cap Sac*” decree. At this point, the participant is considered to have become a new person, both physically and spiritually. After that, the participant is taught traditional dances by the shamans, such as the “*Chum Cheng*” dance (bell dance) and the “*Sa Ma*” dance. On the third day, the ceremony concludes with a thanksgiving ritual dedicated to the ancestors.

The Dao people also have many traditional festivals and New Year celebrations throughout the year. During these festivals, numerous folk games attract a large number of participants. Among these, the Fire Jumping Festival of the Red Dao people stands out with its rich cultural significance and profound spiritual meaning for the Red Dao community. According to the beliefs of the Red Dao people, fire holds special significance in their daily life, culture, and spirituality. Fire is considered a deity that helps ward off evil spirits and illnesses, bringing warmth, prosperity, and a prosperous life. Therefore, during the early spring and New Year celebrations, the Red Dao villages become vibrant with the Fire Jumping Festival. The festival begins with the Tao priest performing a ritual to seek permission from the ancestors and deities for the village to hold the event and to invite the gods to bestow strength upon the young men. At the same time, a large pile of firewood that had been prepared in advance is set ablaze. As the music starts to play, accompanied by the priest’s chanting, the bodies of the Red Dao young men begin to tremble and sway vigorously. They move closer to the blazing fire and then leap into the roaring flames with their bare feet, showing no signs of pain or fear. Each person usually performs the fire dance for about 5 to 7 minutes, sometimes even up to 10 minutes. The duration of their fire dancing depends on the “strength” bestowed upon them by the deities. Amid the sound of drums, gongs, and the enthusiastic cheers of the audience, the Red Dao men continuously dance on the glowing embers. The festival only concludes when the embers have completely burned out. After the fire dies down, the shaman gathers the young men at the mat behind to formally end the ceremony. They express their

gratitude to the deities for joining the community in celebration and pray for warmth, bountiful harvests, and good health for the villagers. To complete the ritual, the shaman must perform a closing ceremony to return the young men to their normal state.

Currently, the Dao people still preserve a wealth of traditional knowledge in labor production and healthcare. Each village and hamlet has skilled herbalists and traditional healers who prepare medicine using two main methods: decoction for drinking and herbal baths. This method depends on the physical condition of certain individuals or is related to specific types of illnesses. The medicinal herbs and valuable remedies used by the Dao traditional healers in Tuyen Quang are quite diverse. Herbal medicines often grow naturally in forests, along stream banks, on pathways, in upland fields, and home gardens. The stem, leaves, and roots of medicinal plants are the most commonly used parts by the Dao ethnic groups, especially with smaller herbs. In addition, Dao healers also utilize various fruits, seeds, branches, and tree bark for medicinal purposes.

The traditional attire of the Dao ethnic group is a distinct cultural identity within the rich tapestry of traditional culture among ethnic minorities living in Tuyen Quang Province. Dao clothing possesses its own unique style and language, showcasing the distinctiveness of their culture. Through the traditional attire of Dao women, it is possible to distinguish the various Dao subgroups in Tuyen Quang. The traditional attire of Dao women in Tuyen Quang is vibrant and striking, featuring intricate embroidery and elaborate decorations. The typical Dao women’s outfit includes various components such as a long tunic, undershirt, belt, trousers or skirt, leg wraps, and a headscarf. In contrast, the attire of Dao men is simple and modest, lacking elaborate designs. The traditional attire of Dao men is simple and unadorned. It mainly includes a headscarf, trousers, and a shirt made from coarse fabric, either hand-woven (or purchased), dyed in dark indigo or black. Both the trousers and shirt are typically plain, with little to no decorative patterns.

Traditional Culture of the Cao Lan People

The Cao Lan people residing in Tuyen Quang province possess a rich and distinctive cultural heritage that is deeply reflected in their spiritual and cultural life, carrying profound humanistic values in their everyday existence.

The folk literature of the Cao Lan people is incredibly diverse and rich, featuring numerous folktales, proverbs, idioms, and riddles. Cao Lan folktales are typically narrated in verse form by elders and shamans during village festivals or Tet celebrations at the

communal house on the night before the main event. These stories are also recited at the home of the ritual host (referred to as “Ong Trum”) during the spring festival when offerings are made to the water god, wind god, and fire god, which takes place around the second lunar month each year. Cao Lan folktales reflect their spiritual consciousness and worldview, expressing their perspectives on life and the universe. These stories often narrate the origins of their ethnic group, the establishment of villages, and praise human strength in conquering nature. They also convey the people’s deep longing for a peaceful life and bountiful harvests. The Cao Lan’s proverbs, idioms, and folk songs are also rich and diverse, reflecting profound insights into human relationships, the connection between people and nature, and valuable experiences in agricultural production. They also convey social etiquette, criticize bad habits, and provide moral lessons for daily life.

In their spiritual and cultural life, the Cao Lan people have preserved and promoted various forms of folk performing arts that continue to thrive in community cultural activities. These include simple yet graceful folk dances performed to the rhythm of “tang sanh” drums, antiphonal singing, and “Sinh ca” folk singing featuring smooth, poetic melodies full of emotion. “Sinh ca” folk singing comes in various forms, such as festival singing, wedding songs, and congratulatory performances. The primary format of “Sinh ca” is antiphonal singing between men and women, and many couples have found their life partners through these singing exchanges. Essentially, “Cao Lan Sinh ca” includes several types: New Year celebration songs, love duets, wedding songs, riddle songs, lullabies, songs praising labor and production, and those promoting the building of a better life. Through these folk melodies, the Cao Lan people convey their emotions, feelings for one another, as well as the dreams and aspirations of laborers towards nature and deities. In Cao Lan weddings, “Sinh ca” folk singing is the most distinctive cultural feature, performed in a simple style with melodies emphasizing the rhythm of pre-existing poetic verses. The use of “Sinh ca” songs, such as bride-seeking songs and wine-offering songs during rituals and wedding ceremonies, is a unique cultural form of communication among the Cao Lan people. In addition, the Cao Lan people have distinctive lullabies that feature a single main melody. When singing lullabies, mothers often repeat certain phrases with a gentle and soothing tune, allowing these songs to nurture pure and heartfelt emotions in their children.

The Cao Lan people in Tuyen Quang Province have traditional dances that vividly reflect the distinctive beauty of the mountainous region, performed with remarkable

skill and joyful energy. Notable dances include the “Sooc Cong” dance, “Pong Loong” dance, and “Long Noc Lau” dance. These dances are not only performed for entertainment but also hold significant spiritual and traditional meanings. They are often showcased during traditional festivals, major events, and community gatherings. The dances reenact the process of daily labor and production, creatively adapted with lively and captivating movements. They are performed in harmony with the rhythm of music, drums, and the graceful body movements of the performers. The dances are not restricted by number, age, or gender, and are performed in a lively and energetic manner, attracting a large audience and encouraging active participation. The “Sooc Cong” dance is one of the traditional dances of the Cao Lan people, characterized by its high flexibility, showcasing the unique cultural identity of the Cao Lan people in Tuyen Quang. Through its rhythm and dance movements accompanied by traditional Cao Lan songs, the dance expresses joy, celebration, unity, and a strong connection to ancestors, reflecting pride in the rich cultural heritage of the Cao Lan ethnic group. The “Pong Loong” dance is a traditional rice pounding dance often performed during the New Rice Festival, with the participation of the entire Cao Lan community. Everyone joins in the “Pong Loong” dance, moving energetically and rhythmically to express their joy. This dance is also considered a ritual of gratitude by the Cao Lan people to the God of Agriculture for blessing them with bountiful harvests and prosperity. The “Long Noc Lau” dance, also known as the “Dove Pair Descending to the Field” dance, is a unique traditional dance of the Cao Lan people. It symbolizes affection, harmony in love, and brings joy and happiness to the participants and spectators alike. The musical instruments of the Cao Lan people are diverse and encompass the full range of eight sound categories, including drums, gongs, bells, cymbals, clappers, the “ken to sau”, and the “sao nhi”. These instruments are commonly used in rituals and traditional dances during the Cao Lan community’s cultural festivals.

The Cao Lan people have numerous traditional festivals that reflect the strong bond among family members and the community. Cao Lan festivals are often held at village communal houses at the beginning of the New Year to express gratitude to those who contributed to founding the village and protecting the homeland. Notable festivals include the Gieng Tanh Communal House Festival (Kim Phu Commune, Yen Son District), the Minh Cam Village Communal House Festival (Doi Can Commune, Yen Son District), and the Man Hoa Village Communal House Festival (Dai Phu Commune, Son Duong District), etc. In addition, the Cao Lan people also

have numerous festivals closely tied to agricultural activities, held at various times throughout the year, reflecting their harmonious connection with nature. These include the Water Fetching and Ancestral Worship Ceremony at the beginning of the New Year, the Spring Opening Festival, the Peace Prayer Ceremony, and the Rain Prayer Ceremony, etc. During the festival, the ceremonial part is conducted solemnly, where villagers offer local produce as tribute to the village's tutelary god and other deities, expressing their wishes for a year of good fortune, favorable weather, and bountiful harvests. The festival also features a variety of cultural and artistic activities, along with traditional folk games, creating a joyful and exciting atmosphere for everyone after a year of hard work and productive efforts.

The traditional attire of the Cao Lan people is very simple and has been preserved through many generations. Men's clothing typically includes an indigo shirt, a beret, and brown trousers. Women's attire features an indigo skirt, a "butterfly" blouse, and an indigo headscarf. The traditional blouse of Cao Lan women extends to the knees and features a combination of colors: if the upper part is brown, the lower part is dark indigo, and vice versa. Cao Lan women often wear rings, bracelets, hairpins, silver chains, necklaces, and earrings made of silver or animal bones. When Cao Lan girls get married, their parents-in-law traditionally gift them a silver necklace.

Traditional Culture of the Pa Then People

The Pa Then people are an ethnic minority group with a small population, residing in Tuyen Quang Province and living alongside the Tay and Dao people, however, they have managed to preserve many of their rich and unique cultural traditions, which reflect their thoughts, feelings, and distinct cultural identity. The Pa Then people hold the belief that "all things have a spirit," which is reflected in their customs, practices, and beliefs closely tied to life cycle rituals, such as ancestor worship, deities worship, weddings, funerals, housewarming ceremonies, and coming-of-age rituals. Additionally, the Pa Then people also have agricultural-related rituals, such as ceremonies before planting seeds and the "new rice" festival.

The Pa Then people possess a very rich and unique traditional cultural heritage, clearly reflecting their spiritual and cultural life, with profound humanistic meanings in their daily existence. In their spiritual and cultural life, the Pa Then people have many forms of folk art performances, which are still preserved and promoted in community cultural activities, such as antiphonal singing (courtship singing), lullabies, etc. The melodies of these songs are gentle and harmonious, often praising their homeland, expressing love between couples, reflecting the

hardships of labor and production, and conveying optimism, belief, and hope for a better life, etc.

The Pa Then people also celebrate many traditional festivals and holidays throughout the year, such as the Lunar New Year (Tet), the 15th day of the first lunar month, the Qingming Festival, the Buffalo Festival, the 27th of September festival, and the Fire Jumping Festival. During these festivals, various folk games attract many participants, such as "danh cu" (spinning top), "danh khang" (single stick), "danh yen", and swinging. The Pa Then people believe that the Fire God is a powerful and sacred deity who can ward off evil, repel disease, and bring strength, warmth, and good things to people. As such, one of the unique traditional festivals of the Pa Then is the Fire Jumping Festival. This festival not only reflects the Pa Then people's spiritual beliefs but also carries the meaning of community cohesion and teaches values about ethics, lifestyle, and the relationship between humans and nature.

The traditional clothing of the Pa Then people is very unique and distinct from that of other ethnic minorities. The attire Pa Then women includes a headscarf, blouse, skirt, and a belt made from fabric that the people weave themselves, all in vibrant colors. The jewelry of Pa Then women includes necklaces, bracelets, and earrings made from silver. The men's attire is simpler, consisting of a black tunic with side slits and pants made in a "crooked leg" style, with the waistband sewn with fabric in white or other colors.

Traditional Culture of the San Diu people

The San Diu people in Tuyen Quang have a rich and unique cultural heritage that is clearly reflected in their spiritual cultural life, with profound humanistic meanings. During their labor and production activities, the community often spontaneously composes poetry and sings to one another to relieve the hardships and worries of daily life, focusing on the joys and happiness of a simple, peaceful life. The folk art forms of the San Diu people are very diverse, including poetry, epic poems, myths, folk songs, proverbs, and riddles. In work, songs and music help ease tiredness and hardship. During celebrations such as festivals, weddings, or housewarming parties, the songs become even more heartfelt in the cheerful atmosphere of the event. One notable form of traditional folk singing among the San Diu is "Soong co", a fixed, structured singing style. The songs are based on a main melody, but the lyrics can vary depending on the context of the performance.

The San Diu people have many different rituals and festivals, each with its own specific purpose, such as the "Vuong dan" ceremony, "Ngu nhac lau", "Nhap

phuon” ceremony, “Chem thao chieu” ceremony, “Ngu dai thien vuong chay dan” ceremony, “Leo guom” (Sword climbing) ceremony, Coming-of-Age Ceremony, Soul Liberation Ceremony, and “Soong co” singing. Among these, the most significant festival is the “Dai Phan” Festival, which lasts from 5 to 7 days, with the participation of high-ranking spiritual practitioners and many people from different regions. The “Dai Phan” Festival is not only a religious activity but also serves as a form of spiritual healing for the people. In addition to the “Dai Phan” Festival, the San Diu people also celebrate other festivals such as the Field Opening festival, Field Closing festival, and village temple ceremonies and spring festivals, etc.

The traditional clothing of the San Diu people has undergone changes over time. Today, the traditional clothing of the San Diu people in Tuyen Quang Province is mostly seen during community festivals and religious ceremonies. The traditional clothing of the San Diu people in Tuyen Quang also varies in details such as the length of the shirts and skirts, the style of buttoning, and so on. However, the basic elements are similar, including the way they wear headscarves, blouses, leaf skirts, and leg wraps. For women, the traditional attire includes: a headscarf (called “bao thoi”), a headband, a halter top, a double-layered tunic (“hap sam”) with an inner (“phac sam chay”) and outer (“sam chay”) layer, a long skirt (“phac yem toi”), a belt (“thoi chay”), a skirt (khun), and leg wraps (“coac sen”). San Diu women typically style their hair up and wear a square-shaped headscarf.

Preservation and promotion of traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities in sustainable tourism development of Tuyen Quang province

Preservation and promotion of the beautiful traditional cultural values of the ethnic minority communities will contribute to enriching the cultural foundation of these groups, strengthening unity and solidarity among the ethnicities, and creating a great internal strength that supports the sustainable development of the country. Since 2001, the Vietnamese government has approved several national strategies and programs aimed at preserving and promoting the valuable traditional culture of ethnic minorities in conjunction with tourism development. These strategies set clear goals and priorities for preserving and enhancing the positive values in the culture of ethnic minorities, such as: Mobilizing the collective strength of society to develop ethnic culture, ensuring that culture becomes a true spiritual foundation for society, serving as both a goal and a driving force for economic-social development, as well as ensuring national defense and security, and the territorial integrity of the country; Preserving and promoting the traditional cultural identity

of ethnic minorities in alignment with the current situation, particularly focusing on regions where ethnic groups are at high risk of cultural erosion (such as small ethnic groups that do not have the means to protect their culture; preservation and development of ethnic culture in border areas, islands, and resettlement areas of hydropower plants); Promoting the role of cultural entities in the development of traditional culture among ethnic minorities; Honoring the valuable traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities and encouraging the creation of new cultural values; Contributing to reducing disparities in living standards and cultural access between regions and ethnic groups, linking economic development with the preservation and development of ethnic cultures; Increasing state investment, enhancing the socialization of cultural activities, and mobilizing all resources for the preservation and development of Vietnamese ethnic minority cultures, linking the task of economic development with cultural development, particularly in key areas.

In recent years, Tuyen Quang Province has consistently focused on preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minority communities. Tuyen Quang Province has carried out an inventory of cultural heritage across the entire province and has worked on restoring, maintaining, and developing traditional festivals of the ethnic communities. Currently, Tuyen Quang has 658 historical and cultural monuments and scenic landscapes, including 474 historical sites, 127 cultural sites, and 57 scenic landscapes. Among these, 182 monuments have been classified as national heritage, and 259 are categorized as provincial heritage. At the 17th Congress of the Provincial Party Committee of Tuyen Quang, for the 2020-2025 term, the goal was set to “develop Tuyen Quang into a fairly developed, comprehensive, and sustainable province in the Northern mountainous region.” In the plan, Tuyen Quang identified “Promoting potential, accelerating tourism development to become an important economic sector of the province” is one of the three breakthroughs in socio-economic development in the 2020-2025 term, contributing to promoting sustainable socio-economic development. To achieve the goal of making tourism an important economic sector, Tuyen Quang aims for rapid and sustainable growth in the tourism industry, encouraging the development of distinctive tourism products. The province aspires to become an attractive destination in the Northern mountainous region, attracting more and more visitors to experience and explore, with the goal of making tourism a vital economic sector in Tuyen Quang. This will help transition the economic and labor structure, create jobs, increase incomes for residents and businesses, and boost

local budget revenue. Tourism development is also seen as a comprehensive sector that will foster the growth of other economic industries, etc. At the same time, Tuyen Quang has issued several documents to effectively implement projects in the national target program for the socio-economic development of ethnic minority and mountainous areas, including the project to preserve and promote the valuable traditional culture of ethnic minorities in connection with tourism development. As a result, the efforts to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of ethnic minority communities, linked to the development of sustainable tourism, have achieved notable results. Many tangible and intangible cultural heritages of ethnic minority communities have been recognized and included in the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Currently, many cultural heritages and traditional forms of art of ethnic minority communities, in general, as well as the traditional culture of these ethnic groups, are being preserved and promoted in the cultural and social activities of the community. Every year, many traditional cultural activities are always prioritized by local authorities to be restored and organized in order to help ethnic minorities preserve their beautiful traditional cultures and promote sustainable tourism development in the region.

To preserve and promote the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities linked with tourism development, Tuyen Quang Province requires actions from all levels, sectors, localities, and the people to implement effective and synchronized solutions to ensure sustainable tourism development:

Firstly, preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities linked with tourism development planning, and building a strategy for cultural tourism development that is suitable for the locality. Tourism development should be associated with the responsibility of the community, emphasizing the role of local culture, raising awareness among the people, protecting interests, and promoting the role of the local community in managing cultural heritage and developing tourism. It is also important to select unique tourism products, etc.

Secondly, enhancing the promotion of cultural values and cultural heritage destinations widely, diversifying the forms of promotion, and implementing the linkage of cultural value chains for each locality, through specific tourism tours or routes that explore cultural heritage. This can be done through mass media such as social media platforms like Zalo, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, etc., to introduce the unique cultural features of

the ethnic group and the attractions of the local cultural heritage.

Thirdly, diversifying tourism products to fully exploit the cultural heritage values of each ethnic group and connect with the cultural heritages of other ethnic groups in the area, allowing tourists to gain a deeper and more diverse understanding of the cultural identity of various groups in Tuyen Quang Province. Therefore, it is necessary to develop various tourism models to promote the beautiful traditional cultural values of the community, such as community-based tourism, village tourism, resort tourism, experiential tourism, and community tourism. At the same time, it is essential to design numerous experiential programs for tourists to learn about the values of many cultural heritages from different ethnic groups in the province through tours and travel programs, etc.

Fourthly, building a team of tour guides who are local ethnic minorities with sufficient numbers, professional qualifications, and an understanding of the people and cultural identity of the ethnic groups to effectively and accurately convey the cultural heritage values to visitors.

Fifthly, strengthening measures to ensure environmental hygiene at tourist sites, especially at community-based tourism destinations, such as: increasing the number of trash bins for tourists, applying wastewater and waste management systems at heritage sites, mobilizing local people to participate in maintaining environmental hygiene and waste collection at tourist sites, etc. At the same time, it is essential to regularly assess and monitor the impact of tourism activities on the preservation of cultural heritage values and the lives of people at tourist destinations.

III. CONCLUSION

The development of tourism linked with the distinctive cultural values of each ethnic community is becoming an inevitable trend in the tourism sector. The diverse and rich cultural heritage potential is an important cultural resource for Tuyen Quang Province to build and develop unique tourism products and enhance the quality of tourism products to meet national standards and eventually international standards, in order to satisfy the diverse needs of tourists. Effectively addressing the relationship between preserving and promoting the traditional cultural values of ethnic minorities and sustainable tourism development will contribute to "protecting and preserving cultural resources for future generations," changing livelihoods, improving the quality of life for the people, and ensuring the sustainable development of the country. To achieve this, it requires the proactivity and

determination of local governments, sectors, tourists, and the ethnic minority communities in Tuyen Quang Province to implement a comprehensive set of solutions that are compatible with the cultural characteristics of the community and the local realities.

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Physical Condition of Students (GRADES 1-2) in Primary Schools in Hanoi City

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Abstract— This study aims to assess the physical status of primary school students from grades 1 to 2 in Hanoi, focusing on anthropometric indicators and basic motor skills. Using a combination of actual measurement and survey methods, the study collected data on students' height, weight, BMI, strength, endurance, and flexibility. The results showed apparent differences between age groups and genders, with many students not achieving optimal physical development. This suggests appropriate physical education programs and a balanced diet to support children's comprehensive development.

Keywords— student physical fitness, physical development, anthropometry, BMI index, primary school students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical development in primary school plays a vital role in forming the foundation for children's health, mobility, and physical strength in the future. In particular, children aged 6 to 8 (grades 1 - 2) experience strong growth in height, weight, endurance, and motor coordination. Accurate monitoring and assessment of physical indicators help identify students' health status and provide a scientific basis for developing appropriate physical education programs.

Hanoi is a city with a clear differentiation between urban and rural areas, leading to differences in nutrition, exercise, and living environment for primary school students. To have a more comprehensive and accurate view of the physical condition of children here, it is necessary to identify indicators and physical fitness tests suitable for actual conditions. These indicators help monitor children's development and support schools, physical education teachers, and management agencies in designing more effective training activities.

This study aims to determine the fundamental indicators and appropriate test systems for assessing the physical fitness of primary school students (grades 1-2) in Hanoi. The research results will be an essential basis for improving the quality of physical education and contributing to the health and comprehensive development of children in this age group.

Research method:

The thesis used the following research methods during the research process: Document analysis and synthesis, interviews, pedagogical testing, medical testing, and mathematical statistics.

II. RESEARCH RESULTS

2.1 Determining Indicators and physical assessment tests for primary school students (grades 1-2) in Hanoi City

The determination of indicators and physical assessment tests for primary school students (grades 1-2) is carried out in the following steps:

- Synthesis of relevant Research works on the physical investigation of Vietnamese people [3]; ASEAN physical assessment indicators [6]; Decision 53/BGDĐT-QĐ 2008 of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam on physical assessment of students [1].

- Interviewing experts and scientists. The results have identified 09 indicators and tests to assess the physical fitness of primary school students (grades 1-2) in Hanoi. These are the indicators:

1. Standing height (cm)
2. Weight (kg)
3. BIM index (kg/m²)

4. Dominant grip strength (kg)
5. Supine sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds)
6. On-the-spot long jump (cm)
7. 30m XPC run (seconds)
8. 4x10m shuttle run (seconds)
9. 5-minute free run (m)

2.2. Physical status of primary school students (grades 1-2) in Hanoi city

The topic involves physical examination of students in grades 1 and 2. The specific number of research samples is 557 students from grades 1 to 2 (Male = 301 students, female = 256 students). Grade 1 has a total

of 277 students, 127 male students, and 120 female students. Grade 2 has a total of 280 students, 144 male students, and 280 female students.

The test results were compared with the physical standards of the Ministry of Education and Training, the results of the people's physical survey

The test results are presented from table 1 to table 4.

Table 1 shows the physical test results of first graders at some primary schools in Hanoi. These results reflect fundamental indicators such as height, weight, BMI, hand strength, speed, endurance, and motor coordination ability of male and female students.

Table 1. Results of physical examination of students at some primary schools in Hanoi - Grade 1

No	Content	Male (n=157)				Female (n=120)			
		$\bar{x}$	δ	Mx	Cv	$\bar{x}$	δ	Mx	Cv
1	Standing height (cm)	118,32	8,01	0,64	0,07	114,92	7,58	0,69	0,07
2	Weight (kg)	26,68	4,01	0,32	0,15	24,3	4,81	0,44	0,2
3	BIM index (kg/m ²)	19,20	3,30	0,26	0,17	18,49	3,8	0,35	0,21
4	Dominant grip strength (kg)	10,59	1,02	0,08	0,1	9,57	0,98	0,09	0,1
5	Supine sit-ups (number/30 seconds)	6,75	2,26	0,18	0,33	4,98	1,55	0,14	0,31
6	On-the-spot long jump (cm)	106,78	5,8	0,46	0,05	99,31	4,07	0,37	0,04
7	30m XPC run (seconds)	6,82	0,56	0,04	0,08	7,96	0,43	0,04	0,05
8	4x10m shuttle run (seconds)	13,61	0,63	0,05	0,05	13,77	0,61	0,06	0,04
9	5-minute effort run (m)	697,44	33,3	2,66	0,05	658,16	35,53	3,24	0,05

Table 2. Results of physical fitness classification of students according to Decision 53/2008/BGDĐT-QĐ of the Ministry of Education and Training - Grade 1

No	Content	Male (n=157)						Female (n=120)					
		Good	%	Obtain	%	Not achieved	Good	Good	%	Obtain	%	Not achieved	Good
1	ominant grip strength (kg)	40	25,48	108	68,79	9	5,73	26	21,67	88	73,33	6	5
2	upine sit-ups (reps/30s)	14	8,92	135	85,99	8	5,10	27	22,5	88	73,33	5	4,17
3	n-the-spot long jump (cm)	48	30,57	96	61,15	13	8,28	41	34,17	74	61,67	5	4,17
4	0m XPC run (sec)	53	33,76	88	56,05	16	10,19	22	18,33	88	73,33	10	8,33
5	x10m shuttle run (sec)	54	34,39	87	55,41	16	10,19	39	32,5	75	62,5	6	5
6	-minute free run (m)	11	7,01	139	88,54	7	4,46	19	15,83	97	80,83	4	3,33
7	verall average rate	37	23,57	109	69,43	12	7,64	29	24,17	85	70,83	6	5
8	verall fitness rating	24	15,29	99	63,06	33	21,02	14	11,67	83	69,17	23	19,17

Table 3. Results of physical examination of students at some primary schools in Hanoi - Grade 2

No	Content	Male (n=144)				Female (n=136)			
		$\bar{x}$	δ	Mx	Cv	$\bar{x}$	δ	Mx	Cv
1	Standing height (cm)	121,7	7,58	0,63	0,06	120,48	7,41	0,64	0,06
2	Weight (kg)	31,5	6,29	0,52	0,2	30,9	5,21	0,45	0,17
3	BIM index (kg/m ²)	21,35	4,46	0,37	0,21	21,3	3,22	0,28	0,15
4	Dominant grip strength (kg)	12,3	1,04	0,09	0,08	11,22	1,11	0,1	0,1
5	Supine sit-ups (number/30 seconds)	8,7	2,27	0,19	0,26	6,77	1,73	0,15	0,26
6	On-the-spot long jump (cm)	125,96	6,27	0,52	0,05	117,98	6,27	0,54	0,05
7	30m XPC run (seconds)	6,65	0,41	0,03	0,06	7,65	0,48	0,04	0,06
8	4x10m shuttle run (seconds)	13,51	0,49	0,04	0,04	13,59	0,53	0,05	0,04
9	5-minute effort run (m)	726,49	36,8	3,07	0,05	705,13	47,18	4,05	0,07

Table 4. Results of physical fitness classification of students according to Decision 53/2008/BGDDT-QD of the Ministry of Education and Training - Grade 2

No	Content	Male (n=144)						Female (n=136)					
		Good	%	Obtain	%	Not achieved	%	Good	%	Obtain	%	Not achieved	Good
1	Dominant grip strength (kg)	32	22,22	107	74,31	5	3,47	31	22,79	97	71,32	8	5,88
2	Supine sit-ups (reps/30s)	41	28,47	100	69,44	3	2,08	63	46,32	69	50,74	4	2,94
3	On-the-spot long jump (cm)	19	13,19	124	86,11	1	0,69	32	23,53	102	75	2	1,47
4	30m XPC run (sec)	36	25	102	70,83	6	4,17	41	30,15	90	66,18	5	3,68
5	4x10m shuttle run (sec)	44	30,56	94	65,28	6	4,17	49	36,03	84	61,76	3	2,21
6	5-minute free run (m)	27	18,75	112	77,78	5	3,47	23	16,91	101	74,26	12	8,82
7	Overall average rate	33	22,92	107	74,31	4	2,78	40	29,41	91	66,91	6	4,41
8	Overall fitness rating	25	17,36	103	71,53	16	11,11	37	27,21	78	57,35	21	15,44

III. RESULTS

Research results in table 1

Compare fundamental physical indicators (Height, weight, BMI)

Height: Male students had an average height of 118.32 cm, higher than females (114.92 cm). This difference is consistent with the general growth trend of children, where males tend to have a faster growth rate in the early stages. However, the level of variation was relatively low ($Cv = 0.07$ for both males and females), indicating that the height of students in the survey sample was relatively uniform.

Weight: On average, male students weighed 26.68 kg, higher than female students (24.3 kg). However, the difference was insignificant, and the variation in females ($Cv = 0.2$) was higher than in males ($Cv = 0.15$), indicating that female weight had more excellent dispersion in the sample group.

BMI (kg/m²): Male students had an average BMI of 19.20, while female students had 18.49. Although the BMI of both groups was within the normal range according to World Health Organization (WHO) standards, the higher Cv values (0.17 in males and 0.21 in females) indicated a more significant difference in body condition in the female group.

Muscular strength and endurance

Dominant grip strength: Male students' average grip strength is 10.59 kg, higher than that of females (9.57 kg), consistent with males' biological characteristics of tending to develop better muscle strength. However, the fluctuation is relatively low ($Cv = 0.1$), indicating that the difference between students is insignificant.

Lying abdominal crunches (number of times/30 seconds): Male students perform an average of 6.75 times, higher than females (4.98 times). This difference shows the difference in abdominal strength between the two sexes, which may be due to biological characteristics or

different levels of exercise.

On-the-spot long jump: Male students achieve an average of 106.78 cm, significantly higher than females (99.31 cm). This reflects the better jumping ability and leg strength of males.

Ability to move quickly and coordinate movements

30m high start sprint (XPC): Male students had an average time of 6.82 seconds, faster than females (7.96 seconds). This is consistent with the fact that males tend to have faster reflexes and better leg strength. 4x10m shuttle run: Male students had an average time of 13.61 seconds, faster than females (14.03 seconds), but the difference was insignificant. This shows that the ability to move flexibly and coordinate between both sexes is not much different.

Endurance and stamina

5-minute free-running: Male students ran an average of 697.44 m, higher than female students (658.16 m). This difference reflects that male students' endurance and stamina are usually better, although the variation is insignificant ($C_v = 0.05$ for both sexes).

In summary, the physical tests of first-grade students in Hanoi show significant differences between males and females in physical fitness, strength, mobility, and endurance indicators. Male students tend to be taller, heavier, stronger, and faster than female students. However, the difference is not too significant, indicating that physical development in the early stages of primary school is still relatively even.

The results of Table 2 show the physical development level of male and female students from grade 1 to grade 2. Analyzing this data helps to assess the percentage of students meeting physical requirements, compare the differences between the two genders, and make recommendations to improve the quality of physical education in schools.

General assessment of male and female students' physical fitness

In general, the proportion of students meeting the physical fitness requirements (classified as "Good" and "Achieved") was relatively high for both boys (78.48%) and girls (80.83%), indicating that the majority of first graders had physical fitness that met the minimum requirements as prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Training. However, there was a notable difference in the number of students achieving the "Good" level: Boys (15.29%) were higher than girls (11.67%), indicating that boys tended to be superior in overall physical fitness.

On the other hand, the proportion of "Not

Achieved" students was higher for boys (21.02%) than for girls (19.17%), indicating that there was a group of boys who did not meet the physical fitness requirements, possibly due to differences in their ability to adapt to the training program or nutritional and lifestyle factors. According to the study by Malina et al. (2004), males are generally better able to develop muscle strength and speed than females due to differences in hormones and body structure. However, the "Not yet achieved" rate difference shows that not all males are physically better than females. Still, it also depends on other factors such as diet, frequency of exercise, and physical education in school.

Compare by test content.

Dominant grip strength (kg): 25.48% of male students were classified as Good, while only 21.67% of female students were classified as Good. This is consistent with the general trend that males have better arm strength. The percentage of "Not achieved" students was very low in both genders (5.73% in males and 5% in females), indicating that most students had arm strength that met the minimum requirements.

Supine sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds): The percentage of male students who met the requirements (85.99%) was higher than that of female students (73.33%), reflecting better endurance and strength of male abdominal muscles. The percentage of "Not achieved" in females (4.17%) was lower than that in males (5.10%), indicating that female students were more consistent in their ability to perform this exercise.

On-the-spot long jump (cm): The "Good" rating of males (30.57%) and females (34.17%) is quite similar, showing that long jump ability does not have too big a difference between the two sexes at this age. However, the "Not yet achieved" rate of males (8.28%) is higher than that of females (4.17%), showing that some male students have not developed their jumping ability well. 30m High Start (XPC) and 4x10m Shuttle Run: Boys had a higher "Good" rate than girls in both speed tests: 30m XPC: Boys 33.76%, girls 18.33%. 4x10m Shuttle Run: Boys 34.39%, girls 32.5%. This confirms that boys have faster reflexes and better running speed than girls. However, the "Not yet" rate was also higher in boys, indicating that some students have not developed well in terms of speed and flexibility.

Running at will for 5 minutes (m): The percentage of students meeting the requirements is very high (88.54% for boys and 80.83% for girls), but the number of students reaching the "Good" level is low (7.01% for boys and 15.83% for girls). This shows that the endurance and stamina of students are still not high and need to be improved through a more persistent training program. It

can be seen that The results of physical fitness classification according to Decision 53/2008/BGDĐT-QĐ of the Ministry of Education and Training show that the majority of first graders in Hanoi have physical fitness that meets the requirements, with a high percentage of "Meeting" and "Good" (78-80%). However, there were apparent differences between boys and girls in some areas: Boys tended to be stronger in muscle strength and speed but also had a higher rate of "Not Yet Achieved." Girls were more evenly matched in physical fitness but needed to improve their endurance and muscle strength. These findings suggest that physical education programs should design exercises appropriate for each gender while focusing on improving endurance and flexibility to help students develop more comprehensive physical fitness.

Table 3 presents the results of physical examinations of second graders at some primary schools in Hanoi, including indicators of height, weight, strength, speed, and endurance. Analyzing these data helps assess the physical development level of male and female students. It compares it with previous studies to make scientific judgments about the physical development trends of Vietnamese children.

General physical assessment of 2nd grade students

In most test contents, male students had higher physical development indicators than female students.

The average height of males (121.7 cm) was higher than that of females (120.48 cm), but the difference was insignificant. This is consistent with the general development trend of children at this age.

The average weight of males (31.5 kg) was also slightly higher than that of females (30.9 kg), with a relatively large standard deviation (6.29 kg for males and 5.21 kg for females), indicating a clear differentiation between students in the same group.

Research by Malina & Bouchard (2004) showed that in the pre-pubertal stage, the difference in height and weight between males and females was insignificant. Still, males tended to develop more muscle, while females had higher body fat. The results in Table 3 are consistent with this trend.

Detailed analysis of each test content

BMI (kg/m²): Boys had an average BMI of 21.35 kg/m², slightly higher than girls (21.3 kg/m²), indicating similar levels of physical development between the two sexes. The standard deviation of BMI in boys (4.46) was higher than that of girls (3.22), reflecting more significant differences in physical development among boys. According to WHO (2020), children's BMI can vary with

age and physical development. The similarity between male and female BMI in grade 2 suggests no apparent differences in physical development. Still, the high standard deviation in boys may indicate an imbalance in diet or uneven levels of physical activity.

Dominant grip strength (kG): Boys had an average grip strength of 12.3 kG, higher than girls (11.22 kG), with a low standard deviation (1.04 in boys and 1.11 in girls). The coefficient of variation (Cv) was almost the same (0.08 in boys and 0.1 in girls), indicating a relatively even distribution in the group. Hand grip strength is an index reflecting the development of the musculoskeletal system. According to Armstrong & Welsman (2007), differences in muscle strength between boys and girls began to appear at an elementary school age, which is consistent with that trend.

Lying back sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds): Boys had a higher average number of sit-ups than girls (8.7 times compared to 7.73 times). The coefficient of variation for boys (0.26) was higher than for girls (0.26), indicating a relatively large degree of differentiation among students in their ability to perform this exercise. Rowland's (2005) study found that sit-ups reflect the strength of the abdominal and lower back muscles. This result is consistent with boys' tendency to develop better muscles, making this movement easier.

Long jump on the spot (cm): Male students have an average long jump of 125.96 cm, higher than that of females (117.98 cm), with a similar standard deviation (6.27 cm for males and 6.27 cm for females). This difference reflects the difference in leg muscle strength between the two sexes. According to the study of Harrison et al. (2001), long jump ability is affected by leg muscle strength and jumping technique. This result is consistent with the general trend that males have better-developed leg muscles.

30m XPC run: Male students had an average time of 6.65 seconds, faster than females (6.77 seconds). The coefficient of variation was very low (0.04 in both groups), indicating high uniformity in sprinting ability.

4x10m shuttle run: Male students' average time was 13.51 seconds, faster than females' (13.59 seconds). The coefficient of variation was low (0.04 in both groups), indicating low differentiation.

5-minute free run (m): Male students ran an average of 726.49 m, higher than females (705.13 m). The standard deviation in females (47.18 m) was more significant than that in males (36.8 m), indicating a more precise differentiation in endurance in the female group.

In summary, Table 3 shows that second graders

have a steady physical development, with some differences between boys and girls: Boys outperform girls in muscle strength (grip strength, long jump, sit-ups) and speed (30m dash, shuttle run). Girls have higher uniformity in many tests but must improve muscle strength and endurance. These findings suggest that physical education programs should design exercises suitable for each gender, helping students develop more comprehensive physical fitness.

Table 4 shows the results of the physical fitness classification of second-grade students according to Decision 53/2008/BGDĐT-QĐ of the Ministry of Education and Training, based on tests such as grip strength, running, long jump, and endurance. Analyzing these data helps assess the physical development level of male and female students, thereby proposing appropriate adjustments in the physical education program.

General assessment of physical fitness of grade 2 students

The results of the general physical fitness classification show that 25 male students (17.36%) achieved Good, 103 students (71.53%) achieved Pass, and 16 students (11.11%) did not achieve. Thirty-seven female students (27.21%) achieved Good, 78 students (57.35%) achieved Pass, and 21 students (15.44%) did not achieve.

In general, the rate of students meeting the requirements (Good + Pass) in males (88.89%) is higher than in females (84.56%). However, the rate of female students achieving Good is higher than that of males (27.21% compared to 17.36%), indicating that a group of female students have better physical condition than average.

According to Malina & Bouchard (2004), physical development between boys and girls in early primary school is not significantly different. However, girls tend to perform better in tests requiring flexibility and endurance, which may explain the higher Good rating in girls.

Detailed analysis of each test content

Dominant hand grip strength (kg): Male students: 22.22% achieved Good, 74.31% achieved Pass, and 3.47% did not achieve. Female students: 22.79% achieved Good, 71.32% achieved Pass, 5.88% did not achieve. The difference between the two groups was not significant, but the rate of failure in females was higher than in males (5.88% compared to 3.47%). According to Armstrong & Welsman (2007), hand muscle strength is more developed in males than in females, which may explain why the rate of failure in females is higher. Lying back sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds): Male students: 28.47% achieved Good, 69.44% achieved Pass, only 2.08% did not achieve.

Female students: 46.32% achieved Good, 50.74% achieved Pass, 2.94% did not achieve. The rate of achieving Good in females was higher than that of males (46.32% compared to 28.47%). This is one of the tests that female students performed better on, consistent with Rowland's (2005) study that female students are better able to perform abdominal exercises due to different body fat percentages and muscle distribution than males.

Long jump on the spot (cm): Male students: 13.19% achieved Good, 86.11% achieved Pass, only 0.69% did not achieve. Female students: 23.53% achieved Good, 75.83% achieved Pass, 1.47% did not achieve. Although the rate of achieving Good was higher in females than in males (23.53% compared to 13.19%), achieving Pass was higher in males than in females (86.11% compared to 75.83%). The long jump is a test to assess leg muscle strength, and this result is slightly different from the general trend where males tend to have better-developed leg muscles. However, this result may be influenced by technical factors or the distribution of physical strength in the study sample. **30m high start sprint (XPC):** Male students: 25.16% achieved Good, 70.83% achieved Pass, 3.83% did not achieve. Female students: 31.40% achieved Good, 66.18% achieved Pass, 3.68% did not achieve. **4x10m shuttle run (seconds):** Male students: 30.56% achieved Good, 65.28% achieved Pass, 4.17% did not achieve. Female students: 36.03% achieved Good, 61.76% achieved Pass, 2.21% did not achieve. The rate of achieving Good in females is higher than in males (36.03% compared to 30.56%). Shuttle run assesses the ability to move quickly and flexibly. This difference may be because female students are lighter, so it is easier to change the direction of movement.

5-minute run (m): Male students: 18.75% achieved Good, 77.78% achieved Pass, 3.47% did not achieve. Female students: 16.83% achieved Good, 74.26% achieved Pass, 8.82% did not achieve. The rate of failure in females is higher than that in males (8.82% compared to 3.47%), indicating that the endurance of male students is slightly better. According to Rowland (2005), the cardiovascular system of male students often works more effectively when performing endurance exercises, which may explain why the rate of failure in females is higher. **Summary:** Boys tend to outperform girls in strength tests (grip, long jump) and endurance (5-minute dash). Girls perform better in tests requiring agility and short-term speed (30-meter dash, shuttle run). Boys are more likely than girls to achieve a pass (Good + Pass), but girls are more likely than boys to achieve a pass on many tests.

2. Comparing the physical fitness of grade 1 and 2 students with related Research works

Table 5 is the result of comparing the body shape of first graders in Hanoi and other provinces such as Can Tho, Da Nang, and Son La, based on the results of the physical survey of Vietnamese people according to ASEAN criteria (conducted in 2020 by the Institute of Sports Science) not only helps to identify the difference in physical condition between regions.

Average height

Urban male students: Hanoi (118.7 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (129 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (127.7 cm, $p<0.01$), and Son La (123.4 cm, $p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (118.1 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (123 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (121.3 cm, $p<0.01$), and Son La (121.6 cm, $p<0.01$).

Urban female students: Hanoi (114.1 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (125.1 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (121.9 cm, $p<0.01$), and Son La (118.2 cm, $p<0.01$).

Rural female students: Hanoi (115.1 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (121.7 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (121.9 cm, $p<0.01$), and Son La (121.2 cm, $p<0.01$). Thus, grade 1 students in Hanoi have a significantly lower average height than students in other provinces, especially Can Tho. This may reflect differences in nutrition, living conditions, genetic factors, and physical exercise regimens.

Average weight

Urban male students: Hanoi (26.85 kg) is lower than Can Tho (33.6 kg, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (30.69 kg, $p<0.01$), and Son La (24.22 kg, $p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (26.46 kg) is lower than Can Tho (30.4 kg, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (28.1 kg, $p<0.01$), but there is no significant difference with Son La (25.45 kg, $p>0.05$).

Urban female students: Hanoi (23.16 kg) is lower than Can Tho (28.38 kg, $p<0.01$) and Da Nang (28.03 kg, $p<0.01$), but there is no difference with Son La (36.92 kg, $p>0.05$).

Rural female students in Hanoi (22.68 kg) were lower than those in Can Tho (27.2 kilograms, $p<0.01$) and Da Nang (24.1 kg, $p<0.01$), but there was no difference with Son La (26.81 kg, $p>0.05$). Thus, The average weight of students in Hanoi was lower than that in Can Tho and Da Nang, especially in the group of male students. However, the difference with Son La was insignificant, suggesting there may be similarities in diet and living standards between Hanoi and Son La compared to the remaining areas.

BMI index (kg/m²):

Urban male students: Hanoi (19.23) did not differ

significantly from Can Tho (19.98, $p>0.05$), but were lower than Da Nang (21.14, $p<0.01$) and Son La (15.61, $p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (19.07) did not differ significantly from Can Tho (19.91, $p>0.05$) but was higher than Son La (17.06, $p<0.01$).

Urban female students: Hanoi (17.96) did not differ significantly from Can Tho (18.03, $p>0.05$), but were lower than Da Nang (18.89, $p<0.01$).

Rural female students: Hanoi (17.26) did not differ significantly from Can Tho (17.57, $p>0.05$) but were lower than Da Nang (19.23, $p<0.01$).

The BMI index of Hanoi students is not much different from Can Tho but is significantly lower than Da Nang. This may be due to the difference in dietary structure, which allows students in Da Nang to have a more reasonable amount of nutrition.

Overall assessment: Students in Hanoi have lower physical fitness than those in the southern and central provinces, especially Can Tho and Da Nang. Nutritional differences may be the leading cause, as students in the west and central regions have higher protein and fat diets. Policies are needed to improve nutrition and physical training for students in Hanoi, especially primary school students, to narrow the gap in physical development between regions. Further Research on the impact of environmental factors, lifestyle, and nutrition is needed to develop appropriate solutions.

Table 6 compares second graders in Hanoi with those in Can Tho, Da Nang and Son La provinces based on the physical fitness survey of Vietnamese people according to ASEAN criteria (Institute of Sports Science, 2020). This result shows significant differences between regions, helping to clarify the impact of environmental and nutritional conditions on children's development.

Table 5. Comparison of body morphology test results of Hanoi students with students from other provinces according to the results of the Vietnamese physical fitness survey according to ASEAN criteria (2020 by the Institute of Sports Science) - Grade 1

Subjects	Area	Index	Hanoi		Can Tho		t	P	Da Nang		t	P	Son La		t	P
			$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ		
Male	Urban (n=77)	Height (cm)	118,7	7,88	129	0,04	11,47	<0.01	127,7	0,05	10,02	<0.01	123,4	9,82	3,28	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	26,85	4	33,6	5,88	8,33	<0.01	30,69	6,05	4,65	<0.01	24,22	7,49	2,72	<0.01
		BMI (kg/m ²)	19,23	3,62	19,98	2,59	1,48	>0.05	11,99	2,21	14,98	<0.01	15,61	3	6,76	<0.01
	Rural (n=80)	Height (cm)	118,1	8,17	123	0,04	5,36	<0.01	121,3	0,04	3,5	<0.01	121,6	6,52	2,99	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	26,46	4,03	30,4	7,13	4,3	<0.01	24,81	2,92	2,97	<0.01	25,45	4,93	1,42	>0.05
		BMI (kg/m ²)	19,07	2,98	19,91	3,45	1,65	>0.05	10,21	1,07	25,03	<0.01	17,06	2,16	4,88	<0.01
Female	Urban (n=59)	Height (cm)	114,19	7,53	125,1	0,05	11,13	<0.01	121,6	3,9	6,71	<0.01	118,2	5,43	3,32	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	23,16	4,64	28,38	6,57	4,98	<0.01	28,03	4,21	5,97	<0.01	36,92	51,39	2,05	<0.05
		BMI (kg/m ²)	17,96	4,13	18,03	3,59	0,1	>0.05	18,89	2,28	1,51	>0.05	26,81	38,37	1,76	>0.05
	Rural (n=61)	Height (cm)	115,1	7,76	124,4	0,06	9,36	<0.01	121,9	7,31	4,98	<0.01	121,2	4,96	5,17	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	22,68	4,72	27,2	5,78	4,73	<0.01	24,89	7,14	2,02	<0.05	22,62	4,15	0,07	>0.05
		BMI (kg/m ²)	17,26	3,88	17,57	3,49	0,46	>0.05	16,49	2,99	1,23	>0.05	15,42	2,75	3,02	<0.01

Table 6. Comparison of body morphology test results of Hanoi students with students from other provinces according to the results of the Vietnamese physical fitness survey according to ASEAN criteria (2020 by the Institute of Sports Science) - Grade 2

Subjects	Area	Index	Hanoi		Can Tho		t	P	Da Nang		t	P	Son La		t	P
			$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ		
Male	Urban (n=71)	Height (cm)	120,32	7,5	135	0,04	16,49	<0.01	135	0,07	16,49	<0.01	126	4,74	5,39	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	30,98	6,34	39,98	6,08	8,63	<0.01	38,14	6,93	6,42	<0.01	26,6	11,03	2,9	<0.01
		BMI (kg/m ²)	21,48	4,51	21,9	2,65	0,68	>0.05	14,01	1,92	12,84	<0.01	16,63	5,9	5,5	<0.01
	Rural (n=73)	Height (cm)	123,05	7,47	128	0,03	5,66	<0.01	130	0,05	7,95	<0.01	125,2	3,33	2,25	<0.05
		Weight (kg)	32,01	6,25	33,2	10,92	0,81	>0.05	32,58	6,45	0,54	>0.05	26,08	6,03	5,83	<0.01
		BMI (kg/m ²)	21,24	4,43	20,06	6,13	1,33	>0.05	12,54	2,27	14,93	<0.01	16,53	3,24	7,33	<0.01
Female	Urban (n=67)	Height (cm)	120,45	7,36	130	0,01	10,62	<0.01	125	0,03	5,06	<0.01	130,2	7,49	7,6	<0.01
		Weight (kg)	30,99	5,09	37,12	4,29	7,54	<0.01	26,75	4,16	5,28	<0.01	29,03	7,54	1,76	>0.05

		BMI (kg/m2)	21,4	3,39	21,85	2,44	0,88	>0.05	17,23	2,54	8,06	<0.01	16,9	3,01	8,12	<0.01
	Rural (n=69)	Height (cm)	120,51	7,52	130	4,97	8,75	<0.01	125,5	6,08	4,29	<0.01	121	3,13	0,5	>0.05
		Weight (kg)	30,81	5,37	33,23	4,36	2,91	<0.01	24,66	4,75	7,13	<0.01	19,93	1,31	16,35	<0.01
		BMI (kg/m2)	21,2	3,06	19,63	2,01	3,56	<0.01	15,6	2,44	11,89	<0.01	13,62	0,84	19,84	<0.01

Table 7. Comparison of physical fitness test results of Hanoi students with physical fitness survey results in 2001 - Grade 1

No		Male				t	p	Female				t	P
		Nationwide		Hanoi				Nationwide		Hanoi			
		$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ		
1	Dominant grip strength (kg)	10,3	2,26	10,59	1,02	1,47	>0.05	9,3	2,07	9,57	0,98	1,29	>0.05
2	Supine sit-ups (reps/30s)	6,5	4,47	6,75	2,26	0,63	>0.05	4,5	4,4	4,98	1,55	1,13	>0.05
3	On-the-spot long jump (cm)	112	16,4	106,78	5,8	3,76	<0.01	102	15,5	99,31	4,07	1,84	>0.05
4	30m XPC run (sec)	7,1	0,76	6,82	0,56	3,72	<0.01	7,8	0,9	7,96	0,43	1,76	>0.05
5	4x10m shuttle run (sec)	13,8	0,89	13,61	0,63	2,18	<0.05	14	0,91	13,77	0,61	2,3	<0.05
6	5-minute effort run (m)	718	117	697,44	33,3	2,12	<0.05	667	107	658,16	35,53	0,86	>0.05

Table 8. Comparison of physical fitness test results of Hanoi students with physical fitness survey results in 2001 - Grade 2

No		Male				t	p	Female				t	P
		Nationwide		Hanoi				Nationwide		Hanoi			
		$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ			$\bar{x}$	δ	$\bar{x}$	δ		
1	Dominant grip strength (kg)	20,4	4,04	12,3	1,04	23,3	< 0.01	11	2,24	11,22	1,11	1,03	>0.05
2	Supine sit-ups (reps/30s)	7,5	3,2	8,7	2,27	3,67	< 0.01	5,5	3,5	6,77	1,73	3,79	< 0.01
3	On-the-spot long jump (cm)	125	17,5	125,96	6,27	0,62	>0.05	116	15,9	117,98	6,27	1,35	>0.05
4	30m XPC run (sec)	6,7	0,68	6,65	0,41	0,76	>0.05	7,3	0,8	7,65	0,48	4,38	< 0.01
5	4x10m shuttle run (sec)	13,7	0,72	13,51	0,49	2,62	< 0.01	13,9	0,81	13,59	0,53	3,73	< 0.01
6	5-minute effort run (m)	744	120	726,49	36,8	1,67	>0.05	699	117	705,13	47,18	0,57	>0.05

Comparison of body mass index between regions

- Average height

Urban male students: Hanoi (120.32 cm) is significantly shorter than Can Tho (135 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (135 cm, $p<0.01$) and Son La (126 cm, $p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (123.05 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (128 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (130 cm, $p<0.01$) and Son La (125.2 cm, $p<0.05$).

Urban female students: Hanoi (120.45 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (130 cm, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (125 cm, $p<0.01$) and Son La (130.2 cm, $p<0.01$).

Rural female students: Hanoi (120.51 cm) is shorter than Can Tho (130 cm, $p<0.01$) and Da Nang (125.5 cm, $p<0.01$), but there is no difference with Son La (121 cm, $p>0.05$).

In summary, Hanoi students have a significantly lower average height than those in the southern provinces (Can Tho) and the central provinces (Da Nang). The reason may come from the nutritional regime, as previous studies (Nguyen Cong Khan, 2019) have shown that children in the West have a protein-rich diet due to abundant aquatic resources. Notably, Son La - a mountainous province, has a higher average height than Hanoi, which may reflect the influence of genetic factors and the more active habits of children in the highlands.

- Average weight

Urban male students: Hanoi (30.98 kg) is lower than Can Tho (39.98 kg, $p<0.01$), Da Nang (38.14 kg, $p<0.01$) but higher than Son La (26.6 kilograms, $p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (32.01 kg) is lower than Da Nang (32.58 kg, $p<0.05$) and is not different from Can Tho (33.2 kg, $p>0.05$), but is higher than Son La (26.08 kg, $p<0.01$).

Urban female students: Hanoi students (30.99 kg) are lower than Can Tho (37.12 kg, $p<0.01$) and Da Nang (26.75 kg, $p<0.01$) but are not different from Son La (29.03 kg, $p>0.05$).

Rural girls: Hanoi (30.81 kg) was lower than Can Tho (33.23 kg, $p<0.01$) but not different from Da Nang (24.66 kg, $p>0.05$) and Son La (19.93 kg, $p<0.01$).

In summary, Hanoi children were heavier than Can Tho and Da Nang, especially in the urban male group. Son La had the lowest weight, possibly due to more limited nutritional conditions in the mountainous area.

- BMI (kg/m^2)

Urban male students: Hanoi (21.48) is not different from Can Tho (21.9, $p>0.05$) but lower than Da Nang (21.92, $p<0.01$) and higher than Son La (16.63,

$p<0.01$).

Rural male students: Hanoi (21.24) is not different from Can Tho (20.06, $p>0.05$) but higher than Son La (16.53, $p<0.01$).

Urban female students: Hanoi (21.4) is not different from Can Tho (21.85, $p>0.05$) but lower than Da Nang (17.23, $p<0.01$).

Rural female students: Hanoi (21.2) is not different from Can Tho (19.63, $p>0.05$) but higher than Son La (13.62, $p<0.01$).

In summary, the BMI of Hanoi students is similar to Can Tho's but significantly lower than Da Nang's. Son La students have the lowest BMI, reflecting the poorer nutritional status in the mountainous areas.

Thus, the above study shows that primary school students in grade 2 in Hanoi have lower physical conditions than those in Can Tho and Da Nang, especially in height and weight. Son La students tend to be underweight and shorter, reflecting the more limited nutritional conditions in the mountainous areas. The BMI of Hanoi students is not significantly different from Can Tho but is lower than Da Nang, indicating differences in dietary structure and physical activity.

Research results of Table 7:

Table 7 compares the physical fitness indicators of first graders in Hanoi with the national average. This analysis aims to assess the difference between Hanoi students' physical fitness and the national average, thereby discussing the influencing factors and proposing solutions to improve physical fitness.

Comparison of hand and abdominal strength

Dominant hand grip strength (kg): Male: Hanoi (10.59 kg) is higher than the national average (10.3 kg), but there is no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). Female: Hanoi (9.57 kg) is higher than the national average (9.3 kg), but there is also no statistical significance ($p>0.05$).

Lying on back, sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds): Male: Hanoi (6.75 times) is higher than the whole country (6.5 times) but not statistically significant ($p>0.05$). Female: Hanoi (4.98 times) is higher than the entire country (4.5 times), but also not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Comparison of leg strength and running speed

On-the-spot long jump (cm): Male: Hanoi (106.78 cm) is lower than the whole country (112 cm, $p<0.01$). Female: Hanoi (99.31 cm) is lower than the entire country (102 cm, $p>0.05$).

High-start 30m run (seconds): Male: Hanoi (6.82 seconds) is faster than the whole country (7.1 seconds, $p<0.01$). Female: Hanoi (7.96 seconds) is faster than the entire country (7.8 seconds) but not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Overall: Hanoi boys had significantly lower standing long jump performance than the national average, reflecting weaker leg strength, possibly due to a lack of outdoor exercise or differences in physical training methods.

Despite their poorer long jump, Hanoi boys had better 30m running performance, possibly due to greater familiarity with sprinting drills.

Comparison of coordination and endurance

4x10m shuttle run (seconds): Male: Hanoi (13.61 seconds) is faster than the whole country (13.8 seconds, $p<0.05$). Female: Hanoi (13.77 seconds) is faster than the entire country (14 seconds, $p<0.05$).

5-minute free run (m): Male: Hanoi (697.44 m) is lower than the whole country (718 m, $p<0.05$). Female: Hanoi (658.16 m) is lower than the entire country (667 m, $p>0.05$).

Thus, Hanoi students had significantly faster shuttle runs, indicating better mobility, possibly due to more organized physical education programs in the city's schools. However, Hanoi students had lower 5-minute free-running performance than the national average, indicating that their endurance was not well trained, possibly due to limited exercise space and less outdoor physical activity participation.

General comments: Hanoi students' grip and abdominal strength did not differ significantly from the national average.

Hanoi students had lower standing long jump performance but faster 30m high-start running, reflecting differences in leg strength and speed development.

Hanoi students' ability to coordinate movements (shuttle running) is significantly better than the national average, but their endurance (running at their own pace for 5 minutes) is worse. The reason may be that urban students have less outdoor exercise space, leading to lower endurance. The physical education program in Hanoi may focus on speed exercises rather than endurance.

Research results table 8

1. Compare arm and abdominal strength

Hand grip strength (kg): Male: Hanoi (12.3 kg) is significantly lower than the national average (20.4 kg, $p<0.01$). Female: Hanoi (11.22 kg) is almost equivalent to the national average (11 kg, $p>0.05$).

Supine sit-ups (number of times/30 seconds):

Male: Hanoi (8.7 times) is higher than the national average (7.5 times, $p<0.01$). Female: Hanoi (6.77 times) is higher than the national average (5.5 times, $p<0.01$).

Discussion: The hand grip strength of male students in Hanoi is significantly lower than that of the national average, indicating differences in hand strength development. This may be because city students rarely participate in physical activities that require hand strength, such as climbing and carrying. On the contrary, the number of sit-ups of Hanoi students is significantly higher, indicating better abdominal muscle strength. This may come from the physical education program in Hanoi focusing more on abdominal exercises, or students are used to sitting for long periods, so they develop better abdominal muscles.

2. Comparison of leg strength and running speed

Long jump on the spot (cm): Male: Hanoi (125.96 cm) is almost equivalent to the national level (125 cm, $p>0.05$). Female: Hanoi (117.98 cm) is nearly equivalent to the national level (116 cm, $p>0.05$). 30m high start sprint (seconds): Male: Hanoi (6.65 seconds) is almost equivalent to the national level (6.7 seconds, $p>0.05$). Female: Hanoi (7.65 seconds) is significantly faster than the national level (7.3 seconds, $p<0.01$).

3. Comparing motor coordination and endurance

4x10m shuttle run (seconds): Male: Hanoi (13.51 seconds) faster than the whole country (13.7 seconds, $p<0.01$). Female: Hanoi (13.59 seconds) is faster than the entire country (13.9 seconds, $p<0.01$).

5-minute free run (m): Male: Hanoi (726.49 m) almost equivalent to the whole country (744 m, $p>0.05$). Female: Hanoi (705.13 m) is practically equivalent to the entire country (699 m, $p>0.05$). Hanoi students have significantly faster shuttle run times, demonstrating better mobility and speed of changing direction, possibly due to the urban environment requiring faster reflexes in traffic and daily activities.

The 5-minute running speed of Hanoi students did not differ significantly from the national average, indicating that geographical factors do not affect endurance.

General comments: Hanoi male students' grip strength was significantly lower than the national average, but abdominal strength was higher. There was no significant difference in the on-the-spot long jump, but Hanoi female students ran 30m with a high start faster, reflecting differences in speed development. Hanoi

students had significantly better 4x10m shuttle performance, demonstrating better mobility. However, endurance did not differ considerably from the national average.

IV. CONCLUSION

Research on the physical condition of primary school students in grades 1 and 2 in Hanoi has clarified the differences between groups of students by age, gender, and living area. The results show that most students have physical conditions that meet the Ministry of Education and Training's physical standards; however, specific differences still need attention.

Physical development by age and gender: Boys are, on average, taller than girls (grade 1: boys 118.32 cm, girls 114.92 cm; grade 2: boys 121.7 cm, girls 120.48 cm), reflecting normal development by gender. Boys are also heavier than girls, but the difference is not significant. The BMI of both sexes is generally within the normal range. However, there is still a proportion of stunted or overweight students that need to be monitored.

Motor and strength: Boys outperform girls in strength tests (grip, long jump) and endurance (5-minute dash). Girls perform better in tests requiring agility and short-term speed (30-meter dash, shuttle run), which may be related to gender differences in physiology. Girls are more likely than boys to score "Good" on many tests, suggesting that girls are more evenly matched in overall fitness.

Compared to other regions, Hanoi students have a lower average height than students in Can Tho, Da Nang, and Son La, indicating differences in nutrition and living conditions. The BMI of Hanoi students is not significantly different from Can Tho but is lower than Da Nang, indicating the need to improve nutrition and physical training to narrow the development gap with other regions.

ARTICLE SOURCE

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Quilted Selves and Shadowed Psyches: A Psychoanalytic Study of Grace Marks

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Abstract— *This paper examines Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* through Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic frameworks, focusing on the psychological complexity of Grace Marks, a historical figure convicted of murder in 19th-century Canada. The novel's fragmented narrative, recurring motifs, and symbolic textures create a rich terrain for exploring themes of repression, trauma, and identity. Grace's disjointed memory and ambiguous role in the murders are interpreted as signs of deep psychological distress, particularly tied to the repression of sexual trauma and loss. Drawing from Freud's concepts of the unconscious, hysteria, and the death drive, as well as post-Freudian ideas on dissociation and trauma narratives, the paper argues that Grace's psyche functions as a quilted self—stitched together by fragments of repressed memories, alter egos, and symbolic dream language. The novel also interrogates the patriarchal structures of medicine and psychiatry through Grace's interactions with Dr. Simon Jordan, whose clinical gaze and erotic transference reflect both the objectification of female hysterics and his own unresolved Oedipal conflicts. Symbols such as quilts, mirrors, fruit, and locked rooms serve as unconscious signifiers, revealing buried desires and traumas. Rather than offering a conclusive psychological diagnosis, Atwood resists closure, constructing Grace as a fluid, unstable subject whose multiplicity challenges dominant narratives of truth, guilt, and sanity. Ultimately, *Alias Grace* becomes both a critique of 19th-century psychiatric discourse and a postmodern meditation on the unknowability of the human mind.*

Keywords— *Margaret Atwood, *Alias Grace*, Psychoanalysis, Trauma and Repression, Dissociative Identity, Female Hysteria.*

I. INTRODUCTION: FREUD IN THE QUILTS

Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1996) presents itself not just as historical fiction but as a complex psychological case study, one that resists straightforward interpretation and invites layered readings through psychoanalytic theory. Based on the real-life case of Grace Marks, a 16-year-old domestic servant convicted of murder in 1843 Canada, the novel reconstructs her story through interviews, memories, dreams, and fragmentary testimonies. Grace's psychological depth, combined with Atwood's metafictional techniques and embedded critiques of gender and power, make *Alias Grace* particularly fertile ground for Freudian and post-Freudian analysis.

The novel's very structure echoes the psychoanalytic case study—Dr. Simon Jordan, a rising star in 19th-century psychiatry, seeks to uncover the truth about Grace's involvement in the murders of Thomas Kinnear and Nancy Montgomery. In doing so, he mirrors Freud's role as both

scientist and confessor. Grace becomes the subject of analysis, her unconscious mind the territory to be decoded, and her narrative the field where repression, hysteria, dissociation, and the death drive surface in unpredictable ways. Atwood deftly destabilizes the reader's reliance on any singular "truth" by presenting multiple perspectives and unreliable narrators, reflecting Freud's insight that the psyche is never fully transparent to itself.

As Zhang Yating notes, Atwood constructs Grace as a "hysterical subject" whose fragmented self must be read through the very discourses that seek to contain her—medical, legal, and psychoanalytic. *Alias Grace*, then, is not only a historical mystery but a deeply psychoanalytic novel, in which quilt patterns, dreams, and silences become as revealing as confessions. This paper applies Freudian and post-Freudian lenses to examine Grace's fractured psyche—her dissociation, defenses, symbolic imagination, and encounters with the clinical gaze. In

doing so, it will argue that *Grace Marks* is less a subject to be understood than a psychic text to be interpreted.

II. REPRESSION, TRAUMA, AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

At the core of *Grace Marks*' characterization in *Alias Grace* lies a profound psychic opacity. Her supposed amnesia regarding the double murder she was convicted for—alongside James McDermott—forms the central mystery of the novel. This repression, a cornerstone of Freudian psychoanalysis, functions as a defense mechanism that shields the ego from memories too traumatic to bear. Freud posited that repression, especially in the context of traumatic or taboo desires, often returns in disguised forms—through symptoms, dreams, or slips. In *Grace*'s case, her fragmented memory is not absence but a symptom of deeply buried trauma.

Early in the novel, *Grace* herself questions her truth:

“When you are in the middle of a story it isn’t a story at all... it’s only afterwards that it becomes anything like a story at all” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 5).

This line hints at the retroactive construction of memory, where repression delays coherent narrative formation. *Grace*'s inability—or refusal—to clearly recall the murders suggests a split within the psyche, between the narrating “I” and the knowing unconscious. What remains unspeakable resurfaces in subtle ways: through her dreams, associations, and moments of silence or confusion during questioning.

The trauma *Grace* has endured is manifold—childhood abuse, starvation, immigration, loss of her mother on the voyage to Canada, and, most poignantly, the death of Mary Whitney, her best friend and emotional anchor. Mary's death from a botched abortion marks a decisive rupture in *Grace*'s psyche. The language Atwood uses to describe *Grace*'s reaction is subdued, almost numb, as though her mind has recoiled from the horror. *Grace* does not process the event in a cathartic narrative, but rather submerges it, echoing Freud's model of latent trauma—an event that becomes traumatic only through its return.

This repression finds further manifestation in *Grace*'s ambiguous relationship to Nancy Montgomery, Kinnear's housekeeper and mistress. *Grace* exhibits contradictory emotions—admiration, jealousy, resentment—and narrates these feelings with measured ambiguity. Nancy, in many ways, mirrors Mary Whitney: a woman who exerts influence, both caring and cruel, over *Grace*. When Nancy is murdered, *Grace*'s mind fractures again, and her selective amnesia sets in. As H. Tiedemann argues, “the breakdown of *Grace*'s psychic continuity is not merely a

legal puzzle but a mirror of 19th-century gendered trauma” (Tiedemann, 2001).

Freud's notion of the return of the repressed also operates symbolically. The name “Mary Whitney” returns in unexpected moments. During a hypnosis session with Jeremiah the peddler, *Grace* appears to be “possessed” by Mary's spirit—a literalization of the divided self and repressed memory. This scene dramatizes the conflict between ego and unconscious, casting Mary as both alter ego and revenant of trauma.

“It's not *Grace* speaking... It's Mary Whitney. She's come back from the dead” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 417).

In psychoanalytic terms, this moment could be seen as a collapse of repression, where the unconscious asserts itself through a dissociative trance. Rather than remembering Mary, *Grace* becomes her, illustrating Freud's idea that repressed content often returns in disguised or symbolic forms.

Post-Freudian theorists like Judith Herman and Cathy Caruth have emphasized that trauma resists narrative closure. *Grace*'s story aligns with this view: her tale is full of gaps, contradictions, and narrative slippage. These are not signs of deceit but indicators of psychic wounds too deep for linear telling.

Thus, *Grace*'s fragmented memory is not an anomaly to be resolved but a truth of trauma itself. Her repression is not only personal—it is cultural, gendered, and symptomatic of a world that punishes female desire, curiosity, and agency. *Alias Grace* forces us to read these silences not as absences, but as rich with unconscious meaning.

III. HYSTERIA AND THE CLINICAL GAZE

One of the most significant psychoanalytic frameworks in *Alias Grace* is the concept of female hysteria, especially as interpreted in the 19th century through the lens of male-dominated science and psychiatry. *Grace Marks* is treated not only as a criminal subject but also as a hysteric—an “unruly” woman whose psyche and body become a site of both fascination and control. Atwood critiques the historical treatment of women as psychologically unstable and pathologized beings, while simultaneously portraying *Grace* as someone who skillfully navigates, manipulates, and sometimes subverts the clinical gaze.

The term “hysteria” itself, rooted in the Greek word *hystera* (womb), historically framed women's emotional excesses as disorders of the reproductive system. Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria* (1895) interpreted hysteria not as fakery but as a manifestation of unconscious conflict, often rooted in repressed sexuality or trauma. In *Alias Grace*, these dynamics are echoed in the

relationship between Grace and Dr. Simon Jordan, who represents the scientific rationalism of the era. Yet, as much as Jordan attempts to penetrate the secrets of Grace's psyche, he is constantly thwarted by her indirectness, her silences, her narrative diversions.

Grace reflects on her interactions with Jordan with ironic detachment:

"He thinks I am a child. He wants to pet me, like a dog. He wants to tame me, or perhaps to rescue me, like a princess in a tower" (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 288).

This observation illustrates the power imbalance in the therapeutic dynamic and alludes to what Michel Foucault terms the "medical gaze"—the reduction of the patient to an object of knowledge and surveillance. Grace's body, her femininity, and her trauma become data points for Jordan's scientific ambitions, yet she remains elusive, never quite what he expects.

Atwood constructs Grace as a woman whose hysterical "symptoms"—memory loss, dreams, possession—challenge the authority of psychiatry. She is both subject and spectacle, aware of the role she is being asked to play. During her trance/hypnosis scene, Grace "becomes" Mary Whitney, and the men in the room (Jordan, Reverend Verringer) interpret this as either fraud or evidence of possession. Atwood allows neither interpretation to dominate, keeping Grace's psyche resistant to capture.

H. Tiedemann notes that *Alias Grace* "reanimates the figure of the hysteric not to reaffirm male diagnosis but to show how female subjectivity is written over, fragmented, and surveilled" (2001). Grace's "hysteria" is not a simple psychological state but a cultural construction, emerging from her gender, class, and vulnerability.

Atwood's portrayal of hysteria also parallels Freud's early recognition that hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences—memories turned pathological. Grace's symptoms—her silences, her gaze, her fragmented storytelling—are acts of resistance as much as illness. Her refusal to provide a neat narrative destabilizes the power dynamics of the clinic, positioning her not as a helpless patient but as a performer of psychoanalytic ambiguity.

Thus, *Alias Grace* interrogates the clinical gaze and the historical treatment of women's minds, exposing the gendered biases of early psychiatry while simultaneously using the tools of psychoanalysis to reveal the depths and duplicities of Grace's psyche.

IV. DISSOCIATION AND MULTIPLE SELVES

Grace Marks's psychological fragmentation in *Alias Grace* is most vividly realized through the theme of

dissociation—a key post-Freudian concept that reflects the mind's defense against unprocessable trauma. Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly known as multiple personality disorder) arises when a person develops distinct identities or "alters" as a way of compartmentalizing traumatic experiences. Atwood subtly weaves this phenomenon into the narrative, suggesting that Grace's identity is quilted together from pieces of self, memory, and repression.

The clearest manifestation of dissociation in the novel occurs during the hypnosis scene, in which Grace, under trance, appears to become possessed by the spirit of Mary Whitney. Jeremiah the peddler, now posing as a hypnotist, guides her into an altered state. There, "Mary" speaks through Grace:

"She has gone inside the veil... Grace is not here. It's me. It's Mary Whitney, come back from the dead" (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 417).

This moment can be interpreted as literal spiritual possession, but through a psychoanalytic lens, it reads as a dramatic externalization of Grace's inner split. Mary's voice emerges as an "alter," allowing Grace to express feelings—rage, guilt, grief—that her conscious self cannot integrate. This is textbook dissociation: Grace, as a traumatized subject, splits her psyche to protect herself from unbearable knowledge and emotional pain.

Notably, Mary Whitney was Grace's closest companion and a figure of rebellious vitality. After Mary's death due to a secret abortion—a trauma Grace internalizes without resolution—her voice begins to echo within Grace, not only metaphorically but psychically. The loss of Mary does not lead to mourning; instead, it leads to internal incorporation, a kind of haunting that Freud described in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), where the mourner identifies with the lost object so deeply that the ego is altered.

Throughout the novel, Grace's identity is constructed and deconstructed by others. To the newspapers, she is a "fiend"; to Simon Jordan, a "puzzle"; to herself, she is both actor and acted-upon. Atwood emphasizes this multiplicity through narrative fragmentation: the reader receives the story through Grace's filtered memories, Jordan's notes, and third-person excerpts, none of which offer a stable truth. This polyvocality mirrors the split subject—a psyche divided by trauma, class oppression, and gender expectations.

The motif of mirrors recurs in the text, reinforcing Grace's fractured identity. In one scene, she observes her reflection:

"Sometimes at night I would look into the glass and wonder whether that was really me... It seemed too much

to expect that there should be two of me” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 284).

Here, the mirror becomes not a device of self-recognition but of uncanny estrangement, invoking Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage—a moment of identification that is always underwritten by misrecognition. Grace sees herself and yet does not, an experience that encapsulates the uncanny in Freudian terms: the familiar becomes strange, the self becomes other.

In dramatizing dissociation, Atwood resists closure. She does not resolve whether Grace is innocent or guilty, sane or mad, possessed or repressing. Instead, she presents a plural subject, one whose fractured mind reflects the psychic toll of trauma, gendered violence, and social marginalization. Grace’s multiplicity is her wound—but also, perhaps, her mode of survival.

V. SYMBOLISM, DREAMS, AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

Alias Grace is richly symbolic, and Margaret Atwood uses the unconscious language of dreams, recurring images, and objects to construct a text that functions like a dreamscape—discontinuous, layered, and governed by repressed desire and trauma. Through Freudian and post-Freudian lenses, these symbols—quilts, fruit, locked rooms, mirrors, and especially dreams—reveal the buried content of Grace Marks’s psyche and expose the mechanisms by which trauma is both concealed and communicated.

One of the most persistent and significant symbolic structures in the novel is the quilt. Each chapter is named after a quilt pattern: “Pandora’s Box,” “Jagged Edge,” “Tree of Paradise,” and so on. These serve not just as decorative motifs but as metaphors for the psyche—fragmented, stitched together, holding disparate pieces in uneasy alignment. As Grace herself remarks:

“A quilt is a sort of a thing you spread on a bed; it is made of patches, cut from old clothes... things that have been worn out, or torn or stained” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 241).

In this analogy, the quilt mirrors Grace’s identity, patched together from discarded memories, violated moments, and half-told stories. The quilt is both a product of female labor and a symbol of repression—a domestic object that conceals deeper, darker realities beneath.

Freud emphasized that dreams are the “royal road to the unconscious,” and dreams in *Alias Grace* are central to both Grace’s and Simon Jordan’s characters. Jordan’s dreams are revealing in their grotesqueness and erotic confusion:

“He dreamed of Grace’s face, twisted and pale... her hair was coiled around his throat like a rope” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 278).

This dream fuses desire, guilt, and strangulation—suggesting both erotic transference and unconscious fears about being overpowered by female sexuality. Jordan, ostensibly the analyst, is also the dreamer, subject to unconscious drives and projections. He is not above Grace, but entangled in the same web of desire and repression.

Grace’s own dreams are more elusive. She often dreams of Mary Whitney, and those dreams bleed into hallucinations and trance states. These nocturnal visions, like her waking slips in memory, are coded forms of speech, expressions of repressed trauma that cannot be fully articulated. Freud’s concept of dream condensation and displacement—where latent content is disguised through symbols—is vital here. Mary becomes a symbolic stand-in for Grace’s desire, guilt, and rage, appearing in dreams as a return of the repressed.

Objects also serve as unconscious signifiers. The apple, often associated with knowledge and temptation, appears when Grace is in Kinnear’s home, subtly invoking Edenic transgression and repressed sexual desire. The locked chest in Nancy’s room, which Grace is forbidden to open, becomes a classic Freudian symbol of repression—the sealed container of taboo content.

“I thought of looking in it. But I was afraid to... I did not wish to see what was inside it” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 132).

Here, the locked chest represents both Nancy’s secrets and Grace’s own unconscious, and her refusal to open it aligns with the mechanism of repression itself—the refusal to know.

Mirrors and reflective surfaces frequently unsettle Grace’s sense of self. These not only reinforce the theme of dissociation, as discussed earlier, but also function as Freudian symbols of the ego, often fractured or distorted in the face of trauma. Grace’s unease in front of her reflection is an acknowledgment of a self that is no longer whole.

In addition, the motif of fruit recurs—often in sexualized or violent contexts, hinting at repressed desire. During one memory, Grace recalls Mary biting into a peach, juice dripping down her chin—an image that merges sensual pleasure with foreshadowed death.

All these symbols—quilts, dreams, fruit, locked objects—create a textured, unconscious fabric that mirrors the workings of Grace’s psyche. They also mimic the therapeutic process, in which seemingly disconnected elements are gradually assembled into meaning.

Through these symbols, Atwood constructs a world where the unconscious speaks continuously, if not clearly. Grace's silence is filled with these signs. Psychoanalysis becomes not just a theme, but a method of reading the novel itself—decoding the quilted fragments to find the deeper patterns of repression, desire, and defense.

VI. EROTIC TRANSFERENCE AND THE OEDIPAL DR. JORDAN

While Grace Marks is ostensibly the subject of analysis in *Alias Grace*, it is Dr. Simon Jordan who undergoes perhaps the most subtle psychological unraveling. His fascination with Grace becomes increasingly charged with erotic projection, a phenomenon Freud referred to as transference—the redirection of unconscious desires and conflicts onto another person, often within a therapeutic relationship. Jordan's feelings toward Grace oscillate between professional curiosity, paternalism, and latent sexual desire, revealing his own unresolved psychic tensions.

From early in the novel, Jordan's gaze is both scientific and voyeuristic. He imagines her in domestic and sexual terms:

“He sees her in her cell, sitting quietly, her head bent, sewing with delicate, competent fingers. He thinks of her hands on his body” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 245).

This moment reveals his attempt to reconcile Grace's perceived innocence with his sexual fantasies—an internal conflict typical of Oedipal dynamics. Jordan's inability to separate his investigative role from his desire mirrors Freud's concept of counter-transference, where the analyst projects their own unconscious onto the patient.

Jordan also exhibits signs of an unresolved maternal complex. His relationship with his own mother is marked by suffocation and control, and Grace becomes a vessel through which he displaces this ambivalence. As Zhang Yating suggests, “Dr. Jordan's erotic fixation on Grace is less about her than it is about his own internal voids” (2009).

Ultimately, Jordan fails to “cure” or possess Grace. She eludes his interpretations and confounds his desire. This failure can be seen as the collapse of the Oedipal fantasy—the analyst-hero who cannot penetrate the mystery of the feminine. In psychoanalytic terms, Grace becomes the “phallic woman”—the unknowable object of both desire and fear, undoing Jordan's illusion of control.

VII. DEFENSE MECHANISMS AND THANATOS

In *Alias Grace*, Grace Marks's psyche is structured not only around repression and dissociation but also a constellation of defense mechanisms that shield her from traumatic knowledge. Freud identified defenses such as denial, projection, and intellectualization as unconscious strategies to cope with internal conflict. Grace exhibits many of these—often simultaneously—revealing the extent to which her identity is a carefully maintained fiction created for psychic survival.

For example, her apparent intellectualization of Mary Whitney's death allows her to distance herself from grief. She narrates Mary's abortion and subsequent death with a detached tone:

“She was stiff, her mouth was open. Her hands were cold. She didn't answer me” (*Alias Grace*, Atwood 154).

Rather than expressing direct emotion, Grace observes clinically—repressing affect through objective language. Similarly, Grace often deflects trauma through storytelling, weaving long tangents or memories into her narrative to avoid painful topics. This may be seen as a kind of narrative projection, allowing her to speak of herself without directly confronting truth.

The specter of Thanatos, Freud's death drive, haunts the novel as well. Grace's repeated proximity to death—her mother's burial at sea, Mary's botched abortion, Nancy's murder, her own trial and near-execution—reveals an unconscious flirtation with annihilation. These deaths are not simply external events but become internalized losses, shaping Grace's unconscious will. The calmness with which she discusses death, and her ambiguous role in the murders, hint at a latent identification with death as both punishment and escape.

Atwood does not present Grace as suicidal, but her life is suffused with a quiet mourning, a resignation that borders on submission to fate. Her survival is not triumphant—it is a negotiation with Thanatos, where living becomes its own form of resistance against psychic erasure.

VIII. CONCLUSION: GRACE'S PSYCHE AS PATCHWORK

Grace Marks, the enigmatic center of *Alias Grace*, defies resolution—not only for Dr. Simon Jordan and the judicial system but also for readers and critics. Her identity remains fragmented, multifaceted, and elusive. This paper has shown that Atwood's rendering of Grace is not an accident of narrative ambiguity but a deliberate evocation of a psyche shaped by trauma, repression, and dissociation, and legible only through the symbolic, the unconscious, and the unsaid.

Psychoanalysis, especially in its Freudian and post-Freudian articulations, provides a valuable interpretive framework for understanding Grace's interiority. Her patchy memory, trance-like states, symbolic dreams, and evasive speech act not as evidence of deception but as markers of a traumatized subject negotiating psychic survival. The themes of repression, hysteria, dissociative identity, and the death drive are all stitched into her narrative like the quilts she sews—each fragment meaningful, each gap significant.

Atwood simultaneously critiques and employs psychoanalysis. Grace is positioned within the 19th-century discourse of female hysteria, subjected to the medical and legal male gaze, yet she retains agency by withholding coherence, refusing the narrative of either innocence or guilt. Her multiplicity becomes a form of resistance—a refusal to be “cured,” explained, or consumed.

Grace's final silence is perhaps her most powerful act. By neither confirming nor denying her role in the murders, she escapes total inscription into any one truth. Her psyche is a quilt, not a mirror: layered, stitched from scraps, beautiful and unsettling.

Ultimately, *Alias Grace* uses psychoanalytic tropes not only to explore the hidden layers of Grace's mind but to challenge the authority of those who seek to decode her. In doing so, Atwood affirms that identity—especially for women under patriarchy—is not singular or stable but quilted, shadowed, and always partly hidden.

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The Crucial Role of Evidence and Witness Testimony in International Criminal Court War Crimes Prosecutions.

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Abstract

This paper delves into the pivotal role of evidence and witness testimony in the prosecution of war crimes by the International Criminal Court (ICC). The International Criminal Court, tasked with addressing the most severe crimes of international concern, relies heavily on solid evidence and credible witness testimonies to secure convictions. This study scrutinizes the processes and challenges involved in collecting and presenting evidence, as well as the importance of witness protection and support mechanisms. Through an in-depth analysis of past International Criminal Court cases, the paper underscores the impact of evidence and witness testimony on the outcomes of war crimes prosecutions. The findings highlight the necessity for stringent evidentiary standards and effective witness management to ensure justice and accountability in international criminal law. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the complexities and significance of evidence and witness testimony in the pursuit of justice for war crimes.

Keywords— Evidence, Witness Testimony, ICC, War Crimes, Prosecution

INTRODUCTION

It is important for one to determine what is just and fair during war. The majority view led us to the path of fairness and justice. War is not a normal circumstance and war crimes are not normal crimes as contemplated by national laws.¹ Arm conflict is when two states have differences, and they resort to the intervention of members of the armed forces.² It is safe to state that when states resort to armed force, they are declaring a war. We have two types of arm conflicts, namely the International and the internal. The International Criminal Court is the jurisdiction of the international arm conflicts, meanwhile the internal arm conflicts are referred to regional criminal courts which are specialized tribunals that address war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide within specific regions.

These courts may operate under international law or be established by regional agreements and entities to ensure

accountability and justice for atrocities committed during armed conflicts. In both courts or jurisdictions evidence and witness testimony are important, one can be not found guilty if there is no evidence. This study investigates the processes and challenges involved in collecting and presenting evidence and how witnesses are protected and supported. The study will use old and recent case laws and the adopted protocols or declarations of humanitarian law and arm conflicts to investigate the impact of evidence and witness testimony on the outcomes of war crimes prosecutions. The findings highlight the necessity for stringent evidentiary standards and effective witness management to ensure justice and accountability in international criminal law. This research contributes to a broader understanding of the complexities and significance of evidence and witness testimony in the pursuit of justice for war crimes.

¹ Halpern, M. (2018). Trends in Admissibility of Hearsay Evidence in War Crime Trials: Is Fairness Really Preserved? Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law, 29(1), pp. 103-126. Available at:

<https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/djcil/vol29/iss1/3/> [Accessed 8 Jan. 2025].

² International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (2008). How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?

Armed conflicts within states may involve a group of people who are armed and ready to fight to seize governmental power.³ Sometimes conflicts are matters of organized crime as opposed to politics. We can use the Mozambique issue as an internal arm conflict which arose due to political conflicts. The Mozambique conflicts involve citizens and the current leaders who are fighting for internal change, the change of political leadership. During the development of this study, it was reported that over 1 500 prisoners have escaped from a maximum-security prison in Maputo, Mozambique and have managed to steal AK47 guns from the police officials during the escape.⁴ Having such a huge number of people who are heavily and fighting against the system can led to a war though out the entire country, because already the citizens were not happy about the elections outcomes and have been protesting ever since the release of the election results. This might lead to a state of emergency where a certain area of the country will be regarded as a war zone, and other neighbouring countries might offer assistance to avoid internal war which will lead the collapse of Mozambique. Fighting in most conflicts in developing countries occurs not on well-defined battlefields but in and around communities and is often characterized by personalized acts of violence.

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW DURING ARM CONFLICTS

The law of arm conflicts or the law of war. International humanitarian law (IHL) is a set of rules designed to limit the impact of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons.⁵ It aims to protect individuals who are not or are no longer involved in hostilities and restricts the methods and means of warfare. IHL applies specifically to situations of armed conflict and is part of the law governing the conduct of hostilities (*ius in bello*), which is distinct from the law governing the justification for the use of force (*ius ad bellum*). The United Nations Charter prohibits the use of force, but IHL must be applied equally by all parties in any

armed conflict, regardless of the justification for their actions. This principle of equality between belligerents differentiates armed conflict, where IHL is applicable, from criminal acts, which are governed by criminal law and human rights law on law enforcement.⁶

For a long time, it was believed that international human rights law applied during peacetime, while international humanitarian law was relevant during armed conflicts. However, modern international law now recognizes that this distinction is not accurate. The international community widely acknowledges that human rights obligations stem from the recognition of inherent rights of all individuals, which can be affected in both peace and war.⁷ Therefore, international human rights law continues to apply even in armed conflict situations. Additionally, human rights treaties do not indicate that they are inapplicable during armed conflicts. Consequently, international human rights law and international humanitarian law are seen as complementary sources of obligations in armed conflict situations. For instance, the Human Rights Committee, in its general comments Nos. 29 (2001) and 31 (2004), affirmed that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also applies in armed conflict situations where international humanitarian law is relevant.

The Human Rights Council, in its resolution 9/9, further recognized that human rights law and international humanitarian law are complementary and mutually reinforcing.⁸ The Council emphasized that all human rights require equal protection and that human rights law continues to provide protection during armed conflicts, considering international humanitarian law as *lex specialis*.⁹ The Council also reiterated the need for effective measures to guarantee and monitor the implementation of human rights for civilian populations in armed conflict situations, including those under foreign occupation, and to provide effective protection against human rights violations in accordance with international human rights law and applicable international humanitarian law.¹⁰ In recent years, the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law in armed conflict situations

³ United Nations. (2001). Armed conflicts and their consequences. United Nations.

⁴ Al Jazeera. (2024). Mozambique president-elect urges 'unity' amid unrest, citizens fleeing. Al Jazeera.

⁵ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Adopted 27 June 1981, entered into force 21 October 1986, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 REV. S, 21 ILM, (1982) 58.

⁶ M Hailbronner 'Laws in conflict: The relationship between human rights and international humanitarian law under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights' (2016) 16 African Human Rights Law Journal 339-364
<http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2016/v16n2a2>.

⁷ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2011. International Legal Protection of Human Rights in Armed Conflict.

⁸ Human Rights Council. (2008). Protection of the human rights of civilians in armed conflict. RightDocs.

⁹ Ibid 8.

¹⁰ United Nations. (2022). Delegates in General Assembly Support Human Rights Council's Monitoring of Crises Worldwide, Yet Some Say Double Standards Ignore Impact on Developing Countries. United Nations Press.

has raised questions about the implementation of specific protections guaranteed by both bodies of law. Their concurrent application has led to confusion regarding the obligations of conflict parties, the extent of these obligations, the standards to be applied, and the beneficiaries of these protections.

Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions is a vital component in safeguarding human rights during internal conflicts or civil wars, imposing obligations on all parties involved to adhere to its principles.¹¹ It outlines fundamental guarantees designed to protect individuals caught in the throes of conflict. However, effectively applying this mini-treaty, alongside Additional Protocol II, presents challenges, particularly in determining the specific circumstances under which each set of provisions becomes operative. Common Article 3 sets a lower threshold for applicability compared to Additional Protocol II, yet both aim to ensure the protection of victims in situations of internal strife.

To invoke Common Article 3 during an internal conflict, two key conditions must be fulfilled: there must be at least two distinct parties engaged in hostilities, and the conflict itself must reach a certain intensity.¹² This distinction is essential, as it helps separate conflicts that meet the criteria of Common Article 3 from less severe violent situations that may not warrant the same legal framework. Each conflict must be carefully analyzed based on these criteria to ascertain which set of legal provisions applies. The provisions of Common Article 3 are comprehensive in nature. They explicitly prohibit acts of violence against life and person, including murder, mutilation, cruel treatment, and torture.

It forbids the taking of hostages and any conduct that could be deemed to outrage personal dignity, such as humiliating or degrading treatment. A critical safeguard it establishes is the prohibition against executing individuals without a prior judgment rendered by a regularly constituted court that offers the judicial guarantees recognized as essential by civil societies. Furthermore, Common Article 3 mandates the collection and care of the wounded and sick,

highlighting the obligation of all parties to ensure humane treatment.¹³ It also allows for the involvement of impartial humanitarian organizations, like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to assist in these efforts. Crucially, the principles enshrined in Common Article 3 are widely accepted as reflecting customary international law, reinforcing their authority and applicability across various contexts of internal conflict.¹⁴ This broad acceptance underscores the universal commitment to uphold human rights and dignity even in the most challenging circumstances of civil unrest.

EVIDENCE AND WITNESS TESTIMONY IN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT PROCEEDINGS.

The role of evidence in international law, particularly within the realm of international criminal law, is essential in upholding justice and accountability.¹⁵ Evidence not only aids in establishing jurisdiction but also plays a crucial part in the overall prosecutorial process. Uncovering reliable sources and types of evidence remains a challenge amidst the evolving landscape of international law.¹⁶ Evidence in international law encompasses a wide range of materials and information that are utilized to substantiate claims and arguments within legal proceedings.¹⁷ It serves as a foundation for establishing facts in international criminal cases and influences the outcomes of judicial decisions.

Types of evidence.

Types of evidence include testimonial evidence, documentary evidence, digital evidence, physical evidence and forensic evidence.¹⁸ Testimonial evidence refers to statements made by witness under oath.¹⁹ This can include testimonies from the survivors, experts, or officials who provide firsthand accounts of events. Documentary evidence refers to written or recorded materials that substantiate claims. This includes legal documents, treaties, official records, reports and communications.²⁰ Physical evidence refers to tangible objects that can be inspected in court. Examples include weapons, clothing, photographs, and forensic materials like DNA samples. Digital evidence refers to electronic data such as emails, digital photographs

¹¹ Common Article 3 of Geneva Conventions, 1949 in the Era of International Criminal Tribunals. 1949.

¹² International Committee of the Red Cross. (2020). Commentary of 2020 Article 3 - Conflicts not of an international character. Geneva Convention (III) on Prisoners of War.

¹³ International Committee of the Red Cross. (1949). Article 3 - Conflicts not of an international character. *Geneva Convention (III) on Prisoners of War*.

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¹⁸ Ahmad, N. (2022). Types of Evidence and How They Are Used in Investigations. *Legal Inquirer*.

¹⁹ Torres, R. (2016). Testimonial Evidence. *Scribd*.

²⁰ LegalBrief AI. (2024). Documentary Evidence - Meaning in Law and Legal Documents, Examples and FAQs. *LegalBrief AI*.

videos, and other digital records that can be used to support claims and establish facts. These types of evidence are crucial in international criminal law to ensure that justice is served and that those responsible for war crimes and other violations are held accountable. The collection, preservation, and presentation of this evidence must adhere to strict legal standards to maintain its integrity and reliability in court.²¹ Evidence not only helps to solve the case but assist one to identify the jurisdiction by determining the authority of a court over a case.

Challenges in collecting evidence.

During trial the Registry, the Court and the Prosecutor are the ones responsible to come with the measures to protect the witness and support him or her. The key responsibility of the court is to protect the witness by all means as his or presence in court is indispensable for the good proceedings. Victims too are protected during this time to avoid further victimization. Certain concerns, including but not limited to the threat of reprisals are noted to protect both the witness and the victim. The Geneva Convictions Protocol additional was of the believe that it is necessary nevertheless to reaffirm and develop the provisions protecting the victims of armed conflicts and to supplement measures intended to reinforce their application.²² According to Article 2 of this protocol in cases not covered by this Protocol or by other international agreements, civilians and combatants remain under the protection and authority of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the principles of humanity and from the dictates of public conscience.²³

The protocol supplements the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the protection of war victims, shall apply in the situations referred to in Article 2 common to those Conventions. Such cases may include but not be limited to armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist régimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.²⁴

During investigations prosecutor as part of the applicant is required to protect the interests and personal circumstances of victims and witnesses, including age, gender and health, and take into account the nature of the crime, in particular where it involves sexual violence, gender violence or violence against children.²⁵ The prosecutor has a discretion to withhold disclosure of evidence if this may lead to the grave endangerment of a witness or his or her family. In terms of Article 54 the Prosecutor shall take necessary measures, or request that necessary measures be taken, in order to ensure the protection of any person.²⁶ These responsibilities of the Prosecutor are similar to the ones imposed to the International Trial Court. It has must take appropriate measures to protect the safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of the victims and the witnesses. The Trial court too takes into consideration all relevant factors, including age, gender, health, and the nature of the crime, in particular, but not limited to, where the crime involves sexual or gender violence or violence against children.

Witness protection and Support mechanisms.

The registrar plays a role to ensure the safety of the victims and the witnesses by giving Victim and Witnesses Unit a statutory mandate to protect, support and provide other assistance to victims and witnesses.²⁷ The registrar should set up the victims and witnesses unit within the Registry and in consultation with the Prosecution office to provide protective measures, security arrangements, counselling and other appropriate assistance for witnesses, victims who appear before the trial court, and others who are at risk on account of testimony given by witnesses.²⁸

Physical protection refers to measures taken to ensure the safety and security of individuals who may be at risk due to their involvement in legal proceedings. This includes protecting them from physical harm, threats, or intimidation. The VWU is a specialized unit within the International Criminal Court responsible for the protection and support of victims and witnesses involved in

²¹ Neel, A., 2024. Digital Evidence: Collection, Preservation and Forensic Analysis. Legal Bites.

²² Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, and Relative to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (PROTOCOL II). 1977.

²³ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 2007. International humanitarian law: Answers to your questions.

²⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 1949. Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.

²⁵ Nkashe, M.S., 2015. Title of the dissertation. Unpublished dissertation. University of South Africa.

²⁶ Southern Africa Litigation Centre (SALC), 2020. Policy Brief: ICC Witness Protection Programme.

²⁷ International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), 2019. Practice Direction - Provision of Support to Victims and Witnesses (MICT-40).

²⁸ International Criminal Court (ICC), 2008. Prosecutor v. Katanga.

International Criminal Court proceedings.²⁹ The VWU provides psychological support to help witnesses and victims cope with the emotional and mental stress associated with testifying in court.³⁰ This includes therapy sessions, stress management techniques, and emotional support. This encompasses a range of support services tailored to the needs of the individuals.

It may include medical care, relocation services, financial assistance, and legal advice. The act of testifying in court can expose individuals to retaliation, threats, or harm from those who may be adversely affected by their testimony. This risk necessitates comprehensive protection measures. The VWU may arrange for secure transportation, safe housing, and personal security details to protect individuals from potential threats.³¹ Ensuring that the identities and locations of witnesses and victims are kept confidential to prevent them from being targeted. Implementing legal measures to protect the rights and safety of witnesses and victims, such as non-disclosure agreements and protective orders.

Rule 16 to 19 of the International Trial Court takes these provisions into details by covering the responsibilities of the Registrar and the Victims and Witnesses Unit. meanwhile Rule 87 and 88 state that the Court may grant protection and special measures.³² The Registry of ICC is responsible for the non-judicial aspects of the administration of the Court's work and for 'servicing of the Court'.³³ This paper examines three instances in which the Registry of the ICC has specific obligations with respect to: victims' and witnesses' protection and support; legal aid for defendants and victims; and the organization of family visits to detained persons. I find it as a common cause for a witness to feel free when giving testimony. He or she should be before court without fear of retribution or further harm.

The witness plays a crucial role in every case, they assist the court to reach a decision which is just and fair. It should always be the Registry of the International Criminal Court and other Courts to protect witnesses and victims. I point out the Registrar over the Court and the Prosecutor because the Registry is serving as the channel communication of the Court. The Judges know us through the Registrar of the Court. One of the biggest challenges for the Court during its

operations have been that the provision of appropriate protective measures, as stipulated in Article 68(1) of the Statute. The Court's operations are mainly conducted in demanding conflict or post-conflict areas, where the law-enforcement structures are generally weak, and the overall security situation is often subject to sudden changes.

The establishment and implementation of a comprehensive, appropriate and adequate system of witness protection aims the addressing of these challenges in the best possible manner.

In terms of Rule 75 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence a witness may give testimony remotely.³⁴ This is part of protecting the witness, as sometimes witnesses get assassinated when they are on their way to give testimony to court. In terms of the statute of the International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia it was stipulated that the Tribunal has at its disposal a number of protective measures ranging from Tribunal records through testimony under a pseudonym. electronic facial distortion, voice distortion and closed session which align to Rule 75 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence.³⁵

A judge or chamber has the authority to order appropriate measures for the privacy and protection of victims and witnesses, either on their own initiative (*proprio motu*) or at the request of either party involved in the case, the victim, or the witness. The Victims and Witnesses Section can also make such requests. These measures must be consistent with the rights of the accused. It is also the responsibility of the chamber to regulate how questioning is conducted to prevent any form of harassment or intimidation. Once protective measures have been ordered for a victim or witness in any proceedings before the Tribunal (referred to as the "first proceedings"), these protective measures will continue to apply in any subsequent proceedings before the Tribunal (referred to as the "second proceedings").³⁶ This continuity remains in effect unless the protective measures are rescinded, varied, or augmented according to the established procedure.

However, these protective measures do not prevent the Prosecutor from fulfilling any disclosure obligations under the Rules in the second proceedings. The Prosecutor must notify the Defence, to whom the disclosure is being made,

²⁹ Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), 2015. Enough is Enough: Protect ICC Witnesses.

³⁰ International Criminal Court (ICC), n.d. Victims and Witnesses Unit: Assistance to Victims and Witnesses.

³¹ Ibid 30.

³² International Criminal Court (ICC), 2019. Rules of Procedure and Evidence.

³³ International Criminal Court, 2025. The Registry. International Criminal Court.

³⁴ International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 2025. Rules of Procedure and Evidence. International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

³⁵ Ibid 34.

³⁶ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, 2005. Decision on Prosecution Motion for Protective Measures for Witnesses. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

about the nature of the protective measures ordered in the first proceedings. This ensures that the Defence is aware of the existing protective measures while the Prosecutor complies with disclosure requirements. The Victims and Witnesses Section of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established under Article 22 of the Tribunal's Statute and Rule 34 of the Tribunal's Rules of Procedure and Evidence.³⁷ This section operates as a neutral and impartial body within the Registry. Its primary function is to ensure that all witnesses can testify safely and securely, without experiencing further harm, suffering, or trauma as a result of their testimony. The Victims and Witnesses Section is dedicated to providing the necessary support and protection to witnesses, thereby facilitating their participation in the judicial process.

The Victims and Witnesses Section of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia provides comprehensive protection and support to all witnesses who appear before the Tribunal, regardless of whether they are called by the Prosecution, the Defence, or the Chambers.³⁸ The Victims and Witnesses Section offers counselling and assistance to victims and witnesses, ensuring their safety and security needs are adequately met. It recommends and implements measures to protect witnesses who have testified or will testify before the Tribunal. The Victims and Witnesses Section informs witnesses of the proceedings and their rights, and makes necessary travel, accommodation, financial, and other logistical and administrative arrangements for witnesses and their accompanying persons. The Victims and Witnesses Section maintains close contact with the trial teams regarding all aspects of the witnesses' appearance before the Tribunal. A significant technological advantage in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia's protection measures is the 30-minute delay in the broadcast of proceedings. This delay allows the parties to seek redaction of any inadvertent reference to a protected witness or potentially identifying information, thereby enhancing the security and confidentiality of the witnesses.

It should be noted that everything has limitations, so is the protection of the witness. In terms of Article 67 in the International Criminal Court the accused is given a right to

examine the witness against him before the court proceedings.³⁹ It is reasonable for one to give evidence or testimony unmasked. Court rooms should remain to be safer spaces for both parties involved in the proceedings. In terms of Article 68 of the Rome Statute the protection measures must not be prejudicial to or inconsistent with the rights of the accused and a fair and impartial trial.⁴⁰ Thus, then makes me to conclude that hiding the witness identity to the accused, prejudice the accused as the trial will not be fair and impartial. The witness being known by the defense or the accused will make them be prepared for cross-examination or be able to defend the witness's testimony. The accused will be better able to specifically refute testimony made by the witness if the accused has personal knowledge of the situation and the person involved. There is no legitimacy if the identity of the witness is hidden. The court also has a discretion to ensure the legitimacy of the witness's statement is vital to a proper trial. For the court to reach such conclusion the accused and his or her legal representatives should be allowed to monitor the witness. Thus, then give court the discretion to limit the witness protection measures for the trial to be fair and to honor the rights of the accused person.⁴¹

Collecting evidence on an international scale poses numerous challenges that significantly hinder the effectiveness of international criminal law.⁴² One of the primary issues is the variation in legal frameworks across nations, which complicates the process of evidence collection. Different jurisdictions often have distinct regulations regarding the admissibility and procedures for evidence, leading to inconsistencies that can obstruct cooperation between states.⁴³ These legal discrepancies make it difficult to ensure that evidence gathered in one country will be recognized and accepted in another, ultimately impeding collaborative efforts to address international crimes. Geopolitical factors also play a crucial role in evidence collection. The dynamics of international relations, including existing conflicts, diplomatic ties, and national interests, can create barriers to obtaining vital information or access to witnesses.

In some situations, individuals tasked with gathering evidence may face threats or even violence, further

³⁷ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, 2009. Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

³⁸ Ewald, U., 2002. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the Crime of Genocide. Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law.

³⁹ International Committee of the Red Cross, 1998. Article 67 - Rights of the accused. Statute of the International Criminal Court.

⁴⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross, 1998. Article 68 - Protection of the victims and witnesses and their participation in the proceedings. Statute of the International Criminal Court.

⁴¹ Ibid 40.

⁴² International Law Editorial, 2024. Limitations of International Criminal Law: An In-Depth Analysis. World Jurisprudence.

⁴³ Ren R. THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN JURISDICTION AND ADMISSIBILITY IN INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION. International and Comparative Law Quarterly. 2024;73(2):417-446. doi:10.1017/S0020589324000022

detering their efforts to collect essential testimonies or documentation.⁴⁴ This reality underscores the inherent risks involved in international investigations, where the safety of personnel can be jeopardized by hostile environments. Cultural differences further complicate the international evidence collection process. Practices and standards that are deemed acceptable in one legal system may not hold the same validity in another. For instance, evidence that is obtained under coercion might be permissible in certain jurisdictions but completely inadmissible in others, leading to potential legal conflicts and complications in international proceedings.

These cultural variations can create significant hurdles, requiring careful navigation to ensure that evidence aligns with the diverse legal norms of different countries. Logistical difficulties also emerge when collecting evidence across borders. Factors such as transportation challenges, language barriers, and the high costs associated with international investigations can limit the ability to conduct comprehensive and effective assessments. These logistical issues can delay the investigative process and hinder the thoroughness of evidence-gathering efforts. Ultimately, the role of evidence in international law is deeply intertwined with the need to address these complex and multifaceted challenges, highlighting the necessity for enhanced collaboration and shared understandings among nations to ensure justice on a global scale.⁴⁵

Case studies and analysis.

The evolution of international criminal procedure regarding the use of written witness statements in place of oral testimony reflects significant responsiveness to developments in jurisprudence.⁴⁶ A key change was the removal of the preference for oral testimony in Rule 90(A) of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).⁴⁷ This was accompanied by the introduction of Rule 92, which permits the admission of written witness statements that do

not aim to prove the acts and conduct of the accused. These amendments were clearly influenced by judgments from the Appeals Chamber in the cases of Kordić and Čerkez, which addressed the admissibility of statements from deceased witnesses. Initially, Rule 92 was less stringent than the previous Rule 94, which dealt with affidavits. Under Rule 92, statements from deceased witnesses were not required to conform to domestic law, allowing Chambers to admit such evidence based on reliability and other considerations.⁴⁸ The earlier stipulation that affidavits could only be used for corroborative purposes and had to be presented before the witness being corroborated had testified was eliminated.

Over time, Rule 92bis underwent further amendments, including the removal of the requirement for a 14-day notice period to the opposing party and the provision that allowed the Trial Chamber to mandate the appearance of a witness for cross-examination though the option for the Chamber to do so remained.⁴⁹ In 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) amended its Rule 90(A) to eliminate the preference for oral testimony, subsequently adopting its own version of Rule 92bis in 2004.⁵⁰ In contrast, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) still maintains a preference for oral testimony in Rule 90(A), although it has also implemented a Rule 92bis concerning prior statements that do not pertain to the acts and conduct of the accused.⁵¹

Following the Appeals Court's ruling in the Milošević case, which allowed the introduction of prior statements under the flexible Rule 89(F) when a witness was present to attest to their accuracy, the ICTY established Rule 92ter to formalize this approach.⁵² The SCSL later adopted a similar Rule 92ter in November 2006.⁵³ In a notable case in 2006, the ICTY faced a request to admit the prior recorded testimony of two deceased witnesses, Ibrahim Rugova and

⁴⁴ Thomas, D. A., Edge, Ian David, Clarke, Donald C., Bernard, Thomas J. and Allott, Antony Nicolas (2024, December 16). crime. Encyclopedia Britannica.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/crime-law>

⁴⁵ International Law Editorial, 2024. The Role of Evidence in International Law: A Crucial Component. World Jurisprudence.

⁴⁶ McDermott, Y., 2013. The Admissibility and Weight of Written Witness Testimony in International Criminal Law: A Socio-Legal Analysis. *Leiden Journal of International Law*, 26(4).

⁴⁷ Ibid 46.

⁴⁸ Ibid 46.

⁴⁹ ICTY, 2008. Statements under Rule 92 bis ICTY. ICTR/ICTY/IRMCT Case Law Database.

⁵⁰ Prosecutor v. Kallon, Decision on the Defence application for leave to appeal 'decision on the prosecution's motion for

immediate protective measures for witnesses and victims and for non-public disclosure.', SCSL-03-07-PT-148 (SCSL TC I, Dec. 10, 2003).

⁵¹ Boost, C.M.H., 2023. The Legitimacy of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). *Contemporary International Criminal Law Issues*.

⁵² ICTY, 2003. Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia, Prosecutor v. Milosevic, Decision on Prosecution Motion for the Admission of Evidence-In-Chief of Its Witnesses in Writing, IT-02-54 (ICTY TC, Apr. 16, 2003).

⁵³ SCSL, 2008. Prosecutor v. Taylor, Decision on Prosecution Notice under Rule 92Bis for the Admission of Evidence Related to Inter Alia Kenema District and on Prosecution Notice under Rule 92Bis for the Admission of the Prior Testimony of TF1-036 into Evidence, SCSL-03-01-T-556 (SCSL TCII, Jul. 15, 2008).

Antonio Russo.⁵⁴ The Tribunal denied the admission of Rugova's testimony as it related to the accused's conduct, while Russo's statement was accepted due to its relevance to the crime base evidence. Subsequently, the Tribunal introduced Rule 92quater, allowing the written statements of deceased witnesses to be admissible even if they pertained to the acts and conduct of the accused. The transcript of Rugova's testimony was ultimately admitted under this new rule. The SCSL adopted its own Rule 92quater in May 2007, while the ICTR continues to adhere to Rule 92bis(C), which restricts such testimony from being used to prove the acts and conduct of the accused.⁵⁵

The most recent addition to the ICTY's procedural rules is Rule quinquies, implemented in response to allegations of witness intimidation during the Haradinaj and Limaj trials, as well as recommendations from a working group on contempt proceedings. This rule allows for the introduction of a written transcript or statement when a witness fails to testify due to "improper interference." Similar to Rule 92quater, this provision does not prohibit such evidence from relating to the acts and conduct of the accused, although this factor may influence its admissibility. It should also be noted that there are no corresponding rules in the SCSL and ICTR regarding this issue, highlighting the unique adaptations made by the ICTY in response to emerging challenges in international criminal law.⁵⁶ Admissibility had no bearing on weight. Not every evidence admitted will be relied in the final judgement.

It is extremely difficult to measure the precise weight given to particular pieces of testimony, given that the evidential record is assessed as a whole, entirely to simplify it and there is no obligation on the International Criminal Court to address each relevant piece of admitted evidence in its judgement. In the current analysis, we operate under the assumption that if a piece of testimony is referenced in a trial judgment and the judgment does not later dismiss that testimony or express doubts about the credibility of the witness, it can be inferred that the Court has accepted the truthfulness of the testimony's content. However, this approach introduces a significant challenge, as it may prioritize form over substance. The underlying premise is that oral testimony, or *viva voce* testimony, is not automatically more reliable than written statements. Instead, *viva voce* testimony offers the Court a greater opportunity to assess the witness's credibility in a more

nuanced manner than what limited cross-examination of a written statement under Rule 92ter would allow.⁵⁷

Despite these limitations, there are critical questions that this analysis aims to address. For instance, do Courts tend to value oral testimony more highly than written testimony? Can testimony that has not undergone cross-examination be corroborated by another unexamined testimony as valid proof? Does the more lenient approach to admissibility adopted by some Courts align adequately with the broader principle of evaluating evidence based on the totality of the evidence? It appears that the answers to these questions are not uniform and can vary significantly from one Court to another. This inconsistency raises concerns, particularly as a lack of clarity regarding the weight assigned to specific pieces of evidence can create misunderstandings in subsequent stages of legal proceedings. The appeal judgments in the cases of Gotovina and Perišić serve as illustrative examples of how such ambiguities can manifest in practice.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) recently introduced a significant update to its procedural rules with the implementation of Rule quinquies.⁵⁸ This change was primarily a response to serious concerns regarding witness intimidation that emerged during the trials of Ramush Haradinaj and Fatmir Limaj, as well as recommendations from a working group focused on contempt proceedings. Rule quinquies permits the introduction of written transcripts or statements when a witness is unable to testify due to "improper interference."⁵⁹ This rule is like Rule 92quater, which allows for evidence related to the acts and conduct of the accused, although the relevance of such evidence may affect its admissibility. There are no equivalent provisions in the Special Court for Sierra Leone or the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, illustrating the ICTY's unique adaptations to emerging challenges in international criminal law. One crucial aspect of these developments is that the admissibility of evidence does not necessarily correlate with its weight in final judgments. Not all admitted evidence will be relied upon in the court's conclusions.⁶⁰

Impact of evidence and witness testimony on case outcomes.

Assessing the precise weight of individual testimonies is inherently challenging, as the evidential record is evaluated

⁵⁴ Ibid 46.

⁵⁵ Ibid 46.

⁵⁶ Ibid 46.

⁵⁷ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2021. Weighing Evidence - Chapter 5: Viva Voce evidence.

⁵⁸ Ibid 38.

⁵⁹ Ibid 38.

⁶⁰ Theophilopoulos, C. and Bellengère, A., 2022. Relevance, Admissibility and Probative Value in a Rational System of Evidence: A South African Perspective. Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal, 25.

as a comprehensive whole.⁶¹ The International Criminal Court is not obligated to address every piece of admitted evidence in its judgments.⁶² In this context, it can be assumed that if testimony is referenced in a trial judgment without subsequent dismissal or doubts about the witness's credibility, the court has accepted the truthfulness of that testimony. However, this assumption poses a challenge, potentially prioritizing form over substance, as oral testimony, or *viva voce* testimony, is not inherently more reliable than written statements. While oral testimony allows for a more nuanced assessment of a witness's credibility, the limitations of cross-examination of written statements under Rule 92ter must also be considered.⁶³

This analysis raises critical questions about the judicial treatment of evidence. For example, do courts generally assign more weight to oral testimony compared to written statements? Is it possible for testimony that has not undergone cross-examination to be corroborated by another unexamined testimony? Does the more lenient admissibility approach adopted by some courts align with the broader principle of evaluating evidence based on its totality? The answers to these questions are not consistent across different courts, which raises concerns about the potential for misunderstandings in subsequent legal proceedings. The appeal judgments in the cases of Gotovina and Perišić exemplify how such ambiguities can manifest in practice, demonstrating the complexities involved in evaluating testimony and the implications of differing judicial standards across various courts.⁶⁴

Proponents of a broad admissibility regime argue that it allows judges to assess evidence based on the overall context provided by numerous individual pieces of evidence.⁶⁵ This "totality of the evidence" approach enables judges to reach conclusions through a holistic evaluation of the evidential record. However, the flip side is that it can be challenging to determine the weight assigned to any specific piece of evidence when there is no clear declaration regarding the credibility or reliability of that witness. In the Đorđević case, for instance, the Chamber acknowledged that it sometimes accepted evidence with inconsistencies while rejecting seemingly consistent evidence, asserting that it acted in light of the other evidence available.⁶⁶

Similar approaches were noted in the cases of Nyiramasuhuko and Perišić.

While the right to a reasoned verdict does not guarantee insight into how a Trial Chamber evaluates the reliability of individual pieces of evidence, the ICTY Appeals Chamber has stated that the standard of proof should not rely on a piecemeal approach but should consider the totality of the evidential record. Challenges can arise at the appeals stage when the Appeals Chamber finds certain pieces of evidence inadequately addressed. For example, in the Perišić Appeals Judgment, the Chamber criticized the Trial Chamber for its "paucity" of evidence regarding the accused's command abilities, believing it had failed to adequately consider the testimonies of witnesses Rašeta and Orlić. Although the Trial Chamber had noted these testimonies, it reached a different conclusion based on other evidence.

The Appeals Chamber emphasized that a Trial Chamber need not reference every piece of evidence as long as it does not completely disregard any relevant evidence. The Perišić Trial Chamber's acknowledgment of contrary evidence and reliance on the totality of the evidence indicated that it had not disregarded any critical information in a legally erroneous manner. In both the Gotovina and Perišić cases, the Appeals Chambers expressed concerns about the adequacy of the Trial Chambers' evaluations of evidence, suggesting that their findings could not be upheld without thorough discussion and analysis of contrary evidence. This raises broader questions about the Appeals Chamber's function and standard of review, particularly as both judgments reflect an interpretation of the "totality of the evidence" approach that may not align with the established principle that Trial Chambers are best positioned to assess the evidential record.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the prosecution of war crimes by the International Criminal Court heavily relies on robust evidence and credible witness testimonies. This research has highlighted the intricate processes and significant challenges involved in collecting and presenting evidence, as well as the critical importance of witness protection and support mechanisms. The analysis of past ICC cases

⁶¹ Oliver, 2024. Witness Testimony: Credibility and Challenging Witness Statements. Law Defence.

⁶² United Nations, 1998. Some Questions and Answers. United Nations Department of Public Information.

⁶³ Ibid 60.

⁶⁴ Jayawardane, S. and Divin, C., 2014. The Gotovina, Perišić and Šainović Appeal Judgments: Implications for International Criminal Justice Mechanisms.

⁶⁵ FasterCapital, 2024. The Broad Evidence Rule: Shedding Light on the Admissibility of Evidence.

⁶⁶ International Justice Resource Center, 2014. With Đorđević Appeals Judgment, ICTY Concludes Final Case Concerning Kosovo.

underscores the profound impact that evidence and witness testimony have on the outcomes of war crimes prosecutions. To ensure justice and accountability in international criminal law, it is imperative to maintain stringent evidentiary standards and effective witness management. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities and significance of evidence and witness testimony in the pursuit of justice for war crimes, emphasizing the need for continuous improvement in these areas to uphold the principles of fairness and justice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is essential to establish and enforce rigorous standards for the collection, preservation, and presentation of evidence to ensure its integrity and reliability in court proceedings. The ICC should continue to develop and implement comprehensive witness protection programs that address both physical and psychological needs, ensuring the safety and well-being of witnesses throughout the judicial process. Greater collaboration between states and international bodies is necessary to overcome legal, geopolitical, and logistical challenges in evidence collection and witness protection, fostering a more unified approach to international criminal justice.

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A critical analysis of Jacques Derrida's notion of 'There is nothing outside the text'

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Abstract— The following paper presents a critical examination of Jacques Derrida's intriguing assertion, "There is nothing outside the text," set against the wider backdrop of the schools of Poststructuralism and Deconstruction. Taking into account Derrida's significant works of criticism, alongside critiques from notable figures like Frank Kermode and Stanley Fish, this study explores the profound implications of Derrida's assertions with regards to language, meaning, and reality. Additionally, the study places Derrida's ideas alongside those of significant earlier thinkers, such as Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics, emphasizing how Derrida questions the conventional boundaries between language and the reality it aims to depict. Through an exploration of key ideas like *différance*, trace, and textuality, the paper illustrates how Derrida deconstructs conventional epistemological structures, uncovering their underlying political aspects. In the end, the research suggests that Derrida's transformative view of text and context reveals the fabricated essence of truth and reality, shedding light on the political motivations inherent in every act of interpretation.

Keywords— Derrida, Deconstruction, Poststructuralism, Textuality, *Différance*, Anti-realism

'Be alert to these invisible quotation marks, even within a word'

(Derrida, 1979)¹

'Derrida's work, as we will see, is about "[putting] into practice a vigilant but . . . general use of quotation marks." Exploring the sense that "it is no longer possible to use seriously the words of tradition", his work is concerned with "destabiliz[ing] . . . the opposition between discourse *with* and discourse *without* quotation marks", in other words with destabilizing "philosophy in its

entirety" and "theory in its entirety" as well'.²

In the beginning of his essay entitled '*Endings, continued*',³ the contemporary critic Frank Kermode acknowledges the 'astonishing intellectual feat' of Derrida's *Of Grammatology*.⁴ He then moves on to claim that Derrida's 'virtuosity is such that one sometimes feels genuinely embarrassed at claiming membership not only of the same profession but even of the same species'.⁵ Speaking with regards to Derrida's deconstructionist arguments, Kermode later admits that 'a continual attention to the operations of *différance* may not be humanly supportable, and even if this is the way things

¹ Bloom, Prof Harold, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey H. Hartman, and J. Hillis Miller. 2004. *Deconstruction and Criticism* (Continuum International Publishing Group)

² Royle, Nicholas. 2009. *In Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press)

³ Kermode, Frank. 1989. 'Endings, Continued', in *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press)

⁴ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

⁵ Kermode, Frank. 1989. 'Endings, Continued', in *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press)

really are, most of us may still have to behave as if they were otherwise'.⁶ The concept of *différance*, central to Derrida's philosophy, refers to the dual process of differentiation and deferral of meaning, emphasizing that meanings are always unstable, never fully present, and perpetually delayed in language. Note that in symptomizing the psychoanalytic notion of Disavowal,⁷ Kermode demonstrates how most scholars reacted to Derrida's philosophy at the beginning, inwardly whispering that 'I know that what Derrida is describing is true, but I am going to carry on trying to live my life as if it is not'.⁸

As the result of the complexity of his interests, and the allusive, controversial, and paradoxical intellectual style he had developed, Derrida has always refused to be limited within a systematic, coherent account. In fact, in honoring the poststructuralist tradition, he employs a plethora of strategies to nullify the traditional western philosophical habit of attaining a secure grasp on meaning, knowledge, and truth. Therefore, despite the fame and ubiquity of the phrase 'nothing outside the text',⁹ one should do well to bear in mind that it is not Derrida's style to enunciate his arguments in clear, consistent language or to provide a coherently structured strategy to substantiate his iconoclastic reconceptualizations. This paper argues that Derrida's dictum 'there is nothing outside the text' is often misunderstood, and that a proper understanding reveals not only a linguistic and interpretive claim but a profoundly ontological and political one; specifically, many critics interpret 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte' as implying radical solipsism or linguistic idealism. This article dispels that myth by clarifying Derrida's true intent and linking it explicitly to his deconstruction of Western metaphysics. The analysis positions Derrida against thinkers like Fish and Sokal to show how Derrida's stance is unequivocally more radical—essentially anti-realist—than even many postmodernists acknowledge.

Nothing outside the text

Generally speaking, the claim 'There is nothing outside the text', originally 'il n'y a pas de hors-texte', brings into question respected semiotic conventions that are established in civic institutions.¹⁰ It is crucial to emphasize that while he never subscribed to linguistic idealism,¹¹ in Derrida's arguments, 'text', 'context', and 'textuality' are not referrals to the traditional syntactic process; rather, they constitute a wide and comprehensive notion covering the structures and procedures responsible for devising and interpreting semiotic and semantic signs and manifestations. A formidable text, Derrida believes, is one that manages to portray the 'incomprehensibly elliptical', and is capable of 'inducing meaning without being exhausted by meaning'.¹²

Derrida asserts that nothing is extra-textual, and that 'The text is not the book; it is not confined in a volume to the library. It does not suspend reference – to history, to the world, to reality, to being, and especially not to the other'.¹³ He then proceeds to point out that 'To say of history, of the world, or reality, that they always appear in an experience, hence in a movement of interpretation',¹⁴ effectively urging the populace to wake up to the realization that all the stated accounts of the world and its history, the essence of reality, and everything else there is, are at the very best, mere interpretations. However, it is important to clarify that Derrida does not deny the existence of reality itself. Rather, he asserts that our access to reality is always mediated through textual interpretation and context; meaning that it is influenced by interpretive mediation.

Having clarified Derrida's intended meaning, it's important to address critics who downplay how radical this notion really is. Such a declamation wouldn't be the cause of much controversy, since even scientific and metaphysical realists acknowledge the schism and the incompatibility present between a subject matter, and the socially constructed activities of theorizing and interpreting it. However, whereas Stanley Fish attempts to reconcile poststructuralism with a form of realism, this

⁶ Kermode, Frank. 1989. 'Endings, Continued', in *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (New York: Columbia University Press)

⁷ Freud, Sigmund. 1991. *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (Harlow, England: Penguin Books)

⁸ Royle, Nicholas. 2009. *In Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press)

⁹ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

¹⁰ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

¹¹ Dilman, Ilham. 2016. *Wittgenstein's Copernican Revolution: The Question of Linguistic Idealism*, 2002nd edn (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan)
<<https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230599017>>

¹² Wood, David (ed.). 1992. *Derrida: A Critical Reader* (London, England: Blackwell)

¹³ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

¹⁴ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

analysis argues that Derrida's position is significantly more radical, explicitly challenging the possibility of a single definitive reality free from interpretative contexts. Furthermore, Derrida's claims aren't challenging the credibility of traditional hermeneutic principles alone, since his arguments, in effect, have political implications as well, as he notes that 'There is always something political in the very project of attempting to fix the contexts of utterances'.¹⁵ The question can be raised, not whether a politics is implied (it always is), but which politics 'is implied in such a practice of contextualization'.¹⁶ This means that Derrida is in effect, attempting to unveil various unscrupulous political interest groups at work, that have been so strategically shaping the interpretive procedures undertaken in any socio-institutional framework throughout the ages.

The Postmodernist, the Deconstructionist

Over time, some have come to maintain that provided a chance to be properly scrutinized, poststructuralists wouldn't emerge as blatantly radical, but reasonably limited to the two aforementioned hermeneutical and political claims. For example, when Alan Sokal protested that 'There is a real world; its properties are *not* merely social constructions; facts and evidence *do* matter. What sane person would contend otherwise?',¹⁷ he attempted to imply that poststructuralists have no outrageously radical ontology; to which Stanley Fish retorted, 'It is not the world or its properties, but the vocabularies in whose terms we know them that are socially constructed'.¹⁸ This response by Fish reflects an attempt to moderate Derrida's more radical insights into something more palatable for traditional realism. It can therefore be argued that Fish, with all the eloquence he could muster, has opted to argue for a propitious compatibility, or at the very least a lack of direct conflict, between Poststructuralism and Deconstruction on one hand, and social constructivism and Realism on the other. However, Jonathan Culler's influential commentary clarifies Derrida's genuine radicalism, emphasizing that Derrida's work explicitly destabilizes the idea of an

external, stable reality.¹⁹ Fish's interpretation thus neglects the depth of Derrida's challenge to traditional realism, as Deconstruction argues that truth, as humans perceive it, is inherently mediated and shaped by interpretive structures and contexts, rather than existing as a single transcendent reality.

Structuralism introduced the comforting notion of objective all-encompassing structures, supposedly independent from any consciousness or arbitrary will.²⁰ Poststructuralism on the other hand, is a way of reconceptualizing truth and reality, asserting that knowledge and truth are mostly fabricated notions designed to be collectively accepted in a society, in order to enhance the power and prominence of a certain class within that society known as the 'elites'.²¹ Furthermore, according to Foucault's assertion that 'we must not imagine the world turns towards us a legible face which we would only have to decipher',²² which is a distinctly Foucauldian stance emphasizing how power shapes knowledge, not only does human mind subconsciously alter and reinterpret any given truth, but it arbitrarily proceeds to fill in the gaps to make it more convincing as well. Unlike Derrida's specific linguistic critique, Foucault emphasizes power's role in shaping truth narratives. This leads to the notion that truth is mostly produced, and not discovered. Compare these notions with that of social constructivism, which as tangible proof of its incontrovertible incompatibility with poststructuralism, highlights intersubjectivity, social construction of norms and perceptions, and the reliability of social structures and institutions.²³

Therefore, much to the chagrin of Fish and his sympathizers, it is crystal clear that Derrida, or any poststructuralist for that matter, wouldn't be content by mere hermeneutical and political claims, rather, they were simply laying the groundwork for their ultimate argument. This ultimate argument, ontological in nature, questions not the existence of reality itself, but the possibility of accessing a single, definitive reality free from interpretative mediation. Poststructuralists are known for

¹⁵ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

¹⁶ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

¹⁷ Sokal, Alan. 1996. "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," *In Lingua Franca: The Review of Academic Life*, pp. 62–64

¹⁸ Fish, Stanley. 1996. "Professor Sokal's Bad Joke," *The New York Times*

¹⁹ Culler, Jonathan. 1983. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press)

²⁰ Culler, Jonathan. 1983. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press)

²¹ Belsey, Catherine. 2002. *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction: A Very Short Introduction* (London, England: Oxford University Press)

²² Connolly, William E. 1985. "Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness," *Political Theory*, 13.3: 365–76
<<https://www.jstor.org/stable/191237>>

²³ Pfadenhauer, Michaela, and Hubert Knoblauch (eds.). 2018. *Social Constructivism as Paradigm?: The Legacy of the Social Construction of Reality* (London, England: Routledge)

philosophical blasphemy and disregarding the notion of an objective higher truth; and according to William Alston, realists hold that ‘much of reality is what it is independently of our cognitive relations thereto’.²⁴ Alston then proceeds to state that anti-realism can be defined as a commitment to ‘the view that whatever there is, is constituted, at least in part, by our cognitive relations thereto, by the ways we conceptualize it or construe it, by the language we use to talk about it or the conceptual scheme(s) we use to think of it’.²⁵ Thus, Derrida can be positioned within an anti-realist tradition, yet one that explicitly rejects naïve linguistic idealism (the notion that language alone directly creates physical reality). Instead, Derrida emphasizes how our interpretations inevitably shape our perception of reality, rather than reality itself being wholly linguistic.

Here, it can be argued that what Fish missed, or at the very least refused to face, was his subtle belief in structuralism, cemented at his very core. He couldn’t really imagine how afar Derrida, or Poststructuralism as a whole, would opt to proceed simply because he envisioned every philosophical movement that breaks away from the monolithic structures of the past as finite, and somehow placed and contained within some kind of a superstructure that can never be violated. In a sense, the likes of Fish, and even many Postmodernists and Poststructuralists, still had some traces of structuralism within, and were unable to truly move beyond, and to correctly understand Derrida.

A prominent member of the said anti-realist camp would be Derrida, as he claims that ‘there has never been anything but writing’. Here, Derrida’s notion of “writing” must be understood broadly; it refers not merely to textual inscriptions but to all forms of symbolic representation and interpretation through which meaning emerges. The full quote is worth mentioning as well, as he asserts:

‘Yet if reading must not be content with doubling the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psycho-biographical, etc.) or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have

taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. That is why the methodological considerations that we risk applying here to an example are closely dependent on general propositions that we have elaborated above; as regards the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. There is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text; il n’y a pas de hors-texte]. And that is neither because Jean-Jacques’ life, or the existence of Mamma or Therese themselves, is not of prime interest to us, nor because we have access to their so-called “real” existence only in the text and we have neither any means of altering this, nor any right to neglect this limitation. ... In what one calls the real life of these existences of “flesh and bone,” beyond and behind what one believes can be circumscribed as Rousseau’s text, there has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the “real” supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. And thus to infinity, for we have read, in the text, that the absolute present, Nature, that which words like “real mother” name, have always escaped, have never existed’.²⁶

Note that for Derrida, writing refers to general human communicative practices and not just words on a paper, and so this phrase is crucial in illuminating Derrida’s perspective on the relationship between language and the world, as it makes us realize that his arguments regarding this relationship are premised upon a

²⁴ Alston, William P. 2019. “6. What Metaphysical Realism Is Not,” in *Realism and Antirealism*, ed. by William P. Alston (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), pp. 97–116

²⁵ Alston, William P. 2019. “6. What Metaphysical Realism Is Not,” in *Realism and Antirealism*, ed. by William P. Alston (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), pp. 97–116

²⁶ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

combination of a deconstructed structuralism and a deconstructed phenomenology.²⁷ In other words, Derrida asserts that the so-called “real” is always mediated by symbolic structures, traces, and contexts, not that reality itself is nonexistent. This passage confirms that Derrida rejects the idea of direct, unmediated reference to reality, reinforcing the anti-realist interpretation of his work. When Derrida uses that phrase, in order to further illuminate his notion of fabricated truth, he demonstrates that the social practice of debating the identity of specific individuals such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau or Therese, has a direct influence on how their identities are shaped and defined. Thus, as he further delineates this point by stating that ‘The thing itself is a sign’,²⁸ he means to convey that language itself, at least in part, constitutes and defines entities, and has a direct role in shaping reality. A reality, that according to realists and structuralists, was supposed to be subjective, and absolute.²⁹ Yet this reality, contrary to realist assumptions of an absolute external existence, remains always contextually determined and interpretively mediated.

Bear in mind that Derrida’s radical ideas did not emerge in a vacuum; he could never argue for such concepts had he not been inspired by Freud in the first place. Freud’s revelations about the fabric of reality were first manifested in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess in 1897, when stated that ‘there are no indications of reality in the unconscious, so that one cannot distinguish between truth and fiction that has been cathected with affect’.³⁰ Having in mind the inability of the unconscious in distinguishing the truth, Derrida would later on employ this Freudian hypothesis to formulate his own philosophy. One might object here that Derrida overstates the primacy of interpretation; however, by drawing on Freud and Nietzsche, Derrida would counter that the unconscious structures of interpretation underpinning human cognition confirm the inescapable presence of interpretive mediation. Besides, to fully appreciate how Derrida arrived

at ‘no outside text’, we should next consider how he positions himself against earlier thinkers like Husserl, Saussure, and Lévi-Strauss.

Paving the way

As mentioned at the start of this paper, Derrida’s philosophy does not adhere to the traditional systematic and structured principles of argumentation. Therefore, the most reasonable solution would be to situate his views in relation to his precursors, especially phenomenologists like Edmund Husserl and structuralists like Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss, and then distinguish his views from them.

With regards to the phenomenological arguments that make Derrida’s work come to light, long before Derrida, Edmund Husserl attempted to separate and disengage the discursive element of human experience from the systematic and coherent ‘stratum’ which stabilizes constant discourse and meaning.³¹ Similarly, Ferdinand de Saussure’s influential structuralist model defined language through arbitrary relations of signs independent from material reference.³² According to Derrida, however, these endeavors were misguided, since they invalidated the vital connection between one’s experience, and one’s perception of what is to be recognized as credible truth.³³ Additionally, Derrida challenges Husserl’s distinction between symbols and objects, and argues for a powerful connection between the mental image of an entity and how it is referred to, and the external physical existence of it.³⁴ He does that, by introducing the notion of ‘trace’, as something influential even when not present, and as the representation of the distinction between the tangible object and the linguistic/symbolic representation of that object.³⁵ Therefore ‘trace’, in Derridean terms, refers to the presence of an absence—meaning that any sign or symbol carries within it echoes of meanings it excludes or defers, always dependent on other traces for meaning. Accordingly, by employing the notion of ‘trace’, he moves to present as

²⁷ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

²⁸ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

²⁹ Culler, Jonathan. 1983. *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press)

³⁰ Royle, Nicholas. 2009. *In Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press)

³¹ Husserl, Edmund. 2015. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (London, England: Routledge)

³² Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1990. *General Course in Linguistics*, 2nd edn, trans. by W. Baskin (London, England: Peter Owen)

³³ Derrida, Jacques. 1982. *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

³⁴ Derrida asserts that ‘The unheard difference between the appearing and the appearance [*l’apparaissant et l’apparaître*] (between the “world” and “lived experience”) is the condition of all other differences, of all other traces, and it is already a trace. ... The trace is the *différance* which opens appearance [*l’apparaître*] and signification’.

³⁵ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

interactive what Husserl wanted to keep distinct, and proceeds to assert that the referent of the symbol does not occur independently from the symbol itself, and that the object and the signal cannot have an independent existence. This paper maintains that instead of Husserl, Derrida's ideology would be much more compatible and definable when interpreted in the light of the arguments proposed by Heidegger, and the intimate relationship between language and being that he introduced in his works.³⁶

As poststructuralism was beginning to emerge from structuralism, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss declared the culture/nature dichotomy to be ultimately indefensible.³⁷ He then proceeded to contribute to the entanglement of sign and object, stating that his idea was, as Derrida quotes, 'to transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible by operating from the outset at the level of signs'.³⁸

In addition to Lévi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure delivered an analytical framework that would motivate some of the most important intellectual movements in the twentieth century. Saussure refused to define language as a simple labeling design, and rejected the perfunctory notion of language being 'a list of terms corresponding to a list of things'.³⁹ His argument is premised upon three concepts, including the sign as signifier and also the signified, the arbitrariness of the relation between signifier and signified, and the role that differentiation from other signs plays in defining each sign. He presents and defines each of these concepts in such a manner that would meticulously disengage the linguistic system from the world of objects and entities. He explains that the signifier, being a mental impression of how a word sounds like, and signified, a rough universal concept, are both mental entities, and aren't really engaged with the material world, or the myriad linguistic systems used within it. Claiming that 'The initial assignment of names to things, establish[ed] a contract between concepts and sound patterns',⁴⁰ Saussure speculates the association between signifier and signified to have been established by some sort of primordial assignment based on concepts and sound patterns, effectively denying the role of language in the creation of what language refers to. Nevertheless, note

that regardless of Saussure's efforts to separate language and sign from physical entities, his conception of language as a sociopsychological structure remains influential, hindering the works of structuralists and even poststructuralists in resolving and deciphering language's relation to that which is beyond the sociopsychological realm.

Moving back to Derrida, we now realize why he warned us about structuralism as a monolithic system designed to ensure the enslavement of the mind, and the isolation of anyone who 'dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes the order of the sign'.⁴¹ Derrida believes in absolute limitless freedom, and as Peggy Kamuf notes, he always 'works to abolish the distance between what he is writing about . . . and what his writing is doing'.⁴² Thus, as a countermeasure to what he saw as the authoritarian structuralism, Derrida employs two of Saussure's principles in his poststructuralist semantics, the arbitrariness of the signifier/signified relationship, and the differential nature of the sign, and then proceeds to alter them.

Regarding the signified entity, he rejects the statement that there can be a distinction maintained between the concept that represents an entity, and the entity it represents. He applies the same argument concerning the signifier as well, as he denies the existent of a constant distinction between the psychological impression of an entity (a sound, word or a mark), and its written or pronounced form.⁴³

Furthermore, he refutes Saussure's assertion that the signifier and the signified, being a mental impression and a conceptual object respectively, are nonlinguistic and disengaged from the physical realm. In doing so, he introduces a perpetual cycle of linguistic functions, stretching indefinitely. What Derrida wants to convey is that an entity, whether physical or abstract, can only be intelligible and specifiable in linguistic terms. Yet, importantly, Derrida does not imply that entities have no existence beyond language; instead, he stresses our unavoidable reliance on interpretive contexts to perceive and communicate these entities. These linguistic terms

³⁶ Rorty, Richard. 1991. *Richard Rorty: Philosophical Papers Set 4 Paperbacks Essays on Heidegger and Others: Volume 2* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press)

³⁷ Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1992. *The Raw and the Cooked: Introduction to a Science of Mythology* (Harlow, England: Penguin Books)

³⁸ Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

³⁹ Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1990. *General Course in Linguistics*, 2nd edn, trans. by W. Baskin (London, England: Peter Owen)

⁴⁰ Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1990. *General Course in Linguistics*, 2nd edn, trans. by W. Baskin (London, England: Peter Owen)

⁴¹ Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

⁴² Kamuf, Peggy. 1991. *The Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. by Peggy Kamuf (New York, NY: Columbia University Press)

⁴³ Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

would then shape reality when used within the context of the physical world. Moreover, the linguistic terms are in turn specified and described by other linguistic terms, continuing this trend perpetually. In asserting his logic in direct contrast with structuralists, and Saussure specifically, Derrida argued that any sign's signified is a signifier in its own right, standing in relation to another signified, and so on indefinitely.⁴⁴ Note that when Derrida reevaluates Saussure's principles of arbitrariness and meaning, what was considered semantic for Saussure, is now considered an argument that is both semantic and ontological, and as a consequence of his disruptive arguments against Saussure, Derrida came to reject and nullify his signifier/signified relation, and his idea of passive signifiers.

Derrida's announcement of 'there is nothing outside the text' and his arguments supporting and clarifying it, are all predicated upon his departure from the western philosophical traditions of the past. Among these norms and traditions, Derrida held a singular contempt for the propensity of western philosophers to continuously appeal to metaphysical notions, in order to achieve some sort of dependability and determinacy in language. These notions, including God, divine revelations, human nature, history and every other metaphysical notion of that ilk, have far less significance in Derrida's philosophical arguments, as in his model of linguistic structure, there is no established center, or a transcendental signified.⁴⁵ The lack of a center, as it came to be the case when Poststructuralism evolved from the Structuralist model, effectively means that the meaning of any sign is to be considered elusive, as what every sign indicates, is only determined by its differentiation from other signs.⁴⁶ And here lies the heart of the Deconstruction process that Derrida tried so hard to implement.

The first step for me, in the approach to what I proposed to call deconstruction, was a putting into question of the authority of linguistics, of logocentrism. And this, accordingly, was a protest

against the 'linguistic turn', which, under the name of structuralism, was already well on its way . . . Deconstruction was inscribed in the 'linguistic turn', when it was in fact a protest against linguistics!⁴⁷

The point of deconstruction is to clarify the manner in which a specific term is prioritized and empathized in a text, while the binary conceptual opposite of the said term is excluded as a result. Subsequently, the Deconstructionist methodology proceeds to demonstrate the necessity of the excluded term for the intelligibility and operability of the prioritized one, practically asserting that the excluded term will always be present in the prioritized one, even in its absence. This process, symptomatic of the notion of 'trace' that was mentioned earlier, reaches the conclusion that a given sign can never be identical with itself, since it is simultaneously defined by what it is and what it is not.⁴⁸ Derrida explains about this notion of differentiation, and the lack of self-identity it entails, saying that 'Identity is not the self-identity of a thing, this glass, for instance, this microphone, but implies a difference within identity. That is, the identity of a culture is a way of being different from itself; a culture is different from itself; language is different from itself; the person is different from itself. ... Identity is a self-differentiating identity, an identity different from itself, having an opening or gap within itself'.⁴⁹

'There is nothing outside the text', as Derrida noted, had 'for some become a slogan, in general so badly misunderstood, of deconstruction'.⁵⁰ Therefore, the recurrent theme of misinterpretation returns prominently here; and in order to illuminate his claim a bit more, he later suggested alternative formulations, such as 'there is nothing outside context', or even 'there is nothing but context'.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the phrase, along with the breathtakingly revolutionary notion it represents, has been subject to constant misinterpretation and misconception, leading Derrida to chafe at the suggestions that he does not believe in the world beyond words. Derrida stipulated that the phrase suggests 'that one cannot refer to 'real' except in

⁴⁴ Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

⁴⁵ Derrida, Jacques. 2016. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press)

⁴⁶ For example, the concept of hotness is only conceivable to someone who has a concept of coldness. Otherwise, the individual would be unable to distinguish between hot and cold.

⁴⁷ Derrida. in conversation with Maurizio Ferraris and Giorgio Vattimo, in Derrida and Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, trans. Giacomo Donis (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2001). Pp. 3–92.

⁴⁸ Derrida, Jacques. 1978. *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

⁴⁹ Caputo, John D. (ed.). 1996. *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (Fordham University Press)

⁵⁰ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

⁵¹ Derrida. 1988. *Limited Inc* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press)

an interpretive experience',⁵² meaning that the context of a text is of utmost importance, since it makes sense of things. In short, Derrida does not deny reality itself; rather, he underscores that reality can only ever be accessed and understood through interpretative structures and contexts. Context, he argued, turns the shapeless clouds of reality into clay, and places it within the reach of our minds, so that it be shaped and molded by our individual interpretations.

Ultimately, as far as philosophers go, and as far as the righteously blasphemous minds of the 20th century go, there is no shortage of genius minds with cogent disruptive theories. Therefore, one would be entitled to wonder what it is that makes Derrida's 'nothing outside the text' and the subsequent deconstructionist assertions so significant in the annals of philosophy. This paper has argued that Derrida's dictum 'there is nothing outside the text' is frequently misread as advocating radical solipsism or linguistic idealism. Instead, by placing Derrida in dialogue with structuralist, phenomenological, and realist traditions, as well as contemporary critics such as Fish and Sokal, this analysis demonstrated that Derrida's claim is far more nuanced and substantial. The appeal of Derrida's arguments isn't solely the consequence of his persuasive reasoning or the cathartic pleasure of his ontology and semiology, rather, it has to do with the political enlightenment that his assertions entail. What has always tainted the honor of metaphysics and the kind of undisputable notions of reality it ensues, is the propensity of its pioneers to develop oppressive political agendas. This policy is ultimately followed by the practice of suppression and censorship, since different political ideologies will inevitably come to announce the supremacy of their version of essential identity and metaphysical reality. Thus, Derrida's contribution lies precisely in exposing how these seemingly neutral metaphysical claims about absolute reality and objective truth are, in fact, politically constructed and institutionally enforced, as Jonathan Culler also emphasizes in his examination of Derrida's legacy. Metaphorically speaking, Derrida toppled not a literal monarchy, but a conceptual one—exposing the political structures hidden behind seemingly neutral assertions about truth and reality, and thus liberating the philosophical discourse itself. And while some might critique Derrida for overstating the interpretive nature of reality, his insights compel us to recognize the political stakes inherent in all philosophical claims to truth, ensuring his ongoing relevance to contemporary philosophical and critical discourse.

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Inheritance and Innovation at Ziyang Academy in Hankou, Hubei

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Abstract— This paper aims to analyze the distinctive features of the Ziyang Academy in Hankou from the perspectives of inheritance and innovation. The academy shares profound ties with familial traditions, having been established by Huizhou merchants based on native-place solidarity. It traces its intellectual lineage to Zhu, Xi while inheriting the legacy of Confucius, serving as a practical embodiment of Confucian values in cultivating civic virtues. Simultaneously, the academy functioned with guild hall characteristics, blending commercial acumen with a commitment to local development and social welfare initiatives. It evolved into an urban landmark, where its founding, architectural design, and associated cultural landscapes became defining features of the era. The academy's adherence to Zhu, Xi's philosophy not only promoted his teachings but also honored Confucian ideals. From Confucius to Zhu, Xi, the Ziyang Academy's social engagement and practices offer valuable insights for fostering a sense of familial and national responsibility—"cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world"—in the new era. Its dual approach of "narrating tradition" (inheritance) and "pioneering innovation" provides a referential framework for integrating humanistic spirit into higher education and societal development.

Keywords— Zhu, Xi Studies; Hankou Ziyang Academy; Guild Hall; Urban Memory; Cultural Landscape

I. INTRODUCTION

In the history of Chinese education, the establishment of academies is not of ancient origin but rather a later development. A common view holds that academies emerged from the dual influence of private and official initiatives. Following the widespread circulation of books,

scholars engaged in activities such as collecting, printing, teaching, writing, and compiling texts, leading to the accumulation and dissemination of knowledge in specific spaces or localities (Deng, 2006).

Since the Ming and Qing dynasties, administrative divisions have undergone numerous changes, and the

Wuhan area gradually came to encompass the three cities of Wuchang, Hanyang, and Hankou. Over time, many renowned academies emerged in the region, among which the Ziyang Academy (located in present-day Xin'an Street, Qiaokou District, and Wuhan) stands out as particularly distinctive and well-known. Academies bearing the name "Ziyang Academy" existed in Anhui, Suzhou, Hangzhou, and other places. However, the Hankou Ziyang Academy, also known as the Xin'an Academy, uniquely combined the functions of an academy and a guild hall. It was founded during the Kangxi reign of the Qing Dynasty by Huizhou merchants who pooled resources to establish it after settling in Hankou for trade. Over years of expansion, it grew into a significant urban landmark.

Notably, the academy also served roles in charity relief, free schooling, ancestral worship, and infant care. Coupled with its grand architecture and extensive facilities, the Ziyang Academy became an important urban symbol for locals and outsiders, natives and sojourners alike. It fostered a shared sense of identity and collective memory, while also embodying the social solidarity and mutual aid of its time.

II. THE ZIYANG ACADEMY AND ITS TIES WITH CLANS

"Ziyang" was the alternative name of Zhu, Xi. After the Southern Song Dynasty, the influence of Zhu, Xi's philosophy grew significantly and spread throughout East Asia. The establishment of the Hankou Ziyang Academy originated from the joint proposal of Huizhou gentry and merchants who had migrated to Hankou for business or settlement. Huizhou was formerly known as Xin'an Prefecture, and Zhu, Xi himself was a native of Wuyuan in Huizhou. Thus, these scholar-merchants, inheriting both academic traditions and cultural legacies, often founded Ziyang Academies in multiple locations. The motivation behind the creation of the Hankou Ziyang Academy was no exception (Dong, 2019).

Current academic research on the Ziyang Academy particularly emphasizes the aspect of mutual assistance among fellow Huizhou merchants. Scholars argue that, in addition to its roles in lecturing and worship, the academy also functioned as a guild hall. Zhou, Chunjian and Zou, Huaqing contend that since Huizhou merchants were active nationwide, especially in Hankou, it was both necessary and urgent to rely on the academy to connect with fellow townspeople. As Dong, Guifu stated, "I consider the establishment of the academy as achieving three benefits in one move: honoring past sages to illuminate the Dao, founding lecture halls to encourage learning, and gathering fellow townspeople to foster camaraderie" (Dong, 2019). From the perspective of "hometown ties," where kinship may fade but land remains familiar, this was the most fundamental original intent behind the creation of the Ziyang Academy. Zhao, Yu, in the preface to A Brief Record of the Ziyang Academy, particularly emphasized that while guild halls were widespread across multiple provinces, the Ziyang Academy, though named as an academy, was in fact also a guild hall.

As is well known, guild halls were initially established to accommodate scholars traveling to the capital for imperial examinations, hence also called "examination halls." Over time, their scope expanded, becoming gathering places for fellow townspeople or urban sojourners to socialize. As Wang, Rigen noted, guild halls were the result of continuous adjustments and refinements between centralized authority and grassroots self-governance. However, the sense of mission encapsulated in "cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world" persisted among both organizers and participants. Thus, within guild halls, efforts were made to strengthen emotional bonds, facilitate information exchange, and provide practical and effective assistance to maintain the stability of grassroots society (Wang, 1996).

Of course, the reverse could also be argued: guild halls incorporated the distinctive features of academies, thereby enhancing their unique value. The Ziyang Guild Hall (Academy) clearly exemplified this. However, if discussing it solely from the perspective of guild halls or Huizhou merchant mutual aid risks lacking historical depth, overemphasizing the merchants themselves while neglecting the traditions and influence of academic education.

In fact, the connection between academies and families, clans, and local communities was a crucial link in the Confucian scholars' practical efforts since the Song Dynasty to transform society and cultivate moral customs. As the Cheng brothers (Cheng, Hao and Cheng, Yi) stated, "To govern the hearts of the people, consolidate clans, enrich customs, and ensure people do not forget their roots, it is necessary to clarify genealogical records and establish the system of clan leadership." (Cheng & Cheng, 2004) Zhu, Xi, in a letter to Lü, Zuqian, also wrote, "I intend to revise the Lü Family Community Compact and its rituals, as well as establish norms for capping, marriage, funeral, and ancestral rites." (Zhu, 2010) The deeper meaning behind this is tied to the traditional Confucian ideal of "cultivating oneself, regulating the family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world." Post-Song and Confucian intellectuals emphasized social order, beginning with self-cultivation and gradually expanding outward—from family and clan to community, society, nation, and the world. The idealistic purpose of establishing academies lay precisely in this progression.

Zhu, Xi and other Confucian scholars were not solely focused on inner spiritual refinement. They advocated self-cultivation, discussed the nature of the mind, compiled Family Rituals, and then extended these principles to family governance. From individual moral development, they expanded into daily life rituals—covering weddings, funerals, ancestral worship, and other rites—and further into clan and lineage structures. This included compiling

genealogies, establishing family and clan rules, and promoting community compacts. Importantly, academies also served as spaces for scholarly discourse, intellectual exchange, and friendship through literature, making them key sites for disseminating knowledge, ideas, and values.

Thus, the integration of academies and guild halls was not solely due to the geographical ties of Huizhou merchants but also stemmed from the educational philosophy that had developed since the Song Dynasty, which found full expression in the Ziyang Academy. This was a tradition inherited by scholar-gentry and merchants from Zhu, Xi when they established academies. As Dong, Guifu noted, "For five hundred years, scholars across the land have revered Zhu, Xi as the great master of learning. The people of Xin'an, dwelling near the sacred legacy, have preserved his teachings, passing them down through generations (Dong, 2019). Discoveries in classical scholarship have flourished in succession, and even those who enter village schools or travel afar to study invariably adhere faithfully to his enduring instructions without deviation." This demonstrates how his intellectual legacy endured, resonating through the ages.

III. THE OPERATION OF ZIYANG ACADEMY AND GUILD HALL

Since the academy and guild hall were integrated and mutually reinforcing, the management of Ziyang Academy inevitably incorporated commercial thinking and practices. Dong, Guifu noted that since its establishment, the academy had incurred significant expenses, initially running a deficit of 4,000 taels of silver. After subsequent expansions and renovations, the deficit had ballooned to 15,000 taels by his time. He observed: "The academy's annual rental income totals just over 4,300 taels, while expenditures for the biannual sacrifices and other expenses amount to no less than 2,000 taels, leaving a surplus of only 2,300 taels. This barely covers the interest on the

15,000-tael deficit, leaving the principal permanently uncovered" (Dong, 2019).

The academy's rental properties—such as ten shops at Xinnmatou, eighteen on the east side of Xin'an Street, and buildings along Shuixiang Lane on Taiping Street—generated an annual rent of 4,404 taels, closely matching Dong's figure. Fundraising through collective contributions or donations from benefactors over the years was another key revenue stream. The Hankou Ziyang Academy Records (Vol. 8) lists numerous donors, affirming that "the academy's completion relied on collective effort, and their names shall endure alongside the institution" (Dong, 2019).

According to Chen, Yue's research, such financing models had a 10-year return cycle with a 60% investment yield. Most donors were Huizhou natives, reflecting the interconnectedness of the academy, clans, and fellow provincials. The "operational process" involved investing in academy-related construction projects—whether renovations or new builds—and initiating collective fundraising campaigns as critical steps. Rental income from commercial properties often exceeded the academy's budgetary expenses, allowing investors to recoup partial principal plus interest annually, ultimately turning a profit after a decade.

Additionally, Chen, Yue analyzed land and rental contracts documented in the Hankou Ziyang Academy Records, identifying five characteristics of land rights: "the voluntary nature of contractual terms, the separable attributes of land and building rights, the stronger enforceability of land rights over building rights, the non-natural legal personality of property owners, and the close ties between urban landowners and local authorities" (Chen, 2021). This reveals that, compared to traditional land rights in feudal society, the academy's real estate holdings enjoyed relative autonomy. Property management thus emerged as the pivotal strategy for reversing the academy's financial losses. The subsequent growth of

sacrificial assets demonstrates that Ziyang Academy's approach to managing land and buildings—distinct from traditional academies reliant on farmland endowments and tuition—embodied innovative commercial principles.

However, during its construction and expansion, Ziyang Academy indeed encountered numerous land ownership disputes. First, in the 37th year of the Kangxi reign (1698), residents who had initially agreed to relocate and signed contracts later reneged on their promises. Then, in the 6th year of the Yongzheng reign (1728), the academy's managers planned to widen Xin'an Lane and construct a new dock, only to find the property rights maliciously seized and delayed in restitution. Both cases escalated into legal battles, requiring significant effort from the academy to resolve.

In the 53rd year of the Qianlong reign (1788), Bi, Yuan, whose ancestral roots were also in Anhui, was reappointed as the Governor-General of Huguang. Leveraging his connections, he strongly supported Ziyang Academy and even composed (or commissioned) An Appeal for the Renovation of the New Anhui Academy in Hankou. He further issued a public notice declaring the renovation a noble endeavor to honor Confucian values. Given Hankou's diverse and often unruly population, the notice warned against any intentional provocation, theft, or disruption of the academy's operations, stating, "All local militia, soldiers, and civilians are hereby notified: Should anyone dare to steal timber, bricks, or stones during construction or exploit this occasion to stir trouble, the merchants are permitted to report the offenders to the authorities for severe punishment without leniency. Let all heed this warning and comply." (Dong, 2019) Disputes over the academy's land rights—whether with residents or malicious actors—were frequent. Yet, operating with a merchant-guild mindset, the academy remained committed to social welfare, aiding fellow provincials and benefiting the broader community.

For instance, in August of the 49th year of Kangxi (1711), catastrophic fires broke out simultaneously in Wuchang and Hankou, with the latter suffering the worst damage—over 10,000 homes burned and countless casualties. Many survivors sought refuge in the academy, which managed to shelter and save thousands. Similarly, in June of the 5th year of Yongzheng (1727), a devastating flood breached the riverbanks, causing immense losses. The academy, built on higher ground, escaped severe flooding and housed displaced residents for months, even constructing temporary shelters.

Beyond disaster relief, with Bi, Yuan's approval, Wang, Hengshi integrated the academy's "water dragon (fire hydrant)" firefighting equipment into the official fire response system. He also hired 22 trained laborers—regularly paid despite their other occupations—to form a rapid-response firefighting team. These men underwent routine drills to ensure swift mobilization during emergencies, with clear reward and penalty regulations. This system became a model of efficiency, often being the first to deploy in crises, further solidifying the academy's role in social rescue and recovery efforts.

IV. ZIYANG ACADEMY AND URBAN MEMORY

The Ziyang Guild Hall (Academy), located on New Street, boasted an architectural layout rich in cultural symbolism. Its main structures included:

(1) Ancestral halls: The Hall of Reverence for the Way, living quarters, a spirit wall, a halberd gate, and the Pool of Striving.

(2) Pavilions and towers: The Imperial Library, Library Pavilion, Pavilion of Literary Glory, and Pavilion of the Star of Scholars.

(3) Halls and study spaces: The Banquet and Archery Pavilion, Dwelling Near the Sages, Qixiu Study,

Six Waters Lecture Hall, Hall of Solemn Respect, Pavilion of Aspiring to Learn, and the Studio of Singular Focus

Over time, the academy commissioned numerous literary works—inscriptions, odes, prefaces, and records—to commemorate its spaces. These included:

- Inscription for the Imperial Library
- Ode to the Imperial Library
- Preface to the Hall of Reverence for the Way
- Record of the Half-Acre Pond
- Account of the West Hall
- Preface to the Academy's Library Pavilion
- Record of the Banquet and Archery Pavilion
- Account of Qixiu Study
- Preface to the Hall of Solemn Respect
- Preface to the Pavilion of Aspiring to Learn
- Essay on the Studio of Singular Focus
- Record of the Merit-Praising Shrine
- Account of the Pavilion of the Star of Scholars

These texts, brimming with literary elegance, reflected the academy's cultural grandeur.

Following subsequent renovations and expansions, the complex grew to include donated structures—shopfronts, covered corridors, side chambers, seated towers, perimeter buildings, and enclosing walls. In the Daoguang era, Ye Tiaoyuan's Bamboo Branch Songs of Hankou captured the vibrancy of New Street: "Jing, Su, foreign, and Canton styles artfully arranged; Gilded and colorful, each more exquisite than the last; High eaves line the road, facing one another; for orderly splendor, none surpass New Street." The annotation clarifies: "Among commercial streets, this reigns supreme—the thoroughfare of the Huizhou Guild Hall." (Xu, 1999)

The Huizhou Guild Hall was none other than Ziyang Academy, and exiting its gates led directly to New Street. Lined with bustling shops and thronged by crowds of affluent customers, the street epitomized commercial prosperity. Ye, Tiaoyuan even employed hyperbolic flair to depict Hankou's mercantile frenzy—where "wheels

clashed and shoulders rubbed" in pursuit of profit—claiming: "This place never had true natives; nine parts merchants, one part common folk." His note adds that the so-called "one part common folk" were "merely registered migrants from elsewhere" (Xu, 1999). While factually exaggerated, this portrayal vividly conjures the era's commercial dynamism and omnipresent opportunities.

The architecture of the Guild Hall (academy), with its vermilion roof tiles and emerald-green glazed tiles, intricately painted beams, and carved pillars—whether in its grand halls, enclosing walls, soaring eaves, or majestic structures—often became a dazzling representative landmark of the city. When managed effectively and combined with social care and practical functions, these spaces could serve both utilitarian and touristic purposes, gradually evolving into iconic symbols of urban memory. Descriptions of such urban memories often highlight sensory richness: amidst teeming crowds and the ceaseless flow of carriages, one would visually encounter scenes of prosperity—ornate buildings and lavish attire; auditorily, the lively sounds of music, song, and merchant calls; while diverse culinary offerings provided gustatory and olfactory stimulation or delight. Sight, sound, smell, and taste—all were abundantly present.

As Hu, Xiaozhen observed, "Compared to rural areas, cities are marked by dense populations, crowded dwellings, vibrant economic activity, rampant consumerism, and a compressed sense of daily time—these surface-level urban-rural contrasts remain constant across eras... Ultimately, all sensory experiences shape the psychological traits of urban residents and their ways of perceiving the world. Naturally, the 'urban psyche' also reciprocally influences the city's character." (Hu, 2019) Ziyang Academy, as an urban landmark, fostered unique sensory experiences through its shops, storefronts, culinary delights, and bustling traffic—all of which coalesced into

an essential component of the city's collective consciousness.

From its initial proposal and construction to subsequent renovations, Huizhou merchants paid meticulous attention to the architectural details of Ziyang Academy. Specifications governed even the weight of city bricks and their laying technique (with particular emphasis on "mián qì" — solid masonry where each brick was laid flat). After years of careful stewardship, Ziyang Academy had become a defining landmark of Hankou, naturally attracting literati to compose poetry in its praise. As Tan, Zhaogui and Wang, Yao's research explicitly notes, such grand architectural complexes as Ziyang Academy—with their majestic scale, imposing presence, and opulent ornamentation—represented how "...the imprint of commercial economy became deeply engraved upon the architectural structures, streets, markets, and skylines of cities along the Han River, transforming into distinctive urban symbols. As natural representatives of commercial development in Han River cities, guild halls substantially reshaped both the physical and social spaces of these urban centers" (Tan & Wang, 2022). The flourishing commercial economy thus manifested itself in the architecture of guild halls and academies, molding urban spaces while simultaneously influencing collective urban memory. Through various written accounts and other recorded narratives, these memories have conversely acquired the power to reconstruct and redefine the very landscapes they describe.

Yet we must not overlook the profound emotional connection between people and the land within China's traditional academy system—a bond deeply intertwined with clan solidarity and social welfare. As reflected in urban memory, these academies often became sanctuaries during disasters, embodying their role as socially inclusive spaces that shared both fortune and misfortune, as exemplified by the previously mentioned cases of fire and flood relief. Beyond the visual spectacle of gilded splendor,

another "distinctive landscape" emerged from clan ethics, carrying even greater social welfare significance: the charitable cemetery. Established during the Qianlong era by Huizhou merchants to bury fellow provincials who died locally, these cemeteries were deliberately sited on prime land christened "Xin'an Righteous Burial Grounds". Contemporary records describe this "landscape narrative": "Stretching west to east in tiered rows and north to south in numbered burial sequences, each plot followed strict dimensions—five chi wide, eight chi long, and four chi deep. Two ledgers were maintained: one kept at Xin'an Academy, another at Yuhuang Temple in Shilipu."

Both Ziyang Academy (Xin'an Academy) and Yuhuang Temple maintained registries of the deceased, cataloged by burial numbers. By 1767 (the 32th year of Qianlong), over a thousand graves filled the grounds; by 1804 (the 9th year of Jiaqing), the overcrowded mounds necessitated expansion. This prompted fundraising to purchase land at Xujiawan, extending this tradition of social care—honoring the dead through dignified burials.

The academy's physical complex and its ancillary facilities collectively formed a cultural "landscape." Such landscapes served not only as landmarks but also as embodiments of ethical imperatives regarding life and death. Beyond cemeteries, other initiatives like the 1800 (the 5th year of Jiaqing) Water Dragon Decree—which positioned new firefighting equipment ("water dragons") at the centrally located academy while maintaining five existing units—demonstrated institutionalized compassion. Derived from the academy's ethos, facilities like orphanages, free lodges, and public docks all manifested its social welfare philosophy. Thus, when examining Ziyang Academy's landscape memory, we must foreground its "social care and praxis" dimension. Only through this lens can we fully appreciate the multilayered social significance embedded in this remarkable institution.

V. LESSONS FROM ZIYANG ACADEMY FOR CONTEMPORARY UNIVERSITIES

Examining the present through the lens of history, the development and distinctive features of Ziyang Academy offer valuable insights for our modern era. As noted at the outset of this article, academies have a long evolutionary history, with their nature gradually adapting through different historical periods. It is well known that since the late Qing dynasty, China faced unprecedented crises from both foreign threats and domestic turmoil—what scholars call "the great transformation unseen in three millennia." Reformists proposed various solutions: some advocated adopting Western learning while maintaining Chinese foundations; others insisted on seeking answers exclusively from ancient wisdom. The debates raged over what should change, how to implement reforms (gradually or radically), and whether the priority should be national survival or intellectual enlightenment. Should modernization focus on naval power, political systems, Buddhist revival, or Confucian critique? Opinions diverged widely, but consensus emerged that China desperately needed transformation.

A prevailing agreement held that social change must begin with educational reform. This led to new academic systems like the year 1902's Renyin System (unimplemented) and the year 1904's Guimao System (considered the foundation of modern Chinese education). The transition from academies to modern schools and then to universities maintained knowledge transmission within institutional walls. Late Qing reforms aimed to popularize "education"—enlightening the masses, expanding schooling, and saving the nation" through universal literacy. Yet reality proved different. The new system, intended to make scholars of all citizens, remained limited in practice. Many who acquired basic literacy through schooling still lacked exposure to new ideas. Compulsory education standards struggled to achieve consistency and sustainability. As a result, numerous citizens outside

academia saw no connection between learning and livelihood—why pursue enlightenment when survival demanded all attention? Even graduates, as Cai, Yuanpei observed in his inaugural speech as Peking University president, often focused solely on textbooks, grades, and credits; mastering examination techniques to obtain degrees for employment, rather than pursuing genuine intellectual growth.

Thus, traditional academies were never entirely abandoned, as many contemporaries believed universities and academies could complement each other's strengths while extending education's reach into society to cultivate moral customs. A prime example is Tang, Wenzhi's establishment of an "academy-style school"—initially named Wuxi Academy of Chinese Classics in 1920, renamed Wuxi College of Chinese Studies in 1927 after official accreditation, and finally approved by the Ministry of Education in 1930 as the Private Wuxi Academy of Chinese Studies, dedicated to teaching and researching traditional Chinese learning. Alumni later recalled four distinctive features of the institution: moral cultivation, specialized text instruction, resonant recitation practices, and essay competitions (Chen, 2016). This legacy continues today as numerous universities establish collegiate systems—some drawing on historical models while adapting to modern academic structures, others preserving the essence while adjusting scale. As previously discussed, if universities can embody urban memory and cultural landscapes, academies certainly can too. While "historic" academies naturally fulfill this role, universities with historical roots can similarly establish collegiate institutions. Even ordinary educational institutions, without the prestige of elite universities, may create academies based on regional characteristics, cultural traditions, or connections to historical figures. As Dong, Guifu articulated in his "Stele Inscription on the Renovation of Hankou's Xin'an Academy": "I maintain that academies achieve three virtues through a single

institution: honoring predecessors to illuminate the Way, establishing lecture halls to encourage learning, and gathering compatriots to strengthen fellowship" (Dong, 2019).

From Ziyang Academy's model in Hankou to the broader history of Chinese academies, we can reconsider contemporary university-college relationships—whether using collegiate systems to supplement teaching and research or as platforms for academic exchange. By studying other universities' models through thorough investigation and aligning with institutional characteristics, today's universities might find inspiration—much as the Tang dynasty poet wrote, "Drawing from the lingering waves of poetry and ritual, we find joy in mutual refinement." This poetic vision of collaborative cultivation remains profoundly relevant for modern higher education.

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Self-Confidence in Learning Turkish: A Beginner-Level Analysis

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Abstract— This study explores the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and its impact on their learning process. Self-confidence in language learning is closely linked to motivation, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement. The research follows a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study includes 162 students from the English Department at Cihan University in Iraq. Their self-confidence levels were assessed using a self-confidence scale and a Turkish language proficiency test. Additionally, semi-structured interviews provided insights into their experiences. Findings indicate that students generally exhibit moderate to high self-confidence. However, many hesitate due to fear of making mistakes and reluctance to participate in class. Qualitative analyses emphasize the importance of teacher and peer support while identifying fear of mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and limited vocabulary as barriers. In conclusion, self-confidence plays a crucial role in learning Turkish. Pedagogical strategies that reduce fear of mistakes, create supportive environments, and encourage active language use are recommended. This study contributes to effective teaching strategies by highlighting self-confidence as a key factor in language learning.

Keywords— Self-confidence, Turkish language learning, foreign language anxiety, pedagogical approaches, language learning motivation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a complex process shaped not only by cognitive processes but also by emotional and psychological factors. In this process, self-confidence is a critical factor that enhances an individual's courage to use the language and actively participate in learning. Individuals with high self-confidence learn the language more effectively without fear of making mistakes, while low self-confidence can increase language anxiety and negatively impact the learning process.

The role of self-confidence in language learning has been extensively examined in the literature. Juliani and Dafit (2024) state that teachers play a significant role in enhancing students' self-confidence through motivation, feedback, and facilitating communication, which contributes significantly to their academic success. Tunçel (2015) emphasizes that self-confidence is a key factor in foreign language learning and that individuals with high

self-confidence achieve greater success in learning Turkish. Ghafar (2023) highlights that self-confidence increases motivation and strengthens individuals' ability to cope with challenges, while Nazarova and Umurova (2016) argue that low self-confidence leads students to remain passive in language learning and avoid verbal communication.

Among the theories supporting the critical importance of self-confidence in language learning, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis stands out. This hypothesis suggests that high self-confidence facilitates the language learning process, whereas low self-confidence hinders it. Similarly, Horwitz and Young (1991) demonstrate that language anxiety negatively affects individuals' self-confidence and disrupts their learning processes. Moradiyousefabadi and Ghafournia (2023) further assert that self-confidence is strongly related to motivation, perseverance, and risk-taking willingness, and that individuals with high self-confidence perform better in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar skills.

Problem Statement

There is a limited number of studies addressing the impact of self-confidence in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. This gap prevents a full understanding of the psychological barriers faced by students learning Turkish. In particular, the lack of self-confidence among A1-level learners may lead to passivity in communication skills and a decline in learning motivation. This situation highlights the need for pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies based on concrete data.

Research Aim

The aim of this study is to examine the self-confidence levels of university students learning Turkish at the A1 level and to investigate the factors influencing their self-confidence, as well as how it affects their success in the language learning process. The study also aims to emphasize the importance of self-confidence in developing pedagogical approaches for teaching Turkish.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What are the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish, and what factors influence these levels?
2. What psychological, social, and pedagogical factors affect the self-confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language?
3. What is the relationship between students' self-confidence levels and their success in learning Turkish, and how can this relationship be statistically explained?

This study aims to fill a significant gap in the literature by examining the impact of self-confidence on Turkish language learning. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of pedagogical approaches and the expansion of student-centered practices in teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Foreign language learning is a multidimensional experience that encompasses both cognitive and emotional processes. In this process, self-confidence is a crucial psychological factor that enhances individuals' ability to cope with challenges in language learning. Self-confidence is generally defined as individuals' belief in their ability to successfully complete a task (Bandura, 2006). The literature clearly demonstrates the critical role of self-confidence in increasing success in foreign language learning. In light of these studies, this section examines how self-confidence develops in learning Turkish and how it can be supported.

The following subsections highlight significant studies that explore the effects of self-confidence on foreign language learning, with a particular focus on Turkish.

2.1. Self-Confidence and Foreign Language Learning

Self-confidence is regarded as a motivational source that increases individuals' active participation in the language learning process. Çileli (1990) emphasized the significant role of self-confidence in developing speaking skills in foreign language learning and concluded that a supportive classroom environment enhances students' self-confidence. Chomsky's (1959) concept of "creative language use" and Maslow's (1954) motivation theory suggest that gaining self-confidence positively influences the learning process.

Similarly, Pangestu and Martriwati (2024) identified self-confidence as a determining factor in students' success in speaking skills. Their findings suggest that students with high self-confidence overcome the fear of making mistakes and use the language more effectively. In contrast, a lack of self-confidence negatively affects the learning process due to factors such as classroom anxiety, limited vocabulary, and insufficient practice opportunities.

2.2. Individual Differences and Language Anxiety

Ellis (1994) highlighted the importance of individual differences in language learning processes and argued that language anxiety negatively affects students' performance. Correspondingly, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, which identifies language anxiety as a factor that reduces students' self-confidence and negatively affects their motivation.

When evaluated in this context, a negative correlation can be observed between self-confidence and anxiety. In other words, as anxiety levels increase, students' self-confidence decreases, making the learning process more challenging.

2.3. The Role of Emotional Factors

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) argued that emotional factors—especially self-confidence and motivation—are fundamental determinants of success in language learning. In this regard, Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that meaningful input provided in a low-anxiety environment contributes to self-confidence development, whereas individuals with high affective filters experience greater difficulties in language learning.

Therefore, managing emotional factors and supporting students' self-confidence significantly contributes to the language learning process.

2.4. Willingness to Communicate and Self-Confidence

Given the importance of communication in foreign language learning, self-confidence emerges as a determining factor. Yashima, Zenk-Nishide, and Shimizu (2004) emphasized that self-confidence increases individuals' willingness to communicate in a foreign language and plays a key role in effective communication. In this context, a lack of self-confidence may reduce participation in verbal activities and negatively affect the learning process.

Yousefabadi et al. (2022) reported that a lack of self-confidence limits students' participation in classes, thereby reducing success in language learning. These findings highlight the necessity of considering self-confidence when designing both in-class and extracurricular communication activities.

2.5. Positive Psychology and a Multidimensional Approach

Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) argued that foreign language learning is not solely a cognitive process but also involves emotional and social dimensions. In line with this perspective, positive psychology-based approaches aim to meet students' emotional needs and enhance their self-confidence.

The design of learning environments that provide a supportive classroom climate and meaningful input reinforces students' self-confidence and positively contributes to their learning processes.

2.6. The Impact of Self-Confidence on Language Proficiency

Bandura (2006) frequently emphasized that self-confidence positively influences motivation and persistence. Bong (2002) and Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) stated that self-confidence enhances academic performance and strengthens individuals' determination to achieve success.

In the context of foreign language learning, Abdullayeva (2024) found that individuals with high self-confidence demonstrate greater success in pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and grammar skills. This further supports the impact of self-confidence on language proficiency with empirical evidence.

2.7. Self-Confidence in Learning Turkish

The literature reveals that studies on the impact of self-confidence in learning Turkish as a foreign language are limited. Tunçel (2015) emphasized that individuals with high self-confidence achieve greater success in learning Turkish, highlighting the importance of a supportive

learning environment. Similarly, Nazarova and Umurova (2016) stated that low self-confidence leads to passivity and avoidance of communication in the process of learning Turkish.

Studies conducted on students learning Turkish in different cultural contexts demonstrate that teaching methods sensitive to cultural differences and positive feedback mechanisms support self-confidence development. This indicates that both pedagogical strategies and emotional support mechanisms play a crucial role in learning Turkish.

Conclusion of the Literature Review

This literature review demonstrates that self-confidence plays a critical role in foreign language learning and that supportive classroom environments, meaningful input, and positive teaching approaches enhance self-confidence and positively impact the learning process. It has been observed that individuals with high self-confidence overcome the fear of making mistakes and communicate more effectively, whereas a lack of self-confidence increases language anxiety and negatively affects the learning process.

In the context of learning Turkish, the limited number of studies in the literature suggests that self-confidence is an important determinant. In light of these studies, further research is needed to examine how self-confidence develops in learning Turkish and how educational environments can contribute to this development.

By conducting such research, both teaching methods can be improved and students' learning experiences can be enhanced. This study aims to analyze the effects of self-confidence on students learning Turkish at the beginner level, contributing to both academic literature and pedagogical applications. Therefore, future studies should examine the self-confidence factor across different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and learning environments, providing a broader perspective that benefits both research and practice.

III. METHOD

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. In the quantitative dimension, a self-confidence scale and a Turkish language proficiency test were administered to measure students' self-confidence levels and Turkish language success. In the qualitative dimension, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather students' opinions, allowing for a comprehensive interpretation of the data. This approach enables an in-depth

examination of the relationship between self-confidence and success in learning Turkish, using both statistical data and participant perspectives.

3.2. Participants

The study was conducted at the English Department of Cihan University in Iraq. The participants consisted of third- and fourth-year students who were taking Turkish as an elective course. A total of 162 students participated in the study on a voluntary basis. Among the participants:

73 were male, and 89 were female

The majority were native Kurdish speakers, with limited or no prior experience in learning Turkish.

Before participation, all students were informed about the study's objectives and methodology. They were assured that their data would be used solely for scientific purposes. Ethical approvals were obtained, and participation was voluntary.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Characteristics	Data
Total Number of Participants	162 Students
Gender Distribution	- Male: 73 - Female: 89
Class Level	- 3rd- and 4th-year students
Age Range	- 18–20: 70 students - 21–24 and above: 92 students
Native Language	- Kurdish (159 students) - Arabic (1 student) - Syriac (2 students)

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

3.3.1. Self-Confidence Scale

To assess students' self-confidence levels in learning Turkish, a 20-item, 5-point Likert-type scale was used, designed to measure self-efficacy and self-confidence in foreign language learning. The validity and reliability of the scale were tested, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of approximately 0.70 was found, indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

3.3.2. Turkish Language Proficiency Test

A Turkish language proficiency test was administered to measure students' A1-A2 level language skills.

The test consisted of multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering reading, writing, and basic grammar elements.

It was developed based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) A1-level criteria and revised with expert feedback.

3.3.3. Semi-Structured Interview Form (Qualitative Instrument)

A semi-structured interview form was designed to gather detailed insights into students' self-confidence and their experiences in learning Turkish.

The form included questions such as:

"What factors increase or decrease your self-confidence while learning Turkish?"

A total of 15 randomly selected volunteer students participated in individual interviews, each lasting 15-20 minutes.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

3.4. Data Collection Process

3.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection

The Self-Confidence Scale and Turkish Language Proficiency Test were administered in a classroom setting during the 4th-5th week of the semester.

Participants were informed about the scope of the study and data collection procedures, emphasizing confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection

After the quantitative data collection phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data.

The interviews were conducted in a quiet setting, recorded, and later transcribed into written form for analysis.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods in line with the study's mixed-methods approach.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values) were calculated to determine the relationship between students' self-confidence levels and their Turkish language proficiency.

The Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the self-confidence scale.

Some items in the self-confidence scale were negatively worded. These items were recoded before analysis to ensure consistency.

Responses were reverse-scored where necessary so that higher scores consistently represented higher self-confidence levels.

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the content analysis method.

Interview recordings were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted to identify factors affecting students' self-confidence.

3.5.3. Thematic Coding Process

The raw data were carefully read line by line to generate meaningful codes.

These codes were categorized under broader themes and subthemes (e.g., "*fear of making mistakes*," "*teacher attitudes*," "*peer support*").

The identified thematic findings were integrated with quantitative results, allowing for a comprehensive

understanding of how self-confidence and language learning success were interrelated or differed based on participant responses.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Prior to the study, necessary approvals were obtained from the relevant university departments and faculty management.

Participants were informed in detail about the purpose of the study, the data collection tools, and confidentiality principles.

The voluntary participation principle was strictly followed.

Participants were reminded that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Data were kept anonymous and used solely for scientific purposes.

IV. FINDINGS

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings obtained in the study. First, the quantitative results derived from the self-confidence scale used to evaluate students' self-confidence levels in the process of learning Turkish are discussed. Then, the qualitative interview results that support these findings are presented.

4.1. Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis determined the self-confidence levels of students in the process of learning Turkish. The scale used in the study included both positively and negatively worded items. The negatively worded items were designed to measure students' negative self-confidence perceptions and were adjusted accordingly in the analysis.

Table 2 Frequency Distribution and Basic Statistics of the Self-Confidence Scale (N = 162)

Item No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1	I feel comfortable when speaking Turkish.	20	40	50	35	17	2.5	1.2
2 (R)	I hesitate to actively participate in Turkish classes.	5	15	30	45	67	3.9	1.1
3	I think my Turkish pronunciation is clear.	25	35	40	40	22	2.7	1.3
4	I do not have difficulty understanding spoken Turkish in listening activities.	20	35	45	40	22	2.8	1.3
5 (R)	I am afraid of making mistakes while learning Turkish.	5	15	30	40	67	3.9	1.1
6	Learning new Turkish words gives me pleasure.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
7	I believe I can improve my Turkish writing skills.	5	10	20	50	67	4.1	1.0
8 (R)	I feel unsuccessful in the process of learning Turkish.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
9	I enjoy participating in Turkish speaking exercises in class.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0

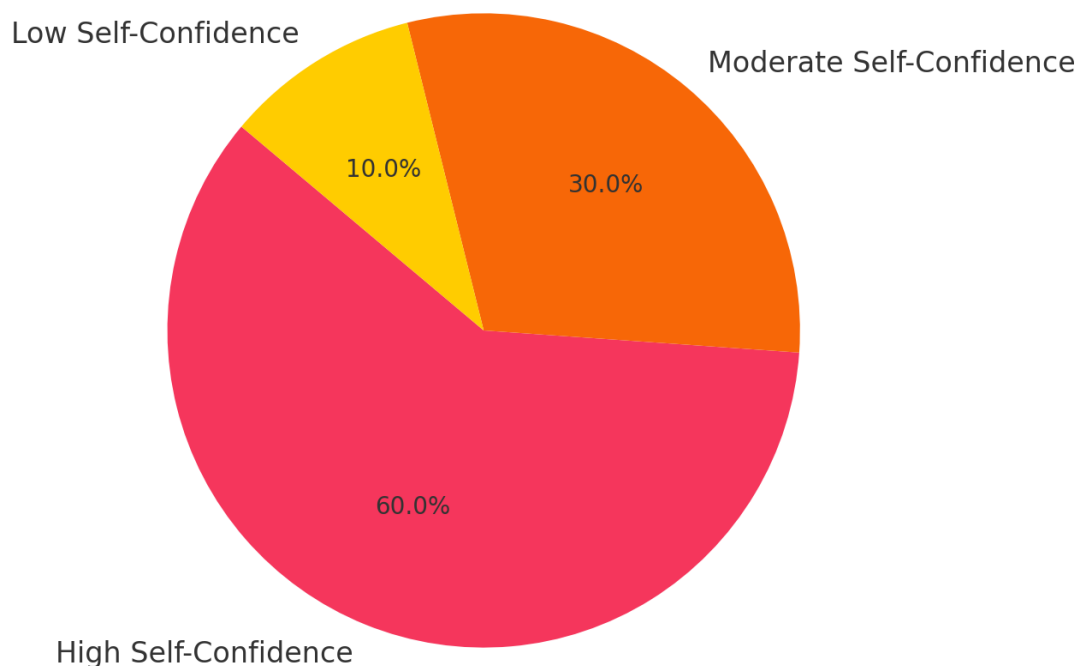
10	My self-confidence increases when I study Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
11	I am willing to communicate in Turkish-speaking environments.	25	35	20	15	10	2.6	1.2
12	I believe I can achieve my Turkish learning goals.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
13	I do not have difficulty completing Turkish assignments or projects.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
14 (R)	I worry about being misunderstood when speaking Turkish.	10	15	25	35	67	4.0	1.1
15 (R)	Criticism from instructors or peers lowers my confidence.	25	30	25	15	5	2.2	1.2
16 (R)	I avoid active participation in Turkish class.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
17	I believe I can overcome the difficulties I encounter in learning Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
18	I think that making mistakes helps me improve my Turkish.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0
19 (R)	I avoid participating actively in Turkish class.	10	15	20	30	67	4.0	1.1
20	I feel more confident in learning Turkish day by day.	5	10	20	50	67	4.2	1.0

The findings indicate that most students have moderate to high levels of self-confidence. However, the analysis of negatively coded items reveals that fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and hesitation in active class participation are significant challenges.

As seen in Figure 2, students experience difficulties in areas such as fear of making mistakes (Item 5), sensitivity to criticism (Item 15), and active participation in the classroom (Items 2, 16, 19). This highlights the importance of teaching approaches that encourage the acceptance of making mistakes as a natural part of the language learning process.

Graph 1 Distribution of Students Self-Confidence Levels

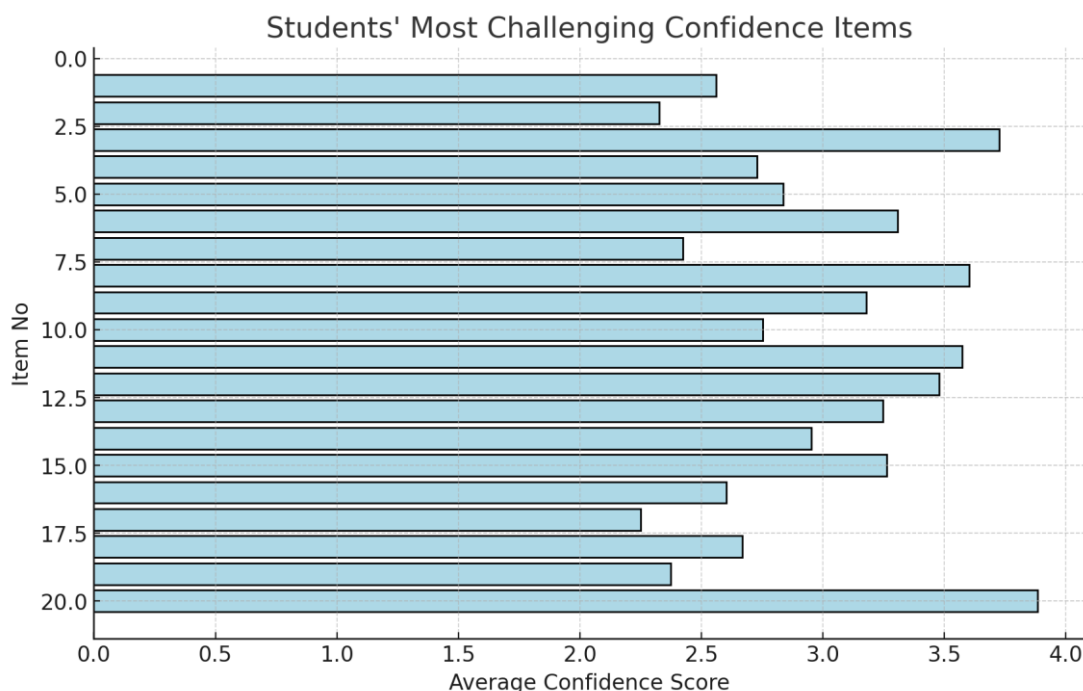
Distribution of Students' Self-Confidence Levels



The analysis results indicate that students' self-confidence levels generally range from moderate to high. However, low averages in fear of making mistakes and

active participation highlight these as significant factors negatively affecting self-confidence in the language learning process.

Graph 2 Self-Confidence Items Students Struggled with the Most



1.

General Confidence Level

The majority of students reported feeling increasingly confident in their Turkish learning process ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.0$). Additionally, they demonstrated a strong belief in their ability to achieve their Turkish learning goals ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.0$). These findings suggest that students are motivated in their language learning journey and hold a high level of confidence in their progress.

2. Confidence in Language Skills

Students exhibited a high level of confidence in developing their Turkish writing skills ($M = 4.1$, $SD = 1.0$). Similarly, a significant proportion of students expressed enjoyment in learning new Turkish vocabulary ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.0$). These results indicate a positive attitude toward writing skills and vocabulary acquisition.

However, students' confidence in the clarity of their Turkish pronunciation was lower ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.3$). Likewise, their willingness to communicate in Turkish-speaking environments was limited ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.2$). These findings suggest that students experience a lack of confidence in their speaking abilities and require more practice opportunities both inside and outside the classroom.

3. Fear of Making Mistakes and Participation

A significant portion of students reported being afraid of making mistakes while learning Turkish ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.1$). This suggests that fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest challenges in the language learning process.

Additionally, students appeared hesitant to actively participate in Turkish classes ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.1$). This finding highlights that students tend to be reserved in classroom interactions and require supportive strategies to encourage participation.

4. Teacher and Peer Influence

The majority of students stated that teacher and peer support plays a crucial role in boosting their confidence. However, a lower percentage of students believed that criticism from instructors or peers negatively impacted their confidence ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 1.2$). This finding suggests that when feedback is provided in a constructive and encouraging manner, it does not harm students' confidence but rather contributes to their development.

The analysis of negatively coded items indicates that students fear making mistakes and experience reluctance in classroom interactions. This underscores the importance of

supportive learning environments that encourage viewing mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.

Quantitative data reveal that students experience confidence deficiencies in areas such as fear of making mistakes (Item 5, $M = 3.9$) and hesitation in active classroom participation (Items 2, 16, 19, $M = 3.9-4.0$). These findings align with qualitative statements such as *"I hesitate to speak Turkish for fear of making mistakes"* (Ö1) and *"I struggle to share my ideas in group activities"* (Ö7). Notably, the low averages in negatively coded items indicate that students encounter emotional barriers during the language learning process.

5. Factors Enhancing Confidence

High motivation and belief in success (Items 12, 17, 20, $M = 4.2$), along with teacher and peer support (Item 15, negatively coded, $M = 2.2$), emerged as key elements in the quantitative data. These findings were reinforced by qualitative responses such as *"My teacher's encouragement makes me feel comfortable"* (Ö3) and *"Practicing with friends boosts my confidence"* (Ö11).

Quantitative analyses demonstrated that students' confidence levels generally ranged from moderate to high. However, qualitative interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how this confidence develops, what factors influence it, and under what circumstances it declines. The findings from these interviews are presented below.

4.2. Qualitative Findings

The analysis of qualitative data was conducted to gain a deeper understanding of students' confidence levels and their experiences in learning Turkish. The content analysis of semi-structured interviews identified five main themes:

1. Motivations for Learning Turkish
2. Perception of Self-Confidence
3. Challenges and Their Effects
4. In-Class and Out-of-Class Experiences
5. The Role of Teachers and Peers

Table 3 summarizes the findings, showing that students' motivations are shaped by individual, academic, and social factors.

Table 3 Students' Motivations for Learning Turkish

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S3	Career Goals	Advantage in Job Applications	<i>"I thought knowing Turkish would give me an advantage in job applications, so I decided to learn it."</i>
S7	Personal Development	Improving Language Skills	<i>"I started learning Turkish because learning a new language contributes to my personal development."</i>
S12	Economic Factors	Education and Learning Costs	<i>"The affordable price of Turkish courses also influenced my decision to learn the language."</i>
S5	Family Influence	Family Expectations	<i>"The requests from my family and the fact that Turkish was offered as an elective at the university influenced my decision to learn it."</i>
S10	Social Factors	Participation in Social Activities	<i>"Knowing Turkish will help me participate more comfortably in social events."</i>
S1	Academic Requirements	University Curriculum	<i>"I learned Turkish because I was required to take a Turkish language course at university."</i>
S14	Future Plans	Migration Plans	<i>"I started learning Turkish because I plan to move to Turkey in the future."</i>
S9	Social Factors	Peer Influence	<i>"The fact that my friends were also learning Turkish increased my motivation."</i>
S4	Career Goals	Desire to Work in Specific Sectors	<i>"I needed to learn Turkish because I want to work in the tourism sector."</i>
S15	Ease of Language Learning	Availability of Resources	<i>"There are many resources and courses available for learning Turkish, which made my decision easier."</i>

In conclusion, qualitative data support the quantitative findings, confirming that fear of making mistakes is one of the biggest barriers in the language learning process.

Providing constructive feedback and creating a supportive classroom environment can help overcome this issue.

Table 4 Students' Perception of Self-Confidence While Learning Turkish

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S2	Positive Confidence Growth	In-Class Interactions	"I feel more confident when questions are asked in class or during speaking activities."
S5	Positive Confidence Growth	Success Experiences	"My confidence increased when I got a good grade in my Turkish exam."
S1	Negative Confidence Perception	Fear of Making Mistakes	"I hesitate because I am afraid of making grammar mistakes, which restricts me while speaking."
S7	Negative Confidence Perception	Shyness in Group Work	"I struggle to share my ideas during group work."
S3	Supportive Factors	Teacher Support	"My teacher's constant encouragement makes me feel more comfortable speaking Turkish."
S9	Supportive Factors	Peer Support	"The support of my classmates boosts my confidence when practicing Turkish."
S4	Personal Factors	Motivation and Interest	"My interest and motivation for Turkish increase my confidence when speaking."
S6	Personal Factors	Previous Language Learning Experience	"Since I had learned English before, I feel more confident while learning Turkish."
S8	Challenges in Language Learning	Pronunciation Difficulties	"I struggle to find the correct pronunciation of Turkish words, which makes me hesitant while speaking."
S10	Challenges in Language Learning	Complexity of Grammar	"The complex grammar rules of Turkish make it difficult for me to express myself."

An analysis of students' confidence perceptions in learning Turkish reveals a strong relationship between confidence growth and fear of making mistakes. While in-class interactions and success experiences help boost confidence, elements such as fear of making mistakes and shyness during group work are the main obstacles to confidence.

This finding highlights the significance of fear of making mistakes as a major challenge in language learning. However, teacher support and encouraging classroom environments have been shown to be effective in reducing this fear.

Table 5 Challenges in Learning Turkish and Their Effects

Comment Code	Theme	Subtheme	Comment
S13	Fear of Making Mistakes	Fear of Making Mistakes While Speaking	"I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking Turkish, so I usually prefer to stay silent."
S7	Language Anxiety	General Language Anxiety	"I constantly feel anxious when learning a new language, which prevents my progress."
S4	Grammar Difficulties	Complex Grammar Rules	"The complex grammar rules of Turkish make it difficult for me to form sentences."

S3	Pronunciation Issues	Difficulty in Correct Pronunciation	"I struggle to find the correct pronunciation of Turkish words, which makes me hesitant while speaking."
S5	Limited Vocabulary	Insufficient Vocabulary Knowledge	"My vocabulary is not broad enough, so I have difficulty expressing myself."
S6	Listening Comprehension Difficulties	Understanding Fast Speech	"Turkish conversations sound too fast to me, making comprehension difficult."
S12	Reading Comprehension Difficulties	Understanding Complex Texts	"I struggle to understand some words and structures in Turkish texts that I read."
S8	Writing Skills Issues	Difficulty in Written Expression	"I find it difficult to construct correct sentence structures in Turkish, which weakens my writing skills."
S10	Challenges in Group Work	Difficulty Expressing Thoughts in a Group	"I struggle to express my ideas in Turkish during group work, so I hesitate to contribute."
S1	Lack of Learning Materials	Insufficient Resources	"I have difficulty finding sufficient and diverse materials for learning Turkish, which slows down my learning process."

Table 6 highlights the impact of students' in-class and out-of-class experiences on their self-confidence. Specifically, in-class speaking exercises, group work, and teacher feedback stand out as key factors in supporting students' confidence.

This table highlights the main challenges students face in learning Turkish. Fear of making mistakes, language anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and the complexity of grammar

rules negatively affect their confidence. Additionally, difficulties in pronunciation, listening, and writing skills make communication more challenging. Students also experience hesitation in group work and classroom interactions, while insufficient learning materials slow down the learning process. In conclusion, providing more supportive resources, teaching methods that reduce the fear of making mistakes, and opportunities for active language practice can improve students' learning experience.

Table 6 Students' Experiences in Using Turkish and Their Impact on Self-Confidence

Comment Code	Theme	Sub-Theme	Comment
S13	In-Class Experiences	Speaking Exercises	"Speaking exercises in class were relaxing for me and improved my Turkish speaking skills."
S2	In-Class Experiences	Group Work	"Group work in Turkish class helped me practice speaking and boosted my confidence."
S15	In-Class Experiences	Teacher Feedback	"When my teacher gives positive feedback, my confidence increases."
S11	Out-of-Class Experiences	Practicing with Friends	"Practicing Turkish with my friends has boosted my confidence."
S5	Out-of-Class Experiences	Daily Use Experiences	"Speaking Turkish while grocery shopping made me feel better about my skills."
S6	Out-of-Class Experiences	Social Media Usage	"Following Turkish content on social media improves my language skills and increases my confidence."
S3	In-Class Experiences	Giving Presentations	"I was very nervous at first while giving presentations in Turkish, but after a few attempts, my confidence grew."

S8	Out-of-Class Experiences	Language Exchange Programs	"Participating in a language exchange program with a Turkish speaker greatly improved my confidence."
S10	In-Class Experiences	Listening Activities	"Doing listening activities in class improved my comprehension skills and boosted my confidence."
S4	Out-of-Class Experiences	Work or Internship Experience	"Having to speak Turkish at my internship allowed me to practice and increased my confidence."

Students' in-class experiences (speaking exercises, group work, teacher feedback) and out-of-class experiences (practicing with friends, daily use, social media, internships) have been effective in increasing their confidence. Real-life practice and a supportive learning environment are key factors in strengthening confidence during the language learning process.

Table 7 highlights the role of teacher and peer support in students' confidence levels. Students expressed that receiving positive feedback from their teachers and practicing Turkish with their friends significantly contributed to their self-confidence.

Table 7 The Impact of Teachers and Peers on Students' Confidence

Comment Code	Theme	Sub-theme	Comment
S12	Teacher Support	Gentle Feedback	"My teacher's gentle feedback reduced my fear of making mistakes."
S7	Teacher Support	Encouraging Attitude	"I feel more confident when my teacher encourages me to speak Turkish."
S3	Teacher Support	Personalized Support	"When my teacher explains the topics I struggle with individually, I feel more comfortable."
S9	Peer Support	Practicing the Language	"I feel more comfortable speaking Turkish with the support of my friends."
S15	Peer Support	Assistance in Group Work	"I feel more at ease speaking when my friends help me during group activities."
S1	Teacher Support	Tolerance for Mistakes	"When my teacher says that making mistakes is normal, I feel more encouraged to speak Turkish."
S10	Peer Support	Positive Social Environment	"Having my friends support me when speaking Turkish boosts my confidence."
S6	Teacher Support	Creating a Safe Classroom Environment	"I feel more confident speaking because our teacher makes us feel that making mistakes is not a problem."
S14	Peer Support	Daily Conversations	"Having daily conversations with my friends helps me feel better about my Turkish."
S4	Teacher and Peer Influence	Overall Supportive Environment	"Both my teacher and friends encouraging me to practice Turkish increase my confidence."

When evaluating the role of teacher support and peer influence on students' confidence levels, students expressed that positive feedback from teachers and peer support significantly contributed to their confidence. However, some students perceived their teachers' criticism as a factor that negatively affected their confidence. This finding highlights the importance of teachers using an encouraging tone when providing feedback.

General Evaluation and Conclusion Guidance

The findings comprehensively reveal the factors influencing students' self-confidence. Strengthening teacher support, reducing the fear of making mistakes, and increasing opportunities for both in-class and out-of-class language practice are recommended strategies for enhancing students' confidence.

In conclusion, students' motivation, changes in confidence levels, challenges encountered, classroom and extracurricular experiences, as well as teacher and peer support, emerge as key factors in the process of learning Turkish as a foreign language.

5. Discussion

This study examined in detail the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and the impact of self-confidence on the language learning process. The findings reveal a strong relationship between self-confidence, language learning motivation, willingness to communicate, and academic achievement. Consistent with previous studies in the literature (Juliani & Dafit, 2024; Tunçel, 2015; Ghafar, 2023), our research confirms that students with high self-confidence tend to be more successful in language learning, while the fear of making mistakes negatively affects self-confidence.

5.1. The Impact of Self-Confidence on the Turkish Learning Process

The study results indicate that self-confidence is a crucial factor in students' Turkish learning processes. Although students generally have moderate to high levels of self-confidence, they express concerns related to the fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and reluctance to actively participate in class. In particular, students exhibit lower self-confidence in speaking skills ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.2$), highlighting the need to increase opportunities for speaking practice. This finding aligns with Pangestu and Martiwati's (2024) research, which emphasizes the role of self-confidence in speaking proficiency.

Students reported that their fear of making mistakes reduces their active participation in class. Studies on language anxiety by Horwitz and Young (1991) show that fear of making mistakes is one of the main factors that diminish self-confidence in the language learning process. Similarly, our study found that students hesitate due to their fear of making mistakes, which negatively affects their learning experiences. This finding is also consistent with Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. Students with low self-confidence struggle more in the language learning process, whereas those with higher self-confidence use the language more comfortably and effectively.

5.2. The Role of Teacher and Peer Support

One of the significant findings of this study is the critical role of teachers and peers in shaping students' self-confidence. Most students reported that positive feedback from their teachers and support from their peers increased their confidence. This result supports the study by Giuliani and Dafit (2024), which highlights the role of teachers in fostering self-confidence. Encouraging attitudes and

constructive feedback from teachers help reduce students' fear of making mistakes and enable them to use the language more confidently. Similarly, peer support and opportunities to practice Turkish in social settings positively influence self-confidence.

However, some students perceived teacher feedback negatively, particularly when criticism was too harsh or insufficiently constructive. According to Bandura's (2006) self-efficacy theory, individuals' beliefs about their learning abilities are directly influenced by teacher feedback. This suggests that teachers should adopt more supportive and motivational strategies in their feedback processes.

5.3. The Relationship Between Language Anxiety and Self-Confidence

The inverse relationship between self-confidence and language anxiety is clearly evident in this study's findings. Research by Ellis (1994) and Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) indicates that high levels of language anxiety lower students' self-confidence and hinder their learning processes. Our study also found that a lack of self-confidence is one of the primary contributors to language anxiety. Particularly, students' fear of making mistakes while speaking makes them hesitant to express themselves.

In this context, as emphasized by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), it is essential to consider students' emotional states and provide supportive learning environments to enhance their self-confidence. Krashen's (1982) hypothesis also suggests that students with a low affective filter learn languages more easily, whereas those with a high affective filter face greater difficulties in language learning. Therefore, teachers should implement strategies to reduce language anxiety in the classroom, which can significantly contribute to increasing students' self-confidence.

5.4. Strategies to Improve Self-Confidence for Turkish Language Learners

Based on the research findings, several strategies can be proposed to enhance the self-confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language:

1. Increase opportunities for speaking practice. To overcome self-confidence issues in speaking, classroom discussions, group activities, and role-playing exercises should be implemented.
2. Adopt teaching approaches that reduce the fear of making mistakes. Creating a classroom environment that fosters tolerance toward mistakes and emphasizes that making mistakes is a natural part of learning is essential.
3. Provide positive feedback and constructive criticism. Teachers should ensure that their

feedback encourages students rather than discouraging them. Negative feedback should be minimized to prevent damage to students' self-confidence.

4. Offer opportunities for real-life language use. Encouraging students to use Turkish in social settings, participate in language exchange programs, and engage in real-life communication scenarios will help boost their self-confidence.
5. Provide individualized support mechanisms. Since language learning is a personal process, instructional approaches should be tailored to meet the unique needs of different learners.

This study highlights the critical role of self-confidence in language learning and contributes to developing pedagogical approaches that support confidence-building among A1-level learners of Turkish as a foreign language. Future research could further investigate self-confidence across different age groups, cultural contexts, and learning environments to provide more comprehensive insights.

Additionally, although this study examined self-confidence through both quantitative and qualitative data, there is a need for long-term observational studies. Longitudinal research tracking students' self-confidence over time could yield deeper insights. Moreover, future studies could explore the impact of technology-supported teaching methods—such as digital language learning platforms and AI-based language teaching tools—on students' self-confidence development.

In conclusion, self-confidence is a key factor influencing students' success in learning Turkish. Therefore, teachers and educators must develop intentional and effective strategies to help students build their self-confidence throughout the language learning process.

V. RESULTS

This study examined the self-confidence levels of A1-level students learning Turkish as a foreign language and revealed the impact of self-confidence on the language learning process. The findings indicate that self-confidence is directly related to language learning motivation, academic achievement, and willingness to communicate. While students generally exhibited moderate to high levels of self-confidence, they also expressed concerns regarding the fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and participation in class activities.

The quantitative data from the study show that students generally have high confidence in their language skills but require more support in speaking and pronunciation. Students reported hesitancy due to the fear

of making mistakes and concerns about being misunderstood, which led them to avoid active participation. Additionally, teacher and peer support played a significant role in enhancing students' confidence.

Qualitative analyses suggest that self-confidence is influenced by various individual and environmental factors. Encouraging attitudes from teachers, constructive feedback, and supportive classroom environments are crucial in boosting students' self-confidence. Furthermore, as students find opportunities to use Turkish in social and academic settings, their confidence grows. However, sensitivity to criticism, hesitation in speaking within a group, and limited vocabulary knowledge emerge as key factors weakening students' confidence.

In conclusion, increasing self-confidence in the language learning process enables students to participate more actively in learning activities and use the language more boldly. Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the confidence of students learning Turkish as a foreign language:

Develop instructional strategies to reduce the fear of making mistakes. It should be emphasized that mistakes are a natural part of language learning, and students should be encouraged to view errors as a learning opportunity.

Create a supportive and encouraging learning environment. Constructive feedback and positive reinforcement from teachers will contribute to increasing students' confidence.

Increase opportunities for speaking practice. Group work, paired dialogues, and class discussions can help students develop confidence in using the language.

Provide opportunities for students to use Turkish outside the classroom. Social activities, language exchange programs, and real-life communication opportunities can support self-confidence development.

Adopt pedagogical approaches that reduce language anxiety and enhance motivation. Task-based and communication-oriented teaching methods that allow students to experience success should be prioritized.

This study provides valuable insights into the development of self-confidence among students learning Turkish as a foreign language and aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for teaching Turkish. Future research should examine the effects of self-confidence across different age groups and learning environments to produce broader findings. Considering the critical role of self-confidence in the language learning process, promoting student-centered and supportive teaching approaches is of great importance.

1. First Level Subtitle about the Research Question (2. Level Title)**Turkish Learning Self-Confidence Levels of A1-Level Students**

The study found that the self-confidence levels of students learning Turkish at the A1 level ranged from moderate to high. However, factors such as fear of making mistakes, sensitivity to criticism, and hesitation in classroom participation negatively influenced their confidence. The quantitative findings indicated that most students had a positive attitude toward Turkish learning, but speaking and pronunciation were the most challenging areas in terms of self-confidence. The qualitative data supported these findings, revealing that teacher and peer support played a significant role in boosting confidence.

2. Second Level Subtitle about the Research Question (3. Level Title)**Factors Affecting the Self-Confidence of Students Learning Turkish**

Several psychological, social, and pedagogical factors were identified as affecting the self-confidence of students learning Turkish. Psychological factors included fear of making mistakes and foreign language anxiety, which created hesitation in classroom participation. Social factors involved peer support, teacher encouragement, and opportunities for real-life communication. Pedagogical factors included the classroom environment, teaching methods, and feedback from instructors. The study emphasized that reducing anxiety and providing a supportive learning atmosphere significantly enhanced self-confidence.

3. Third Level Subtitle about the Research Question (4. Level Title)**The Relationship Between Self-Confidence and Turkish Language Learning Success**

Statistical analyses showed a significant positive correlation between self-confidence levels and students' success in Turkish language learning. Students with higher self-confidence demonstrated better performance in reading, writing, and listening comprehension. However, those with lower confidence levels, particularly in speaking activities, tended to avoid participation. The findings aligned with previous research suggesting that self-confidence contributes to motivation, persistence, and overall success in language acquisition.

4. Fourth Level Subtitle about the Research Question (5. Level Title)**Strategies for Enhancing Self-Confidence in Turkish Language Learning**

Based on the findings, several strategies were proposed to enhance students' self-confidence in learning Turkish:

1. Increasing Speaking Practice Opportunities – More classroom discussions, role-playing activities, and real-life speaking situations should be integrated into lessons.
2. Reducing Fear of Making Mistakes – Encouraging students to view mistakes as a natural part of learning and fostering a positive and mistake-tolerant classroom environment.
3. Providing Constructive Teacher Feedback – Instructors should offer positive reinforcement and avoid overly critical feedback that could harm students' confidence.
4. Encouraging Peer Support and Collaborative Learning – Group activities and peer interaction should be encouraged to create a comfortable and motivating learning atmosphere.
5. Expanding Learning Beyond the Classroom – Real-life exposure to Turkish through social interactions, digital platforms, and language exchange programs can significantly enhance confidence.

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The Power of Metaphors in Psychotherapy: Enhancing Therapeutic Communication, Emotional Expression, and Transformative Change

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Abstract— This paper explores the enduring role of metaphors in human language, cognition, and psychotherapy. It emphasizes how metaphors bridge intangible ideas and concrete experiences, drawing on historical, linguistic, and therapeutic contexts. By examining the history, applications, and significance of metaphors in counseling, the study highlights their potential to enhance understanding, facilitate emotional expression, and promote transformative change. Metaphors play a crucial role in building rapport, serving as diagnostic tools, and offering clients innovative approaches to reframing challenges in psychotherapy. This discussion provides a nuanced perspective on how metaphors enrich therapeutic communication and dialogue by integrating insights from both contemporary research and classical theories. The use of metaphors allows for a deeper exploration of the unconscious and fosters personal growth through symbolic meaning. The paper concludes by affirming the diversity and significance of metaphoric language in addressing complex human experiences.

Keywords— Metaphor, Psychotherapy, Therapeutic Communication, Counseling.

I. INTRODUCTION

It has long been acknowledged that experiencing emotions is significantly more immediate than verbalizing them. Although emotions are experienced immediately and tangibly, articulating these sentiments often involves non-literal language.

The replacement of one meaning with another is a concept that has persisted for millennia; for instance, we utilize the term 'Big Bang' as a metaphor for 'first-ness.' Metaphor has permeated our language throughout history, from Medieval Allegories to Shakespeare. "Metaphor in Discourse. By 'metaphor' I mean the phenomenon whereby we talk and, potentially, think about something in terms of something else" (Semino, 2008, p.1).

As Rorty (1989) and Searle (1979) cited in Fetterman et al, (2016) metaphors are frequently, in a strict sense, illogical. A colorful personality is not feasible, as personalities lack surfaces that can reflect light. In other instances, analogies appear to generate ambiguity. Does a strong individual possess physical strength to lift huge

weights or the resilience to persevere in the face of adversity? Consider the sentence "things are looking up." What elements are present in this scenario, and what is the reason for their upward gaze? Such issues and uncertainties have prompted certain scholars to assert that metaphors at best distract and at worst obscure.

Individuals acquainted with metaphor theory and research are aware that its boundaries were significantly expanded some decades ago by the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor (CMT) (Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999). Although it is evident that metaphor, conventionally defined as a comparison between two disparate entities, necessitates some degree of cognitive processing, the most significant assertion from CMT theorists is that metaphors are fundamentally cognitive and only secondarily linguistic. Ritchie (2006) claims that not only do metaphors always occur in the context of the words that surround them, but they also appear in the context of a certain communicative exchange, social circumstance, and cultural setting. On the other hand, there are not many theories that have sufficiently accounted for the role that the

social and conversational environment plays in the process of recognizing, employing, and comprehending metaphors. In addition, as Cameron (1999) asserts that “What I’m arguing for... is the centrality of the contextual nature of language in use; the human and discourse context of language use is inherent in the joint construction of discourse goals and in the use of metaphor to achieve these goals. Processing metaphorical language takes place in context and draws on the discourse expectations of participants” (p. 25).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

What are metaphors?

The significance of metaphor has a longstanding history in our civilization, originating with Aristotle, who characterized metaphor as “the power of the mind over the possibility of things.” It is, undoubtedly, one of the fundamental instruments of artistic and literary contemplation. Recently, the presence and significance of metaphor in health sciences discourse have garnered persistent attention. Collins Dictionary of the English Language (Hanks, 1979) defines a metaphor as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance.” The term metaphor originates from the Greek words *meta*, meaning over, and *pherein*, meaning to carry; so, it signifies to carry over or to bridge. Turbayne (1970), in his book *The Myth of Metaphor*, prefers Aristotle's broader definition that metaphor involves assigning a name from one entity to another, with the transfer occurring either from genus to species, from species to species, or based on analogy.

Wagener (2017) claims that metaphors are not merely linguistic or literary tools; they significantly contribute to learning and the cognitive structuring of our view of the world (Aragno, 2009; Evans, 2010; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The significance of metaphors in learning and comprehension is a primary rationale for counselors to be proficient in metaphors and their applications in counseling. Counseling is assisting clients in acquiring knowledge and comprehension to facilitate adjustments that allow them to achieve their objectives. Understanding and utilizing client metaphors can be advantageous for professional counselors, as research indicates that the frequency and types of metaphors correlate with emotional shifts (Gelo & Mergenthaler, 2012; Tay, 2012; Wickman, Daniels, White, & Fesmire, 1999). Metaphorical language occurs commonly in communication, with a study by Steen, Dorst, Herrmann, Kaal, and Krennmayr (2010) finding that metaphoric language is used 18.6% of the time in academic writing, 11.8% in fiction and 7.7% in conversation.

Metaphors in psychotherapy

McNeilly (2000) argued that, for over two thousand years we viewed language as merely descriptive, but language is much more than that. Language is a powerful tool of which metaphorical language is one compelling feature that the therapist has at his or her disposal. Counselors work mainly in the realm of language and symbols (Berger, 1989). Metaphor can be an effective means to help clients transfer information from one domain to another (Lyddon, Clay, & Sparks, 2001). Carlsen (1996) stated that “metaphors are not only innovative, imaginative forms of comparison and contrast, they are also conceptual windows into evolution and change” (p. 338). Metaphor provides insight beyond the superficial into a more profound and meaningful realm. Metaphor can serve as a basis for diagnosis and treatment, as well as a pathway to a nuanced comprehension of personal experiences (Fox, 1989). Metaphor enhances therapeutic communication, rendering abstract concepts more tangible (Paulson, 1996) as cited in Kemp (2002).

Needham-Didsbury (2014) in his book *metaphor in psychotherapy* states in recent years, there has been a growing focus on the application of metaphors in counseling, particularly concerning specific topics such as self-esteem and career management (Amundson, 2010 and Inkson, 2006). Psychotherapy serves as an ideal situation in which both discursive and cognitive approaches to metaphor are highly pertinent. This source of spontaneous discourse, occurring under particular therapeutic conditions, yields precise data that underscores “the centrality of the contextual nature of language in use” (Cameron, 1999, p. 25). Simultaneously, the therapeutic significance of metaphor has been heightened by the cognitivist assertion that metaphoric expressions embody metaphoric cognitive frameworks for understanding various abstract notions within our physical, emotional, and social realms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Metaphors can provide a broader perspective on experiences by offering a context or framework to help clients reframe past events (Efran & Clarfield, 1993). For example, linking a childhood memory of being trapped in a closet to feelings of claustrophobia in a relationship can help a client recognize that, just as they could open the door to escape the closet, they also have the power to find freedom in their current situation. Metaphors act as a bridge between internal and external experiences, delivering powerful emotional messages (Lankton & Lankton, 1983). They evoke emotions, allow the expression of abstract or non-literal experiences, expand perception and cognition, and stimulate memory recall (Billow, 1977). These processes are fundamental to psychotherapy, making

metaphors a valuable therapeutic tool. Additionally, metaphors are connotative rather than direct, enabling clients to symbolically express deeply hidden emotions, memories, or conflicts.

Clients may sometimes struggle to express their feelings accurately, creating a gap between what they can articulate and what they are truly experiencing. Fine, Pollio, and Simpkinson (1973) noted that clients may lack the vocabulary to fully convey their emotions, or they might not be consciously aware enough of their experiences to find appropriate words. To bridge this gap, clients often use words metaphorically to express their emotions. If therapists fail to recognize and interpret these metaphors, they risk missing key aspects of the client's communication, thereby hindering the resolution of this disconnect. Awareness of the pervasive role of metaphor can help therapists attune to the metaphors shaping a client's experiences and provide deeper insight (Smith, 1992).

Why Metaphor is Useful

Many people seek counseling because they feel "stuck" and want to make a change. As Berger (1989) noted, facing dilemmas is an inherent part of being human. Often, individuals find themselves repeating the same behaviors and need to discover a way to resolve their challenges. The therapist's role is to create an environment that fosters the possibility of change, while the responsibility for making that change lies solely with the client. Metaphors, or various forms of them, can be instrumental in establishing a context for change by encouraging clients to view their situations from new perspectives (O'Hanlon, 1987). Metaphors serve as a means to teach, enlighten, and facilitate therapeutic progress. They help convey abstract concepts and ideas in a way that is easier to understand (Cade & O'Hanlon, 1993). Since people have diverse learning styles, metaphors can be an effective tool for communicating and connecting with clients.

Goals of Utilising Metaphor

Understanding the therapist's own metaphoric repertoire is crucial, as is knowing the appropriate timing for employing metaphor in therapy. Metaphors can help achieve various therapeutic goals. Below are examples of these goals and how they have been effectively accomplished (Lankton & Lankton, 1983). The therapeutic process starts with the client trying to articulate their reasons for seeking help (Paulson, 1996). Metaphoric stories, enriched with various images, allow therapists to empathize deeply with clients. Lankton and Lankton (1983) proposed the concept of the "matching metaphor," a metaphor strategically aligned with the client's main issue, presenting a parallel and dramatic theme to address their concerns effectively.

Engaging the client's perception processes and grabbing their attention are the objectives of a matching metaphor. One of the therapist's first responsibilities at the beginning of therapy is to establish rapport with the client by proving that they understand their issue. For instance, when a client described herself as being on an island, the therapist offered to build a bridge, establishing a metaphorical connection that promoted understanding and support, according to Caruth and Ekstein (in Atwood & Levine, 1990).

In clinical situations where direct communication may not be effective, metaphors are especially helpful. Metaphors, for instance, might provide a less combative means of promoting communication when a client is feeling demoralized by the therapeutic process or needs encouragement to participate more actively. Metaphors' indirectness can be used to communicate significant ideas without offending or offending people (Barker, 1985). Furthermore, since clients frequently don't anticipate stories to be a part of therapy, metaphors can help re-engage clients who have become stagnant or disengaged.

III. METHODOLOGY

Using a qualitative methodology, the study investigates the use of metaphors in psychotherapy by reviewing previous research, theoretical frameworks, and practical applications. In order to investigate the cognitive, affective, and communicative roles of metaphors, it incorporates knowledge from traditional theories—such as the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor (CMT)—as well as actual counseling situations. The use of metaphors in therapeutic contexts is demonstrated via case examples from addiction and grief counseling, and academic references bolster its importance in promoting emotional expression, comprehension, and transformation. This approach places a strong emphasis on contextual analysis, highlighting the transformational potential of metaphoric language by fusing discourse theory with therapeutic practice.

How Metaphor Are Used in Counseling

The purpose of using metaphors in counseling is to build a connection with clients, understand their emotional state, propose ideas and solutions, and subtly introduce suggestions for their future growth (Pearce, 1996). These guidelines apply whether you are helping someone overcome an addiction or someone who is dealing with a major loss or trauma. Metaphors can be an effective tool in a variety of therapy scenarios when used properly.

rief Counseling

Death is not the only cause of grief and loss; other life experiences including losing one's job, developing a chronic illness, getting divorced, or going through a traumatic incident can also cause these emotions (Close, 1998). In addition to the acute loss, people frequently have other unsolved problems that need to be addressed. People dealing with loss and grief may find it difficult to actively process therapy advice, according to Salke (1997). Counselors can use the unconscious mind as a source of wisdom, information, and useful insight by using metaphors to interact with clients on a deeper, unconscious level (Pearce, 1996). This method assists individuals in finding their own answers and gaining access to their own abilities.

Addictions Counseling

According to research by Battino and South (1999) many addicts first sought counseling for reasons unrelated to stopping drugs or alcohol. These people frequently denied having a problem, lacked motivation, and refused treatment. But as time went on, the emphasis of their treatment changed to dealing with their addiction. Metaphors were shown to be less daunting than other approaches in addiction counseling by Barker (1985), Battino and South (1999), and Kopp and Craw (1998). The counselor's comprehension of addiction dynamics, their evaluation of the client or family, and their outlook on change all influence how effective metaphor is (Barker, 1985).

Addicts frequently exhibit low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy, and strong emotions like anger and rage, all of which are important catalysts for transformation. Three important topics for counselors to focus on were recognized by Barker (1985). First, rather than being discounted, the sensation of being "high" should be accepted. Clients must understand that although getting high is enjoyable, there are better ways to experience the same emotions. Counselors can assist clients in finding activities that serve as a metaphorical substitute for the "high."

Second, substance use has a big social component. The need to fit in is a common motivator for addicts. Without resorting to outright conflict, metaphors can assist clients in exploring and creating more positive social relationships.

Finally, it's critical to reframe drug usage and provide alternatives. Stories are a useful tool for counselors to reframe behavior and promote constructive change. Stories can be useful parts of a long-term treatment plan, even though they might not be enough to treat addiction on their own. Addicts are more susceptible to mythical narratives than to direct conversations about their troubles, especially in the early stages of recovery, as demonstrated

by Barker's (1985) use of these myths to depict the collapse of people overpowered by their excesses.

In contrast, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings share real-life stories, allowing participants to relate to others' experiences and find strength through this connection (Close, 1998).

Finding and results

The study emphasizes the significant role metaphors play in psychotherapy and promotes emotional expression, cognitive restructuring, and transformative change by demonstrating their capacity to connect abstract and real ideas. By helping clients express suppressed feelings, reframe difficulties, and get fresh insights into their circumstances, metaphors improve therapeutic communication. Bypassing conscious opposition, grief counselors use the unconscious to find inner strengths. Metaphors are used in addiction treatment to gently reframe harmful behaviors and provide non-confrontational avenues for transformation. Metaphors are essential for dealing with complex human experiences because they enable clients by promoting emotional awareness, developing rapport, and enhancing the therapeutic process.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study shows how powerful metaphors are in psychotherapy and how adaptable they are as tools for cognitive restructuring and communication. By connecting abstract or emotionally charged situations to concrete, relevant ideas, metaphors help people understand them more deeply. This process helps clients express suppressed feelings and improves therapeutic connection. The study demonstrates how metaphors can help reveal unconscious feelings, reframe personal struggles, and inspire change through practical applications in addiction and grief counseling. Metaphors, for example, give customers a fresh perspective on their "stuck" circumstances, which promotes empowerment and understanding.

Furthermore, the analysis emphasizes how metaphors bridge the gap between internal experiences and external expression by appealing to customers' emotions and cognitive processes. Metaphors in bereavement counseling assist individuals access their inner powers by avoiding conscious resistance. They are used in addiction treatment to gently reframe harmful behaviors and provide non-confrontational alternatives for transformation. The results confirm metaphors' essential role in promoting psychological change and highlight how their comprehension and application enhance therapeutic practice by addressing the complex aspects of human experiences.

V. CONCLUSION

As cognitive and communication tools, metaphors have demonstrated their value in promoting comprehension and promoting emotional and psychological development. They are essential in therapeutic settings because of their special capacity to connect the concrete and abstract worlds. Metaphors facilitate understanding and transformation by empowering clients to express suppressed feelings and reinterpret their struggles. This essay has demonstrated how metaphors, despite their literary origins, have significant applications in psychotherapy, enabling patients to deal with difficult feelings and situations. Therapists who want to promote deeper connections and genuine growth must be able to recognize and use metaphoric language. Metaphors' capacity to change lives is unbounded, even as research about them develops.

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Construction and Standardization of Psychology Aptitude Test for Incoming College Psychology Students

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Abstract— Psychology programs in higher education institutions rely on accurate assessment tools to gauge the aptitude of incoming students effectively. However, existing standardized tests often fail to address the unique skill sets and knowledge domains specific to psychology, emphasizing the necessity for a tailored Psychology Aptitude Test. This study aims to bridge this gap by developing and standardizing a Psychology Aptitude Test tailored for incoming college psychology students. Anchored on Item Response Theory (IRT), the study endeavors to create a test that comprehensively evaluates students' preparedness for the BS Psychology program. Objectives include assessing the Psychology Aptitude Test's validity, item difficulty and discrimination indices, and reliability. Findings reveal a sound measurement with strong content validity, balanced difficulty levels, and internal consistency. Recommendations for ongoing item review, expanded validation studies, and predictive validity assessment are provided to optimize the test's effectiveness in evaluating psychological aptitude within college environments.

Keywords — Psychology Aptitude Test, Item Response Theory, psychometrics, validity and reliability, college readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

Psychology, as an academic discipline and profession, plays an important role in understanding human behavior, cognition, and emotions. With the increasing popularity of psychology programs in colleges and universities, a compelling need arises to ensure the effectiveness of assessment tools for incoming students. While standardized tests exist for various academic fields, constructing an aptitude test specifically tailored for psychology students remains an unmet challenge (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2018). Existing standardized tests often lack specificity to the unique skill sets and knowledge domains required in psychology, potentially leading to inaccurate assessments of students' aptitude and preparedness (Bridgeman & Wendler, 2016). This gap highlights the necessity for a Psychology Aptitude Test to comprehensively evaluate incoming college psychology students' readiness and suitability for the demands of their chosen field.

Research in the field of psychological assessment has primarily focused on the development and validation of tests for specific constructs such as intelligence, personality, and clinical disorders (Graham, 2016). While these assessments provide valuable insights into individual differences, they do not fully capture the breadth of skills and competencies relevant to success in psychology education and practice. Furthermore, the existing literature on aptitude testing in psychology predominantly revolves around postgraduate or professional levels, overlooking the critical transition phase of incoming college students (Kuncel et al., 2013). Consequently, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding the construction and standardization of a Psychology Aptitude Test explicitly tailored for incoming college psychology students. Addressing this gap is essential for enhancing the accuracy and validity of student assessments and ultimately promoting the quality of psychology education.

Developing and implementing a Psychology Aptitude Test holds significant benefits for multiple stakeholders within

the academic and professional domains. The test results may be utilized to make informed decisions regarding the selection of incoming psychology students, ensuring that admitted individuals possess the necessary foundational knowledge and skills for success in their academic endeavors. Additionally, students themselves may benefit from a more accurate assessment of their aptitude, guiding their academic and career aspirations and facilitating their personal and professional development in the field of psychology. Overall, the construction and standardization of a Psychology Aptitude Test has the potential to enhance the quality and rigor of psychology education, benefiting students, educators, and the broader psychological community alike.

Objectives of the Study

1. What is the validity of the Psychology Aptitude Test?
2. What is the difficulty index of each item of the Psychology Aptitude Test?
3. What is the discrimination index of each item of the Psychology Aptitude Test?
4. What is the reliability of the Psychology Aptitude Test?
5. What is the test norm of the Psychology Aptitude Test?

Framework

This study is anchored on the Item Response Theory (IRT) proposed by Lord and Novick (1968). This provides a strong framework for constructing and standardizing the Psychology Aptitude Test for incoming college psychology students. IRT models the relationship between an individual's abilities and how they respond to test items, yielding an advanced approach for creating test items. By utilizing IRT principles, the researchers can ensure that the items included in the Psychology Aptitude Test accurately measure students' psychology-related abilities across various difficulty levels. This ensures that the test provides reliable and valid assessments, crucial for evaluating students' aptitude and readiness for psychology education at the college level.

In the context of this study, IRT guides the item development process, allowing for the creation of test items that effectively discriminate between students with different levels of aptitude in psychology. Furthermore, IRT provides guidance for the calibration of test items, ensuring that they accurately measure students' abilities while maintaining consistency and reliability across different test administrations. By anchoring the study on IRT, the researchers aim to develop a Psychology Aptitude Test that provides precise and informative measurements of incoming college psychology students' aptitude for the field.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study encompassed the construction and standardization of a Psychology Aptitude Test for incoming college psychology students, including item development, validation procedures, pilot testing, and psychometric analysis. This aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment tool that accurately measures students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in Psychology.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Instrumentation design, particularly in the context of developing an aptitude test, involves creating a set of questions and tasks that accurately assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities of individuals in a specific field. This process includes designing questions that cover a wide range of topics within the subject area, varying in difficulty to effectively evaluate the candidates' proficiency. The design of an aptitude test for instrumentation engineers aims to test their understanding of concepts related to instrumentation, transducers, control systems, and other relevant areas (libguides.mit.edu, n.d.).

Furthermore, the design of an aptitude test for instrumentation engineers should ensure that the test is valid, reliable, and free of bias. Validity ensures that the test measures what it intends to measure, while reliability ensures consistent results when administered multiple times. Additionally, the design of an aptitude test should be based on a conceptual framework that aligns with the learning objectives and outcomes of the test.

Research Procedure

This research was advanced to develop an aptitude test that aims to serve as a reliable instrument systematically designed to assess various facets of students' cognitive abilities, analytical reasoning, and psychological knowledge. In doing so, the researchers followed this procedure:

Firstly, the researchers initiated the study by conducting a comprehensive review of relevant literature. Secondly, they developed test items based on the specifications outlined in the Introduction to Psychology course, a fundamental component of the BS Psychology program. Thirdly, the validation of these items was undertaken by five subject matter experts. Following the validation process, a request to carry out the study was submitted to the office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. Upon approval, the researchers administered the instrument to three-hundred sixty-eight applicants for the

BS Psychology program at Carlos Hilado Memorial State University. Subsequently, the data collected from the pilot test was compiled and analyzed utilizing appropriate statistical methods.

Statistical Analysis

For problem number one, which aims to determine the validity of the Psychology Aptitude Test, the Content Validity Ratio developed by Lawshe was used.

For problem number two, which aims to determine the difficulty index of each item of the Psychology Aptitude Test, Crocker's (1986) method was followed

For problem number three, which aims to determine the discrimination index of each item of the Psychology Aptitude Test, Ebel's (1979) method was followed.

For problem number four, which aims to determine the reliability of the Psychology Aptitude Test, KR20 was used.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Statement of the Problem No. 1

In the first phase, the researchers developed a 70-item test and were subjected to content validation. Five subject matter experts who are psychology teachers validated the test by following Lawshe's method (1975). After the validation process, only sixty (60) items yield at least a .99 content validity ratio (required CVR to be retained using five validators).

Statement of the Problem No. 2 and 3

Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of how individual items performed in the psychology aptitude test, specifically looking at their difficulty and ability to differentiate between high- and low-scoring students. The distribution of difficulty levels was well-balanced, with most items categorized as moderately difficult, aligning with previous studies (Candiasa et al., 2018; Raza et al., 2022; Gupta, 2010; Propp, 2005; Lloyd, 1991). However, similar research shows that some items required revision due to moderate difficulty but weak discrimination. In contrast, others were removed entirely because they failed to effectively distinguish between students, particularly those with negative discrimination indices. This pattern suggests that the test was designed to cover a range of difficulty levels, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation of students' aptitude.

Looking at the discrimination index, the results varied. Certain items demonstrated strong discrimination, echoing findings from Lim et al. (2015). For instance, while categorized as very difficult, items like 32, 36, and 55 were still able to differentiate between students with higher

and lower aptitudes effectively. This suggests that even the most challenging items in the test play an important role in identifying differences in ability. However, items flagged for revision or removal indicate areas where the test could be improved to maintain its accuracy and effectiveness in assessing student aptitude.

To enhance the overall reliability and precision of the test, only the items with the highest discrimination indices—those classified as "Very Good"—were retained. These high-performing items were particularly effective at distinguishing between students with different levels of aptitude and thus contributed significantly to the test's accuracy. As a result, the original 60-item test was reduced to 30 carefully selected items.

The discrimination index was calculated by comparing how often students in the top 27% (higher scorers) and bottom 27% (lower scorers) answered each item correctly. This method helps ensure that the test accurately identifies variations in students' abilities, making it a reliable tool for assessing psychological aptitude.

Table 1. Difficulty and Discrimination Indices

Item No.	Difficulty Index		Discrimination Index	
1	0.49	Moderate	0.26	To be revised
2	0.75	Easy	-0.08	To be discarded
3	0.26	Difficult	0.38	Very Good Item
4	0.43	Moderate	0.29	To be revised
5	0.15	Difficult	0.51	Very Good Item
6	0.68	Moderate	0.08	To be discarded
7	0.63	Moderate	0.14	To be discarded
8	0.80	Easy	-0.03	To be discarded
9	0.38	Moderate	0.40	Very Good Item
10	0.82	Easy	-0.09	To be discarded
11	0.75	Easy	-0.03	To be discarded
12	0.43	Moderate	0.29	To be revised
13	0.86	Very Easy	-0.18	To be discarded

14	0.30	Moderate	0.41	Very Good Item	39	0.40	Moderate	0.32	Very Good Item
15	0.15	Difficult	0.55	Very Good Item	40	0.64	Moderate	0.18	To be revised
16	0.69	Moderate	0.04	To be discarded	41	0.27	Difficult	0.44	Very Good Item
17	0.58	Moderate	0.19	To be revised	42	0.21	Difficult	0.49	Very Good Item
18	0.76	Easy	0.03	To be discarded	43	0.49	Moderate	0.23	To be revised
19	0.48	Moderate	0.19	To be revised	44	0.61	Moderate	0.14	To be discarded
20	0.32	Moderate	0.41	Very Good Item	45	0.34	Moderate	0.35	Very Good Item
21	0.16	Difficult	0.49	Very Good Item	46	0.43	Moderate	0.20	To be revised
22	0.86	Very Easy	-0.14	To be discarded	47	0.31	Moderate	0.45	Very Good Item
23	0.19	Difficult	0.48	Very Good Item	48	0.44	Moderate	0.28	To be revised
24	0.90	Very Easy	-0.23	To be revised	49	0.32	Moderate	0.40	Very Good Item
25	0.80	Easy	-0.08	To be discarded	50	0.40	Moderate	0.39	Very Good Item
26	0.21	Difficult	0.50	Very Good Item	51	0.54	Moderate	0.19	To be revised
27	0.17	Difficult	0.49	Very Good Item	52	0.30	Moderate	0.41	Very Good Item
28	0.65	Moderate	0.12	To be discarded	53	0.29	Difficult	0.30	Very Good Item
29	0.77	Easy	-0.07	To be discarded	54	0.24	Difficult	0.44	Very Good Item
30	0.47	Moderate	0.24	To be revised	55	0.12	Very Difficult	0.47	Very Good Item
31	0.85	Easy	-0.15	To be discarded	56	0.33	Moderate	0.32	Very Good Item
32	0.07	Very Difficult	0.57	Very Good Item	57	0.32	Moderate	0.36	Very Good Item
33	0.64	Moderate	0.13	To be discarded	58	0.32	Moderate	0.43	Very Good Item
34	0.32	Moderate	0.38	Very Good Item	59	0.24	Difficult	0.47	Very Good Item
35	0.60	Moderate	0.22	To be revised	60	0.23	Difficult	0.45	Very Good Item
36	0.11	Very Difficult	0.59	Very Good Item	Statement of the Problem No. 4 Table 2 provides key metrics for the Psychology Aptitude Test for incoming psychology students, showing that the test is both reliable and well-structured. With 363 students completing the test and a full 100% response rate, the data				
37	0.16	Difficult	0.54	Very Good Item					
38	0.71	Easy	-0.02	To be discarded					

is complete and representative of the group. One of the test's strongest indicators is its internal consistency, reflected in a high Cronbach's Alpha (KR-20) score of 0.892. Since a reliability score above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), this result suggests that the test consistently measures what it is designed to assess. A strong internal consistency like this ensures that students' scores are not random but instead reflect their actual aptitude for psychology (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997).

The test consists of 30 carefully selected items, allowing for a thorough evaluation of students' psychological aptitude while avoiding unnecessary redundancy. Research on test development emphasizes that balancing the number of items and their quality leads to more accurate assessments and prevents test fatigue (Thorndike & Thorndike-Christ, 2010).

Table 2. Reliability of Psychology Aptitude Test

Scale		n	%	Cronbach's Alpha (KR20)	N of Items
Psychology Aptitude Test	Cases Valid	363	100	.892	30
	Excluded	0	.0		
	Total	363	100		

Statement of the Problem No. 5

The Psychology Aptitude Test for incoming first-year college students was developed after refining the test through a careful selection process. Initially, it contained 60 items, but after analyzing how well each question measured what it was supposed to—by looking at difficulty levels, discrimination power, and overall reliability—the test was reduced to 30 stronger items. This refined version was then given to a new group of 387 students to establish a standard way of interpreting scores. The results were organized using the Stanine scale, a standard system in education that divides test scores into nine levels, making it easier to compare individual results to the larger group.

The stanine system classifies students into three categories: above average, average, and below average. As indicated in Table 3, those who scored 19 and above were placed in the above-average range, meaning they likely have strong psychological aptitude and critical thinking skills that could help them excel in psychology-related subjects. Most students, who scored between 13 and 18, fell within the average range, indicating they have the foundational skills necessary for success but may perform at varying levels. Meanwhile, students who scored 12 and below were categorized as below average, suggesting they may need extra support in psychology-related coursework.

Establishing a test norm like this is important because it provides a straightforward way to interpret results based on a larger sample rather than looking at scores in isolation. Psychologists and education experts like Anastasi and Urbina (1997) have emphasized how

norming makes test scores more meaningful by showing how an individual's performance compares to others. The stanine system, which is commonly used in standardized assessments, helps simplify score interpretation while maintaining accuracy (Thorndike & Thorndike-Christ, 2010). Since the test was reduced to 30 items through detailed analysis, only the most reliable and relevant questions were kept. This process follows established research on test development, highlighting how refining questions improves accuracy (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Research also supports the idea that stanine scores can help predict academic performance, making them helpful in identifying students who might struggle or excel (De Ayala, 2009).

Table 3. Psychology Aptitude Test Norm for Incoming College Students

Raw Score	Stanine	Interpretation
23 and above	9	Above Average
21-22	8	Above Average
19-20	7	Above Average
17-18	6	Average
15-16	5	Average
13-14	4	Average
11-12	3	Below Average
9-10	2	Below Average
8 and below	1	Below Average

n=387

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the development and validation process of the Psychology Aptitude Test has yielded positive outcomes, indicating its potential as a valuable tool for evaluating psychological aptitude in incoming college students. By meticulously validating content and selecting items, the test now consists of 30 items with strong content validity, ensuring they accurately measure the intended constructs. Analysis of item performance revealed a balanced range of difficulty levels, and careful prioritization of items with notable discrimination indices emphasizes the test's accuracy in distinguishing between individuals with varying levels of aptitude. Moreover, the high Cronbach's Alpha coefficient affirms the test's internal consistency, reinforcing its reliability in consistently assessing psychological constructs. In the subsequent timeframe, continuous evaluation, diverse validation studies, and refined discrimination analysis will enhance the test's efficacy and suitability for assessing psychological aptitude in college settings.

Recommendations

Following a comprehensive analysis of the development and validation of the Psychology Aptitude Test, practical recommendations are presented here to enhance its effectiveness in evaluating psychological aptitude among incoming college students. Based on the study's findings, these recommendations aimed to strengthen the test's utility and relevance in the college setting.

Continuous Item Review and Revision. Regularly review and update test items to ensure relevance and effectiveness in assessing psychological aptitude.

Expanded Validation Studies. Conduct additional studies with diverse samples to confirm the test's effectiveness across different populations and contexts.

Predictive Validity Assessment. Conduct a predictive validity assessment to examine the extent to which scores on the Psychology Aptitude Test predict future academic success and retention in the BS Psychology program.

Longitudinal Studies. Undertake studies tracking students' academic and career outcomes over time to assess the test's predictive validity.

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Appendix

Sample Test Items

This section presents selected test items from the Psychology Aptitude Test for Incoming College Psychology Students. These items assess fundamental psychological concepts and critical thinking skills relevant to incoming psychology students.

Item 9

Your friend has a hard time understanding classical conditioning. As a psychology student, how can you explain this concept to your friend?

- a. Whenever you bring a baseball bat home, you take your child to the park to play. As a result, every time your youngster sees you bring home a baseball bat, he becomes delighted because he associates your baseball bat with a trip to the park
- b. Your parents gave you a reward every time you get a high score in an exam
- c. Every time you clean your room, your mother rewards you with 1000 pesos
- d. All of the above

Item 42

Which kind of concept do psychometricians employ when determining the status of the criterion in relation to a test's accuracy?

- a. Predictive Validity
- b. Content Validity
- c. Concurrent Validity
- d. Construct Validity

Item 60

What is the probability of rolling two dice and getting a sum of 7?

- a. $\frac{1}{6}$
- b. $\frac{1}{12}$
- c. $\frac{1}{36}$
- d. $\frac{6}{36}$

The Power of Think Tanks: Shaping U.S. Economic and Foreign Policy: Personal opinion, review and thoughts

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Abstract— *In the era of excessive information, while some may argue that America's economy and public policy are primarily shaped by media or corporate interests, think tanks stand out as penetrating and forming forces. Although their name may sound foreign, these research institutes are the main drum intelligentsia, giving the government and private businesses insight, analysis, and suggestions that influence policies and decisions. Moreover, from social issues to economic policy and welfare strategies, in the above order, the work of think tanks is not simply academic, it is pragmatic. In this review, the anatomy of think tanks including their missions, methods, and myriads of webs of influence and power will be explained in this research.*

Keywords— *Think Tanks, Public Policy, American Society, International Monetary System*

An Overview of Think Tanks: Their Definition and Functions

As mentioned, Think Tanks play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of American public policy and the economy; therefore, it is necessary to reflect on American policy and economy in the context of publicly available information. In this regard, the first thing that needs to be considered is what Think Tanks really are. "Think-Tank" refers to a research organization or institution that analyzes various tasks and creates ideas and strategies around them, including economic policies or social justice. These entities can be non-profit organizations, academic institutions, or even government-affiliated groups, and experts from various disciplinary backgrounds are often invited to engage in research and policy analysis by these entities.¹

The intention of a Think Tank is primarily to impact the public discourse and decisions that are made by carrying out research and advocacy activities on a particular issue. They address multifaceted problems by analyzing the

policies that are made not only with respect to the people but also with regard to the general system and society. By conducting thorough research, think tanks aim to address urgent matters through the effective application of primary data and information.

The impact and intermediation of think tanks in America are pronounced as they connect academic research with practical public policymaking. They frequently interact with legislators, government representatives, and civic heads, extending their assistance and analyses in order to enable legislation. Think tanks promote informed discourse and provide reasoned suggestions; and in the process, goes beyond shaping policies that govern the social and economic order or highly contributing to the functioning of a democracy, by ensuring that multifarious interests are taken in the construction of public policy².

A Brief History of Think Tanks in America

In terms of their political and economic functions, Think Tanks have integrated into United States society, while their roots stem from the early 20th century. As a response

¹ Dehnavi, E. A., & Fiedler, R. (2024a). Adventures of Two Captains' Trilogy and U.S Exceptionalism in their Foreign Policy: Manifestation of Think Tanks in a literary work. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 9(3), 277–281.
<https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.93.35>

² Dehnavi, E. A., Niafar, M. M., & Ahmadzade, K. (2024). An Overview Regarding the U.S Domestic Economic Strategies: Role of Think Tanks. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 82–92. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.12>

to organized interdisciplinary collaboration, especially during the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II, the term ‘think tank’ was coined to describe these institutions that sought to assist national issues by providing analyses and solutions.

According to many scholars, the Brookings Institution is the first modern think tank in the United States. It was established in 1916 and was primarily focused on economics and government, which served as the model for the multitude of Brookings-style think tanks that took root during the post-war period. These additional institutions, such as Rand Corporation in 1948 which concentrated on defense and foreign policy as well as the Heritage Foundation which became prominent in 1973 for its conservative policy analysis, cut across various disciplines.

In addition, throughout the late 20th century, there became a relative equilibrium between the policy and governing structures which enabled the growth of public butter production. The appearance of radical partisanship on both the left and right was evident within these types of American Center for Progress or Cato Institute. This facilitated think tanks to influence political debates, serving as a framework of primary ideas that would come to be embraced by congressional representatives and state leaders later on³.

In the 21st century, think tanks have kept pace with advances in technology and media. Furthermore, their use of digital platforms enables them to share research, interact, and influence discussions on policy matters with greater ease. These institutions are also more easily accessible because of the rise of data-based analysis and social media, which have increased their reach.

As we deal with the nuances of contemporary governance and economic policies, it is crucial to appreciate the evolution of think tanks in America. These institutions stand at the interface of social and scientific knowledge, and as such, in the social and economic democracy, their existence is reflective of political history and at the same time makes history⁴.

Think Tanks and Their Impact on Economic Policy in the USA

³ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). The Trump Doctrine: Redefining U.S. Foreign Policy through Immigration, Security, and Diplomacy. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 26–28. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.5>

⁴ Dehnavi, E. A., & Daheshiar, H. (2020). Changes and indicators of Trump's new immigration policy plan. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump's_new_immigration_policy_plan

In the United States, think tanks have a critical responsibility in solving the multifaceted problems facing the country's economy.⁵ They comprise a blend of scholars, researchers, and policymakers who make vast contributions to the analysis and synthesis of economic data towards solving pertinent public issues.⁶ America's policy and debate centers employ a wide range of leaders and social thinkers knowledgeable on numerous subjects to provide comments and information that are useful for decision-making⁷.

Their influence stems from their capacity to simplistically translate complex economic theories into tangible recommendations for policymakers.⁸ With well-documented policy briefs, research reports, and white papers, think tanks provide legislators the means to deal with challenging economic issues such as taxation, trade, labor markets, social welfare, and many others.⁹ Their work not only identifies challenges but also offers practical solutions that can bring about sustainable development across various sectors (i.e., foreign policy and relations of the U.S. with other nations such as Iran).¹⁰

In addition to the above, think tanks often act within the market for policy ideas as facilitators among different audiences such as economists, business executives, and government officials. These forums provide a platform for collaboration and consensus-building, enabling innovative thinking to expand. It is through engaging with an array of voices that think tanks ensure that economic policies are crafted from evidence, and reflect the needs of the society¹¹.

On the political side, the proliferation of supportive ideological groups referred to as think tanks has

⁵ Routledge Handbook of Comparative Policy Analysis. (2017). In *Routledge eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315660561>

⁶ Routledge Handbook of Comparative Policy Analysis. (2017). In *Routledge eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315660561>

⁷ Dehnavi, E. A., & Jamal, M. A. (2020b). From containment to Americanism. ResearchGate. I8765 poiuyytrk https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381002365_From_Containment_to_Americanism

⁸ Leeson, P. T., Ryan, M. E., & Williamson, C. R. (2011). Think tanks. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 40(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2011.07.004>

⁹ Leeson, P. T., Ryan, M. E., & Williamson, C. R. (2011). Think tanks. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 40(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2011.07.004>

¹⁰ Dehnavi, E. A. (2020b). Sorry, how can I get to Washington? ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381096520_Sorry_how_can_I_get_to_Washington

¹¹ Leeson, P. T., Ryan, M. E., & Williamson, C. R. (2011). Think tanks. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 40(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2011.07.004>

complicated matters further. These divide the public into different groups and can narrate the economy in various fashions which can make opposing policies more popular than others. While defending their ideological positions, the think tanks become political entrepreneurs within the politics where they very actively influence the preferences of a constituency and the policies that an economy ought to pursue¹².

Based on researchers, it is evident that think tank institutions appear to have a rudimentary cultural influence that is much broader than direct shifts in policy. This phenomenon has been noted because of their chronic promotion of pro-market concepts and normalization of policies that exclusively favor capital over labor. Moreover, They Create propaganda that classifies welfare as wasteful and government involvement as detrimental. This self-sustaining process leads to an Overton window shift in which extreme policies like austerity and privatization become prevalent and are viewed as a matter of fact. The deception lies in framing these shifts as natural public agreement rather than outcomes of well-funded maintained advocacy.

However, to understand the functions of think tanks that employ indirect cultural influence over policy, or why they support pro-market ideology, they incentive structure as a whole has to be analyzed instead of single actions. Think Tanks exist in a context where their credibility and existence are externally determined by their adherence to powerful prevailing economic forces. This is a consequence of a system that rewards disproportionately institutions for advancing policies of privatization and austerity which gets framed as "economic rationality" while other policies such as welfare state expansion or active state intervention are sidelined.

It is not so much a question of why think tanks promote market-centered policies, but rather, why equate welfare with deterioration of the system. Such an inclination is formed from a political economy where there is a blend of concentration of capital and market-driven forces, which are assigned the uppermost importance. Even in ostensibly "free markets," monopolistic tendencies and regulatory capture enable powerful economic actors to steer discourse. For think tanks that depend on funding and institutional relevance, there is an inevitable drift toward agendas which appeal to the capitalist class and corporate policy makers that engage in policy obstructionism.

The inconsistency abounds in the dialogue about the free market concerning its theory and practicality. If there existed a genuine competition, it would, in theory, reduce monopolies and focus the attention of the firms to the public good. In reality, however, markets mean profit and in uncontrolled markets, economic power gets systematically consolidated engendering a vicious circle of economically powerful donors and corporate sponsored politicians who pay for the services of policy-centered academic institutions to justify policies which emerge out of the market economy ideology. This loop does not emerge arbitrarily but is set in motion by fundamental economic motivators.

Critically, however, the fault lies less with think tanks or individual actors than with structural governance failures. State facilitates for this situation by posting no bounds or lacking control that allows the flow of funds to the think tanks to remain undisclosed and institutionalizing policies that are economically defined at the merest expense of social good. There are no controls or ethical boundaries of relevance that assure that the existence of market pro ideas is not because they provide answers which are unquestionably reasonable, but because there is stark alignment with the dominating economic order.

In other words, the passive malice predicts why the architecture of the system is designed in such a way to allow the proliferation of ideas supporting the elite class by policy-centered academic consultants. Until the governing structures come to grip the inequities built within their frameworks, the achievement of looking after economic policies which are beneficial to the general population rather than the market will be prolonged.

In conclusion, American economic policymaking is particularly fragmented, and so think tanks are uniquely important. They can spend the nation's resources because they transform debates into decisions, and thus, resolve issues pertaining to the economy. The figure above illustrates the scope of their impact, demonstrating the extent to which these institutions can use and distort data to form policies where their input is needed to build an emerging economy¹³.

Key Think Tanks Influencing American Public Policy

As part of the multifaceted American public policy landscape, a number of think tanks have emerged to dominate economic and policy debates. These organizations conduct important research and advocacy,

¹² Leeson, P. T., Ryan, M. E., & Williamson, C. R. (2011). Think tanks. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 40(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jce.2011.07.004>

The figure above illustrates the scope of their impact, ¹³ demonstrating the extent to which these institutions can use and distort data to form policies where their input is needed to build an emerging economy

with the capacity to influence public opinion and provide information to legislators and journalists. Following is an illustrative list of some of the key think tanks that influence public debate and policy formulation across different issue areas.

1. The Brookings Institution

In 1916, the Brookings Institution was established as a prominent college within the United States. Being a college, the institution had several scholars working within its confines. Even today, Brookings has some of the most educated and respected scholars working for its many branches. These scholars cover a broad array of subjects including, economic policy and policies defining the relations of the United States with other countries, all of which are supported by data. Brookings has a vested interest in the policy-making processes of the government, especially concerning spending congressional funds and capital investments to develop cities. In other words, it is particularly influential in shaping fiscal policy and urban development strategies, often providing policymakers with the evidence needed to support or oppose legislation.

2. The Heritage Foundation

Founded in 1973, the Heritage Foundation advocates free markets and limited government as a leading conservative think tank. It has historically greatly influenced the Republican Party's policy priorities including taxation, healthcare, and national defense. Its policy briefs and publications are often the basis for legislative proposals and are frequently disseminated throughout the United States.

3. The Center for American Progress (CAP)

Founded in 2003, the Center for American Progress is a liberal counterpart to the Heritage Foundation. CAP specializes in creating policy proposals designed to target economic inequality, climate change, and social justice to build a more equitable society. Its research aims to not only inform legislators but also energize grassroots movements around important issues, CAP is well known for proposing progressive solutions to problems facing America today.

4. The Cato Institute

The organization's primary goal is to promote policies and public opinion consistent with the libertarian worldview. Founded in 1974, Cato's scope includes drug policy reform, civil liberties, and laissez-faire capitalism among other public policies. The Institute's analyses and events are often at odds with orthodoxy and frequently call for action that rests on the acceptance of self-governance and microstate control. Cato enables the public to formulate

policies that are beneficial to the individual without government control.

5. The Urban Institute

The Urban Institute was established in 1968 and focuses on social and economic constituents of the city, housing variances, and health issues. They tackle profound social issues using a very organized strategy oriented around facts and statistics. Paradoxically, it helps the authorities grasp the consequences of their actions for different population groups. Its reports are often used to advocate for evidence-based reforms at local, state, and federal levels.

These think tanks, just like several other Think Tanks, contribute to the fabric of American public policy, offering their unique insights and skills. Moreover, policymakers who work with these organizations are equipped with information that helps them make decisions to drive the economic policy of the country. As the relationship between think tanks and the government evolves, their role in facilitating dialogue and steering policy will still be critical in managing the intersection of American politics.

5 . How Think Tanks Conduct Research and Analysis

Think tanks conduct research and analysis to influence the American economy and policymaking. These organizations often consist of professionals from different disciplines and apply a multidisciplinary approach to deal with challenging problems so that they can generate efficient solutions.

However, it should be mentioned that information gathering is one of their first steps. Think tanks collect information from a wide variety of sources such as government documents, academic publications, and even grassroots research in order to gain a holistic grasp of the issues at hand. Each item of data is carefully evaluated through quantitative methods, such as statistical modeling, and qualitative techniques, including interviews and case studies. Unidimensional data often leads to unidimensional conclusions, which is why most think tanks cross-reference data from numerous sources and processes .

As often happens in academic disciplines, research findings, and data are presented in a variety of formats. In this case, policy briefs, white papers, and reports become the preferred presentation of findings and conclusions, as they succinctly outline reasoning, conclusions, and recommendations. The information provided in the documents is not just a presentation of facts; rather, it is an analysis of what the data means in the context of policymakers, business institutions, and society at large. Changes need to be made, and decision-makers need the proper information to enact beneficial policies.

Moreover, the think tanks actively participate in public discussion using seminars, conferences, and even the media. They circulate their research among journalists, policymakers, and citizens and in this way, foster dialogue on issues of public concern while ensuring that the important decision-makers are aware of their findings. This not only enhances the visibility of their work but makes them reputable experts in the domain.

In a time when there is an array of information circulating, and yet very little of it is crystal clear, think tanks are doing invaluable. The relentless and exhaustive research done, along with the well-thought-out analysis provided guides what strategies need to be adopted economically and what public policies need to be put in place to determine the direction America takes in the future.

6. The Process of Policy Advocacy: From Research to Implementation

The process of advocacy policy is in itself a journey requiring the advocacy of much more than unique and strategic enactment. This merging of two areas, the public policy and the academic world, is facilitated by the so-called 'think tanks' that sit at the heart of this policy advocacy world. This process begins with deep and sophisticated research by experts on critical issues such as healthcare and educational reforms and development in economics. Furthermore, Think Tanks attempts to analyze and capture interrelations that can be very important politically, such as the ones between Iran and the United States after the emergence and establishment of the Islamic Republic, using both quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection and analysis¹⁴.

After the analysis and research stage, the next step is to plan, implement, and communicate the dismantling of the findings along with their visuals into tangible pieces of evidence acknowledged by scientific set policies think tanks. After conducting elementary research, think tanks are supposed to draft advanced policy briefs, white papers, or reports summarizing their findings using simple words available to everyone in society. Moreover, their goal is to capture the attention of the policymakers to the areas that need urgent action to be composed by using strong narratives and vivid illustrations from the USA and around the world.

In the advocacy phase, Think Tanks start to mobilize their resources. They interact with lawmakers by presenting their research findings and recommendations through

meetings, testimonies, and public forums. This phase is particularly important for building coalitions with other organizations and stakeholders because collective voices often have more influence on legislation. Think tanks utilize their contacts to generate support and create public and political support for their initiatives.

When a policy has been recommended, the policy then is put into action in the implementation phase. This is the phase where the proposal is practiced. During this phase, the think tanks still participate in the dialogue; they track the progression of the policy and provide analytical support throughout the enactment process. The implementation involves assessing the effectiveness of the policy, which enables changes to be made to advance the policy, therefore improving it ceaselessly.

At its core, the procedure of policy advocacy integrates research, communication, coalition-building, and evaluation. In this way, think tanks not only bolster informed decision-making essential to healthy democracies but also actively participate in the selection of policies that govern the country. However, while operating in this sphere, their work aids in the advancement of public policy in America, which is illustrative of the great power well-informed advocacy wields; these implementations can be witnessed in the general behavior of different U.S. presidents or the foreign policy of this country¹⁵.

Case Studies: Successful Think Tank Initiatives

Think tank case studies provide a very clear view of how these organizations affect America's economic policy and strategy formulation. One striking example is urban policy at the Brookings Institution. Brookings does not only provide housing research; their work has aided cities grappling with transportation, economic expansion, and affordable housing. Their "Metro Policy Program" has not only shaped local governance but also sparked national conversations concerning revitalization.

The argumentation for free-market policies at the Cato Institute is also another. Their work on regulatory changes has significantly impacted the discussion of taxes, education, and health care. Cato has successfully changed the attitude of the public and politicians towards the use of data-driven arguments and practical alternatives. This is how, in one example, public discourse can be altered by think tanks.

¹⁴ Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). An Analytical Examination of Iran-USA Relations Post-Islamic Revolution: Extended Scientific Review. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development*, 6(5), 23–25. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.5.4>

¹⁵ Dehnavi, E. A., & Daheshiar, H. (2020). Changes and indicators of Trump's new immigration policy plan. *ResearchGate*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362014916_Changes_and_indicators_of_trump's_new_immigration_policy_plan

Additionally, numerous countries are ranked according to the amount of free market policies they have put in place. This is something the Heritage Foundation does through its "Index of Economic Freedom." Economists use the index to discuss economic policies and their correlation with prosperity in the world, which allows political leaders to shift resources toward innovation.

These cases illustrate the variety of ways in which change can be catalyzed by think tanks. Through research, dialogue, and interaction with policymakers, these organizations do not merely add American public policy but actively work towards reconstructing the economy of the country. As we deal with the intricate blend of ideas and politics, the importance of think tanks in America is ever so critical; some of these case studies also dial in the reasons why America has fallen in or why countries like China have risen in international politics¹⁶.

The Relationship Between Think Tanks and Government

As it can be comprehended, the collaboration between think tanks and government agencies is multifaceted and ever-changing which profoundly affects the development of public policy and economic issues in the United States. Think tanks are important to middle agents who specialize in integrating academic work and government practice. They provide needed healthcare and environmental solutions underpinning these complex challenges with practical knowledge and as such, assist in offering genuine approaches and innovative approaches to recognized policymaking challenges.

In many cases, think tanks work in close consultation with government departments providing them with valuable guidance concerning various issues. Because of this interdependence, politicians have the opportunity to make use of research and analysis which can substantiate their actions and policies. For instance, during deliberation on important bills, lawmakers often use think tank documents citing the probable economic consequences or social benefits of the activities in question. This intertwining of governance and academic research can result in improved governance, leading to better satisfaction of public needs and values.

Nonetheless, obstacles exist within the relationship. The concern about bias and partisan undertones is prevalent due to the affiliation of think tanks with certain political and corporate interests. These biases lend themselves to

reasonable skepticism towards the so-called "objective" information provided and the reasons behind proposed policies. Hence, both the public and policymakers need to question the origin of information that influences their perception of intricate matters¹⁷.

Furthermore, the emergence of online platforms has drastically changed this relationship by enabling direct communication between the public and think tanks and broadening the reach of their research. New initiatives by think tanks can be profoundly more visible and impactful due to policy-related discussions being fostered and promoted through social media and discussion forums. These tools can enable think tanks to not only direct government decisions but also shape public opinion and stimulate political participation.

To summarize, the interaction between think tanks and the government is complex, but it serves as an important aspect of how the United States transforms its economy and public policy. Think tanks can bring about significant change as they can serve as channels of information, but intense scrutiny surrounding the motives behind their research also needs to be considered. The public needs to remain educated and take part in discussions in order to voice their opinions in the political arena.

The Impact of Think Tanks on Public Opinion

Considered the intermediary between academic research and public critiques, think tanks possess a formidable power in shaping public opinion. With their abundant resources and expertise, these entities are enabled to create narratives surrounding economic and social topics, making intricate issues easier to comprehend for the general populace. Think tanks make research accessible to the media, policymakers, and the public, allowing them to understand the ramifications of proposed policies and economic plans.

Through white papers, reports, and even involving themselves in the media, think tanks focus attention on important subjects, suggesting alternate methods of addressing certain matters aside from the mainstream ones. Their ability to conduct systematic research and give

¹⁶ Dehnavi, E. A. (2020a). The reasons for the decline of American hegemony and its impact on China's regional policies in the Middle East. *Revista San Gregorio*, 1(37).
<https://doi.org/10.36097/rsan.v1i37.1274>

¹⁷ Dehnavi, E. A., & Tabatabaei, S. M. (2021). Principles and positions of US foreign policy against terrorism. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/356423964_Principles_and_positions_of_US_foreign_policy_against_terrorism?_sg%5B0%5D=AdOFEC9XN1vmmIBRs4gyq8rMbj3U5_Y9q9M_E1W4U0xiUgtqm-wixPGJfKtMkKc_DE5RqhOuVrLzROITu_ajuVCBqP3ca--Y3hS9_rIR-oqxSkcNiSWqEI5UO-IT3Rd7cy9j30YMbOIk_fSFSzedWLOsXGUqQiAPZUx6HgiQhmOC8ckm-p3zIUoKkvdX32Q&_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6ImxvZ2IulicGFnZSI6InByb2ZpbGUlCjw3NpdGlvbil6InBhZ2VDb250ZW50In19

rational recommendations makes them credible and helps build their esteem, enabling them to become authoritative figures in the said topic. For example, possessing claims with logical reasoning and deep data analysis that appeals to public values, economic reforms, climate change, and health care becomes easier to address from their side, shifting the view of the general population.

In addition, think tanks work with other arms of the media for the purpose of sharing their research or appearing in interviews, opinion articles, and segments on various issues. Such visibility makes it possible for them to reach and touch a wide range of people, including those who may not be interested in policy matters. The sophisticated use of social media is more useful to them in this regard because it offers the opportunity for direct interaction with the public and subsequent mobilizations of support at the grassroots level for issues that concern the think tanks.

In such a changing context, the function of the think tanks goes beyond just researching as they are now active participant in managing public information and thus, government policy. In doing so, and assisted by the media, they address and discuss emerging issues that are important, as well as influence how the population perceives and reacts to political decisions and policies taken at the government level. While they're navigating around America's society, they affect public opinion which is significant and lasting, and this is true no matter how one looks at it.

Engaging with Think Tanks: How Citizens Can Get Involved

The soar in civic participation in the policy debate poses another research challenge; citizens as active participants can also serve as instrumentalists in engaging in economic and policy formation. If citizens know how to maneuver within the systems, they are able to use without any restrictions, their views and knowledge.

For instance, a good way to begin is to take part in public sessions organized by different think tanks, forums, and discussions. There are always top-level individuals in the form of researchers who give the public some of 'their' issues to talk and research on. Participating in these events gives you that knowledge but the opportunity to ask questions and be involved allows you to voice your opinions.

The "lower barrier" way of getting into a think tank is through volunteering or interning for them. Many people have been able to volunteer with many organizations or even inter-universities interested in learning and building on policy issues. Such participation can be in the form of assisting to do research or organizing activities and gets

one closer to the processes of how policies are formulated and advocated for.

Therefore, consider using social media to engage with think tanks. Following their accounts, tweeting out their research, and commenting on their work are all great ways to start engaging. Many, if not most, think tanks provide opportunities for citizen participation through online comments, discussions, surveys, or even on papers published policies. Your contribution can shift the center of gravity toward their priorities and community needs that, at times, remain hidden.

In the end, consider grassroots efforts. Getting involved, or starting, local advocacy groups in harmony with the goals of a think tank can multiply your impact. Working with other citizens permits you to deal with community problems impact national policies and show decision-makers that community issues are important.

In essence, think tanks are an opportunity for every single citizen to participate actively in molding the economic and public policy system. The more a person engages, the better the understanding of the mechanisms at play and the more one can engage in constructive actions to address the societal challenges we have.

Conclusion: The Importance of Think Tanks in a Democratic Society

In conclusion, think tanks play a crucial role in shaping the landscape of democracy and public policy in America. These institutions act as vital engines of intellectual discourse, promoting informed debate and providing policymakers with well-researched insights that can guide effective decision-making. In a democratic society, where diverse opinions and perspectives are essential, think tanks serve as a platform for dialogue and innovation, bridging the gap between academia, government, and the public by also translating and softening the complicated notions that are hard to comprehend.¹⁸

These organizations maintain a thorough examination and argue that policy measures must be developed for the most acute problems of our country, for example, economic inequality and climate change. They create an appropriate atmosphere for lawmakers to do their work, where real solutions can work and voters' wishes and values are met. Also, some think tanks seek to give back to the community

¹⁸ Fiedler, R. A., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). The Styles in the American Politics Volume II, Conservative Think Tanks and their Foreign Policy: A Booklet. ResearchGate.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379449531_The_Styles_in_the_American_Politics_Volume_II_Conservative_Think_Tanks_and_Their_Foreign_Policy_A_Booklet/references

by understanding complex issues so as to increase civic education and participation, which includes teaching the public about complicated socio-political engagements.¹⁹

What might be underestimated, in this case, is the place and role of think tanks. They are more than just information storages; they actively participate in daily political life by arguing in the name of open democracy that demands ultimate responsibility and an accountable authority. Here, think tanks provide multilateral solutions and stand up for all citizens, making sure that all employed policies truly reflect democracy in deepest meaning. In this way, they uphold the principles of democracy and contribute to the ongoing pursuit of a more just and equitable society.²⁰

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¹⁹ Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024a). Navigating Engagement with Iran: Exploring US Strategies and Options: A Futuristic Scenario and Review. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences, 9(2), 109–113. <https://doi.org/10.22161/ijels.92.18>

²⁰ Fiedler, R., & Dehnavi, E. A. (2024b). Unraveling the Enigmas: Deciphering the Causes of Discord in the Middle East: A review. Journal of Humanities and Education Development, 6(1), 51–56. <https://doi.org/10.22161/jhed.6.1.7>

A critical comparative analysis regarding Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Omar Khayyam's quatrains

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Abstract— This paper provides a critical comparative analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Omar Khayyam's *Rubáiyát*, exploring the thematic intersection of individualism, morality, mortality, and metaphysical self-awareness. By examining Wilde's portrayal of the soul as a locus of ethical consequence within the context of Victorian gothic literature, the analysis demonstrates how Wilde critiques conventional moral frameworks, proposing a radical internalization of moral judgment and spiritual retribution. In parallel, the paper analyzes Khayyam's quatrains—rendered through Edward FitzGerald's influential translations—which similarly redefine traditional metaphysical concepts by placing notions of heaven, hell, reward, and punishment within the individual's existential domain. While highlighting ideological contrasts such as Wilde's depiction of immortality as a destructive pursuit versus Khayyam's celebration of life's transient pleasures, the study underscores fundamental philosophical parallels. Both authors, though culturally and temporally distinct, propose that spiritual consequence and metaphysical truths reside within the self, independent of external religious paradigms. This investigation ultimately positions Wilde and Khayyam as significant contributors to the modern, secular reconceptualization of ethics and metaphysics, asserting their roles as iconoclasts who challenge and redefine the boundaries between aesthetic experience and ethical self-realization.

Keywords— Oscar Wilde, Omar Khayyam, Individuality, Victorian Gothic, Metaphysical Self, Morality, Comparative Literature

Be happy for this moment.
This moment is your life. Here
with a Loaf of Bread beneath
the Bough, A Flask of Wine, a
Book of Verse - and Thou
Beside me singing in the
Wilderness - And Wilderness
is Paradise enow.¹

(Omar Khayyam – 12th
century)

'Because to influence a person
is to give him one's own soul.

He does not think his natural
thoughts, or burn with his
natural passions. His virtues
are not real to him. His sins, if
there are such things as sins,
are borrowed. He becomes an
echo of someone else's music,
an actor of a part that has not
been written for him. The aim
of life is self-development. To
realize one's nature
perfectly—that is what each of
us is here for. People are afraid

¹ Omar, Khayyam, and Edward Fitzgerald. 1979. *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam*, trans. by E. Fitzgerald (London, England: Mammoth)

of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course, they are charitable. They feed the hungry and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion—these are the two things that govern us. And yet, I believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream—I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal—to something finer, richer than the Hellenic ideal, it may be. But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself'.²

(Oscar Wilde – 1890)

As a disruptive literary phenomenon, the Victorian gothic genre portrays the social scene as dark and spiritually decadent, manifesting itself as a chilling critique of the scarcity of moral values in London, and the depravity of its Godless population. Traditionally, the fictions of the late Victorian gothic genre depicted London as the source of depravity, presenting it as a corrupt urban landscape in which unsanctified creatures walked freely. London's ethically-bankrupt status had been cemented in gothic literature so firmly that in his *The Sorrows of Satan*,³ Marie Corelli narrates the Devil's inability to find any Londoner

who would be immune to his temptations. According to Corelli, as the Devil ultimately fails to find any trace of morality in London, he proceeds to choose the city as his homeland.⁴

As stated, the perception of corrupt individuals infecting the society was pervasive at the time, and it had some unfortunate consequences. During the initial publication of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde's only novel, critical discussions mainly revolved around the author's personal life, failing to reflect upon the depth of his literary work, and ultimately perceiving it to be a mere reflection of his indecent lifestyle. Far from aiming to delineate Wilde's strategy in engaging the Victorian audience, the novel's critical analysis had been limited to homosexual anxieties so prevalent at the time. Such an irrational prejudice led to critics mostly failing to realize that the novel, using *Dorian Gray* as the protagonist, meant to depict the universal and everlasting search for an ideal individuality. Individuality, as a concept, is essential in illuminating the parallelisms between Wilde's novel and the famed quatrains of Khayyam.

As a preface to his novel, Wilde asserts that 'no artist has ethical sympathies' and that in an artist, any form of ethical sympathy would be 'an unpardonable mannerism of style'.⁵ I have come to maintain that such a liberated and unrestrained strategy in the pursuit of art, should indeed be identified as the primary reason for Wilde's breathtaking success in investigating the corruptions of the soul. In his unorthodox novel, Wilde manages to present these corruptions as mere symptoms, originating from aesthetic narcissism, and the gradual death of conscious.

During its initial publication, almost all of the popular press came to vehemently rebuke the novel, citing its outrageous lack of morality. As the novel was being described as a 'poisonous book with odors of moral and spiritual putrefaction',⁶ and as a disgrace since 'it is not made sufficiently clear that the writer does not prefer a course of unnatural iniquity to a life of cleanliness, health, and sanity',⁷ Wilde astutely pointed out the irony in the public outrage. He proceeded to argue that his novel was legitimately and categorically moral, since during the course of its process 'All excess, as well as all renunciation brings its own punishment'.⁸ This assertion is the crucial

² Wilde, Oscar. 2013. *Picture of Dorian Gray (Collector's Edition): Including the Uncensored 13 Chapter Version & The Revised 20 Chapter Version* (London, England: Arcturus Publishing)

³ Corelli, Marie. 2015. *The Sorrows of Satan: Or, the Strange Experience of One Geoffrey Tempest, Millionaire - Scholar's Choice Edition* (London, ON, Canada: Scholar's Choice)

⁴ Corelli, Marie. 2015. *The Sorrows of Satan: Or, the Strange Experience of One Geoffrey Tempest, Millionaire - Scholar's Choice Edition* (London, ON, Canada: Scholar's Choice)

⁵ Wilde, Oscar. 2013. *Picture of Dorian Gray (Collector's Edition): Including the Uncensored 13 Chapter Version & The Revised 20 Chapter Version* (London, England: Arcturus Publishing)

⁶ *The Daily Chronicle*. June 30th. 1890. (DeKalb, Illinois)

⁷ *The Scots Observer*. July 5th. 1890. (The United Kingdom)

⁸ Ellmann, Richard. 1997. *Oscar Wilde* (Harlow, England: Penguin Books)

point in understanding Wilde's iconoclastic point of view, as it seeks to depict the soul, an internal and intrinsic entity, as the agent of divine retribution. Such a break from established principles of morality had monumental implications, as Wilde's disruptive ideology ultimately meant to introduce misunderstood notions like heaven and hell, as being originated from within, and not extrinsically manifested in the afterlife.

It would be fair to point out that while partially failing to comprehend Wilde's reconceptualization regarding the fabric of the self, and his reevaluation of established religious structures, philosophers like Colin McGinn did manage to evaluate the novel based on a humanist and individualistic agenda.⁹ Furthermore, Michael Patrick Gillespie manages to offer an impressive, and liberal humanist critique of Wilde's novel, although, as with McGinn, he fails to consider the role of the Victorian gothic, as the stage upon which Wilde presents the inward nature of divine retribution.¹⁰ According to Gillespie,

'Through the actions of its characters, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s discourse establishes within us a sense of the wide-ranging aesthetic force that ethics exerts upon a work of art. Furthermore, Wilde's novel gives us the opportunity to enhance the mix of our aesthetic and ethical views by extending our sense of the possibilities for interpretation beyond those delineated by our immediate hermeneutic system'.¹¹

Such agendas, impressive as they were, ultimately failed as well, since they couldn't fathom Wilde's tacit assertions, as he implied that the process of reward and punishment, previously thought to be exclusive to the afterlife, is inherently interpersonal, and takes place within the soul of each individual. Hence, according to Wilde himself, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a novel predicated upon, and not in contrast with, the notions of morality.¹² This provides a clue as to which strategy would prove to be the most illuminating while interpreting the novel. One could reasonably argue that an ethical reading of Wilde's

novel is the best choice, since it can reveal the contradictory emotions and problematic moral scenarios that often afflict the characters.¹³ Note that in utilizing the fantastic elements provided by the Victorian gothic genre, Wilde manages to portray intricate and sensitive moral dilemmas that every character, even in the depths of depravity, would be forced to deal with, and subsequently, live with its consequences.

Omar Khayyam, an enigma

During a glorious period of enlightenment, Nineteenth-century British literature went through an ideological metamorphosis, as fiction and poetry came to undertake the preoccupations that had been specific to theological discourse. This entailed writers and poets opting to employ classic religious accounts, in order to argue for secular conclusions. One of the prominent manifestations of this overlap between religious and secular modes of thought is Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, which had justifiably become 'by far the best known and most popular poem in the English language' by the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Using his formidable literary taste in this remarkable instance of Orientalism,¹⁵ FitzGerald manages to employ the Persian interpretation of the metaphysical aspect of the self, commonly known as the soul, and then proceeds to apply it to the spiritual trends of the Victorian era.

As stated, the poems were originally written by Omar Khayyam, a Persian poet of majestic nature. In his poems, originally called *Rubáiyát* as its Persian equivalent, Khayyam manages to depict a secular way of thought, striving to rebel against the reign of religious fundamentalism. This is mostly due to his belief that transcendental notions of fundamentalism have failed in making sense of human existence, and can no longer withstand rational philosophical challenges. The speaker of the *Rubáiyát*, seeking solace in 'A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou / Beside me singing in the Wilderness,' opts to let go of the conflicts that afflict him within, and to relish and embrace pleasure.¹⁶ Khayyam, in effect, manages to introduce the metaphysical and the unknown part of one's existence, that is, the part known as the Soul, and depict it as an entity operating within the physical presence of every individual. He then proceeds to reconceptualize notions such as divine retribution, heaven, and even hell, leading to

⁹ McGinn, Department of Philosophy Colin. 1997. *Ethics, Evil, and Fiction* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press)

¹⁰ Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

¹¹ Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

¹² Ellmann, Richard. 1997. *Oscar Wilde* (Harlow, England: Penguin Books)

¹³ Ellmann, Richard. 1997. *Oscar Wilde* (Harlow, England: Penguin Books)

¹⁴ Gray, Erik. 2008. "FitzGerald and the 'Rubáiyát', in and out of Time," *Victorian Poetry*, 46.1: 1–14

¹⁵ In art history, literature and cultural studies, **Orientalism** is the imitation or depiction of aspects in the Eastern world. These depictions are usually done by writers, designers, and artists from the West.

¹⁶ FitzGerald, Edward. 2008. *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Christopher Decker (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press)

a materialist version of the notions that were once thought to be exclusively religious and metaphysical. It is this materialist version of thought, that allows FitzGerald to present his own secular interpretations of the *Rubáiyát*.

As FitzGerald's elegant rendition of Khayyam's Persian voice came under the spotlight, Victorian reviewers appreciated the secular orientation that the poem so masterfully reincarnated. The *National Review*, for example, came to praise FitzGerald's competence in capturing the 'zeitgeist', saying:

'there is now some recent change in the mood of the Anglo-Saxon race that has caused this wide response to Omar-in-FitzGerald. It is, one must imagine, that there has been of late a wide and rapid decline in religious belief, so that a vast number of English people are able to understand and largely sympathize with the old rebel against the orthodox Islamite Puritanism of the East.'¹⁷

Seeing how they were originally written centuries prior to translation, the accuracy with which the *Rubáiyát* were able to address the spiritual awakening of the time, coupled with their characteristic skepticism, only furthered the poems' popularity, leading Charles Eliot Norton to write that 'The prevailing traits of Omar Khayyám are so coincident with certain characteristics of the spiritual temper of our own generation'.¹⁸ Another example would be Jessie E. Cadell's critical review, diligently announcing:

'That we have heard a good deal of late about Omar Khayyám is not due to any increase in the number of Persian scholars, but to the fact that the existing translation

harmonises with a special phase of modern thought'.¹⁹

Bear in mind that literary critics in the twentieth century, long after the publication of FitzGerald's volumes, have also noted that, astonishingly, the *Rubáiyát* does extremely well in upholding the secular values so cherished in the west. Hence, not before long, it came to be known that Khayyam, and therefore Fitzgerald, were the perfect embodiments of modernity,²⁰ and how it was applicable to the state of the Victorian era.²¹ David G. Riede, as an example, writes that:

'The great cultural importance of FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* is not merely in its exemplification of the Victorian age's melancholy agnosticism but in its exemplary severing of poetic beauty from any kind of Christian duty'.²²

Khayyam's ideology

Abu'l Fath Omar ibn Ibrahim Khayyam, widely known as Omar Khayyam, was born around 1083 AD, and died after a lifetime of literary and scientific achievements between 1124 AD and 1129 AD.²³ Predominantly known as a mysterious poet, Khayyam was also an astronomer, astrologer, physician, philosopher, and mathematician, making outstanding contributions to science.²⁴ Aminrazavi notes that 'Up to date, there are fourteen treatises that are known to have been written by Omar Khayyam [...]. As one can see, Khayyam wrote little but his works are dense, original and written in very concise language'.²⁵

For all his fame and glory, the man himself remains something of an enigma. Over time, Different biographers, both Persian and Western, have come to describe him in various fashions, with some accounts documenting him as a 'pleasure-seeking, wine-drinking agnostic',²⁶ while others reportedly called him a 'closeted

¹⁷ Holland, Bernard. 1899. "The Present Popularity of Omar Khayyám," *National Review*: 643–52

¹⁸ Norton, Charles Eliot. 1869. "Omar Khayyám," *North American Review*, p. 565

¹⁹ Cadell, Jessie E. 1879. "The True Omar Khayam," *Fraser's Magazine*, pp. 650–59

²⁰ In using the term 'Modernity', this paper follows Michael Saler in using this term to denote a 'mixture of political, social, intellectual, economic, technological, and psychological factors, which include the emergence of the rational and autonomous subject; the differentiation of cultural spheres; the rise of liberal and democratic states; the turn to psychologism and self-reflexivity; and the dominance of secularism, nationalism, capitalism, industrialism, urbanism'.

²¹ Saler, M. 2006. "Modernity and Enchantment: A Historiographic Review," *The American Historical Review*, 111.3: 692–716

²² Pearsall, Cornelia. 2007. "Allegories of One's Own Mind: Melancholy in Victorian Poetry, by David G. Riede," *Victorian Studies*, 49.4: 756–58

²³ Garrard, Garry. 2007. *A Book of Verse: The Biography of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (Abergavenny, Wales: Sutton Publishing)

²⁴ In the year 1072 AD, Omar Khayyam documented the most accurate year length ever calculated, a figure still accurate enough for most purposes in the modern world.

²⁵ Aminrazavi, Mehdi. 2013. *The Wine of Wisdom: The Life, Poetry and Philosophy of Omar Khayyam* (London, England: Oneworld Publications)

²⁶ Garrard, Garry. 2007. *A Book of Verse: The Biography of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (Abergavenny, Wales: Sutton Publishing)

Zoroastrian', a 'Sufi Muslim', an 'orthodox Sunni Muslim, and even a 'disciple of the Ancient Gods of Greece'.²⁷ Regardless of his faith, he is universally known to be an iconic intellectual, with astonishing scientific discoveries.

Yet Khayyam is perhaps best known for his work as a poet. The *Rubáiyát*, his collection of hundreds of quatrains (or rubais), was first translated from Persian to English in 1859 by Edward Fitzgerald. These short poems are Khayyam's attempt at celebrating the pleasures that life has to offer, while simultaneously shedding light on the political and religious atmosphere of the time of their composition. Note that what makes his poems propitiously peculiar, is the semi-secular experience that it provides for the audience. Contrary to what one might expect, the poems don't reaffirm any convictions about the supremacy of reason over sensation, or vice versa, as they are primarily concerned with the relationship between the self, as a physical being, and the other side of the self, which is defined as a metaphysical entity. Mentioned below is one of his most iconic quatrains, subject to this paper's analysis:

'I sent my soul through the
invisible,
Some letters of that after-life spell,
And by my soul returned to me,
And answered I myself am
Heaven, And Hell.'²⁸

" برتر ز سپهر خاظم روز نخست
لوح و قلم و بهشت و دوزخ میجست
پس گفت مرا معلم از فکر درست
لوح و قلم و بهشت و دوزخ با تست "²⁹

Analysis of the quatrain

Khayyam was a prolific poet, managing to provide the future generations with a plethora of poems, concerning the essence of existence, and the ultimate fate of mankind. Based on a general overview of his works of literature, it would be a reasonable observation as to place his poems in three separate categories, with each category representing a different perspective on the matters of life and death. Note that these categories are somewhat incompatible, since they portray conflicting views regarding the nature of existence. Nevertheless, the poems constituting each section manage to present well-founded

and convincing arguments, cementing their effect in the reader's mind. These categories include:

- i. Believing the afterlife and the essence of existence to be an unsolvable mystery, Khayyam inexorably insists upon on the incomprehensibility of the afterlife, announcing it to be unknown and unfathomable. Therefore, one must cease all efforts to conceptualize it.
- ii. In a plethora of other works, consisting of many of his most iconic poems, Khayyam is adamant about the necessity of appreciating the pleasures of life. He opts to pivot his focus from the afterlife, and encourages the audience to relish in the joys of their brief mortal life. He defines every moment of our temporary existence as a precious gift, meant to be fully appreciated before the arrival of death.
- iii. In the third direction of his poems, Khayyam manifests an avid interest in the afterlife, rejoicing in the solid faith that there will be a divine system of rewards and retributions, that will conclude the fates of the virtuous and the sinners of the world. Note that Khayyam's assertions in these poems are fundamentally different from the traditional notions of heaven and hell, since his alternative point of view is predicated upon a humanist and individualistic view of the afterlife.

The quatrain in question should be placed within the third category, as it asserts Khayyam's belief in an alternative view of the afterlife. When scrutinized properly, it would be evident that the said quatrain is trying to convey the notion that human beings, that is, the spiritual and metaphysical part of their existence, are indeed the center of life and death themselves, around which divine concepts such as heaven and hell revolve.³⁰ Furthermore, by the effective use of rhetoric, Khayyam encourages the audience to wake up to the realization that heaven and hell, life and death, or any other concept of divine retribution and intervention, are intrinsic entities placed within each individual's existence, and they cannot be called upon or triggered as a result of any external factor. Humans are all there is, he so persuasively argues, and whatever one might be searching for, whether it is Heaven or Hell, life or death, pain or pleasure, faith or blasphemy, damnation or salvation, whatever it may be, it is imperative for one to seek it within one's self, and not in any other extrinsic entity. He is, in effect, trying to liberate the human mind from the

²⁷ Garrard, Garry. 2007. *A Book of Verse: The Biography of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (Abergavenny, Wales: Sutton Publishing)

²⁸ FitzGerald, Edward. 2008. *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Christopher Decker (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press)

²⁹ FitzGerald, Edward. 2008. *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Christopher Decker (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press)

³⁰ FitzGerald, Edward. 2008. *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Christopher Decker (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press)

invisible shackles of superstitions, by insisting that in order to discover the ultimate destination, one need not look anywhere but within, for the concept of Heaven and Hell, reside nowhere but inside. Therefore, looking within, should you choose to ignite it, the everlasting flames of Hell shall engulf you whole, and should you nourish and nurture it, the flowers of Heaven shall rain upon you forever.

Ideological contrasts between Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Khayyam's quatrains

Note that the most dominant theme in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, is mortality and the fleeting nature of beauty and youth, and in fact, it is the obsession with mortality that causes Dorian's dramatic downfall.³¹ This sounds very familiar, as it reminds us of how Khayyam encourages the reader to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of life. During the course of the novel, and as the urge to become immortal starts to unravel Dorian, he comes to view Basil's portrait of himself in an infuriating manner. He notices how the portrait will forever remain unscathed, and how its presence is practically a mockery of his hopeless mortality. With Henry's words ringing in his ears, and now suddenly aware of the inexhaustible passage of time, Dorian comes to see his beauty as a curse, inflected upon him only to be slowly taken away, while tormenting him in the process.³² This is in direct contrast with Khayyam's interpretation of mortality, because while Dorian comes to associate beauty with death and doom, Khayyam depicts the fleeting nature of life as the reason for cherishing and appreciating it.

During the course of the novel, Dorian falls in love with Sybil, which later on turns out to be a manifestation of his obsession with beauty and death. It gets clear that Dorian loved Sybil not because of Sybil herself, but simply because he got to watch her die onstage repeatedly, followed by her miraculous resurrection backstage. She epitomized immortality in the eyes of Dorian, as her vivacity and beauty seemed to be eternally immune to her constant brush with death.³³ In the eyes of Dorian, even her unfortunate suicide turns out to be a final magnificent resurrection, since even in death, she preserves her beauty and remains eternally young in her lifeless state. Therefore, it is the process of resurrection that is glorious in the eyes of Dorian, whereas in the case of Khayyam, the glory resides in acknowledging the inevitability of death, and challenging its authority by living every moment to the fullest.

Later on in the course of the novel, Dorian too is gifted, or rather, cursed by the notion of immortality. This

comes as the result of the portrait, which curses Dorian's flesh to remain forever stuck in the same point of time. But contrary to what one might have hoped, he interprets his newfound freedom as a license to experience every form of excess, and to maintain a callous disregard for the dire consequences of his actions.³⁴ Such a tragic turn of events is Wilde's attempt to suggest that while the legions of death will ultimately come for all mortals, the consequences of achieving any sort of everlasting life are much more catastrophic. Just as the portrait came to be the main antagonist in the novel, driving Dorian to engage in unspeakable acts of sordid nature, and reminding him of the innocent he has forever lost, Wilde suggests that however horrible, death is a necessary evil bound to be faced sooner or later. Khayyam on the other hand, is never bothered with the idea of immortality, since in his point of view, all life, no matter how long or how short, is bound to reach death at some point, rendering the search for everlasting existence null and void.

Ideological parallelisms between Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Khayyam's quatrain

Note that while Dorian succeeds in becoming immortal on the physical front, in the spiritual realm of existence, he is unable to make a difference. Accordingly, while he manages to experience every form of excessive pleasure with ostensible immunity, his soul will bear the marks of his platitude forever. There has been a propensity among the scholars, to consider the painting as a separate entity from Dorian himself. This misguided perception asserts that the painting has managed to trap Dorian's soul within itself, allowing his flesh to remain unscathed from the whips of time.

But after proper scrutiny, one will ultimately notice that the painting can never exist separately from Dorian himself, and while they are at times miles apart, the metaphysical connection between them is never lost. I believe that the nature of such a connection is the illuminating factor here, since it confirms that contrary to the traditional analysis of the novel, the painting doesn't own Dorian's soul, neither can it contain the soul within itself. So how does the portrait function?

I have come to realize that the soul was never left in the painting to rot, and it was always within Dorian. What the painting actually does, I believe, is that it manages to depict the status of Dorian's soul at any given moment, while blocking its manifestation in the physical realm. Hence, the soul, ever present within Dorian, is perpetually

³¹ Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

³² Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

³³ Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

³⁴ Gillespie, Professor of English Michael Patrick (ed.). 2010. *Picture of Dorian Gray* (Andover, England: Twayne)

afflicted by the scars of his turpitude, while not being allowed to materialize those scars in the physical realm.

If one were to look closely, one would discover that Dorian's wretched soul, represented in the painting naked from its physical façade, amounts to his personal version of eternal damnation. This means that Dorian is carrying around his own personal hell, and his own version of retribution resulted from his degeneracy. Therefore, hell didn't engulf him in flames subsequent to his death, he wasn't transported to any apocalyptic world of demons and suffering, and all along, without even realizing it, he was the carrier of his own hell. His retribution came from within, and as he nurtured it and ignited it over time, the flames ultimately caught up to him in this world, and not any other.

That is the exact same point that Khayyam tries to make in his aforementioned quatrain. As evident, he proceeded to assert that heaven and hell, as agents of retribution, can never be anything external to the self, meaning that they are not worlds to enter, or portals to be sucked through. These notions are to be subject to reconceptualization, since they are ultimately part of mankind, within him, and grown from him. Khayyam then proceeded to imply that it is one's individual choice, to decide his essence of being, meaning that it is one's personal responsibility, to determine whether it shall be heaven, or hell, that he chooses to nurture, or starve. Juxtaposed next to Wilde's novel, it is clear that these notions are the foundation in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as well.

CONCLUSION

As delineated in this paper, both Khayyam and Wilde were concerned with the idea of death and mortality, and how one comes to face the consequences of one's actions. Bear in mind that while Khayyam has a much more direct approach toward the matter, both him and Wilde come to reach the same conclusion at the end. This means that while centuries apart, it would be a cogent observation to perceive Oscar Wilde and Khayyam as ideologically compatible. Equality iconoclastic in each their societies, they both managed to present a modern and materialist version of existence, introducing the metaphysical aspect of humanity's existence as independent from the forces of death. They argued that this metaphysical aspect, previously thought to be exclusive to religious context, operates freely and independently from the afterlife, perpetually implementing justice upon one's actions. They both unveiled the Soul as the ultimate, omnipresent, and omnipotent agent of retribution, manifesting itself as Heaven or hell based on one's performance in life. Ultimately, they managed to convey the message that the hell within devours sins and hatred, while its polar opposite

feeds on love and pleasure. Every man is the center of his own salvation or doom, everyman is the center of his own divine retribution. Oscar Wilde, and Omar Khayyam are the pioneers of the modern ethical structure.

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Spatio-Temporal Trends in Oilseed Crop Production in Haryana: A District-Level Analysis

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Abstract— This study provides a spatio-temporal analysis of oilseed crop production across Haryana, focusing on comparative data from 2013–14 and 2023–24. The objective is to understand regional variations in cultivation area and output, identify emerging trends, and evaluate the effectiveness of agricultural policies promoting oilseed farming. The analysis reveals that districts such as Bhiwani, Mahendragarh, Hisar, Sirsa, and Rewari dominate both areas under cultivation and total production, highlighting their continued significance in the oilseed sector. Over the decade, these regions have shown marked increases in output, suggesting the adoption of improved technologies, seed varieties, and favorable climatic conditions. Conversely, eastern and urban-adjacent districts like Karnal, Kurukshetra, and Gurugram display limited involvement in oilseed cultivation, indicating ongoing reliance on alternative high-value or staple crops. The emergence of districts such as Charkhi Dadri and Nuh as notable contributors reflects diversification trends and a shift towards more sustainable farming systems. This spatial variation underscores the importance of district-level planning and region-specific strategies for balanced agricultural development. By analyzing secondary data from the Statistical Abstract of Haryana and government sources, the study offers valuable insights into the evolving oilseed landscape, aiding policymakers, planners, and researchers in enhancing productivity and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

Keywords— OilSeeds, Spatio-Temporal, Sustainable Agriculture, Mechanization of Agriculture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has long been the backbone of Haryana's economy, providing livelihoods to a significant portion of its population and making a notable contribution to the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). While Haryana is traditionally known for its dominance in wheat and rice cultivation, the oilseed sector has emerged as a significant component of the agricultural landscape in recent decades. Among oilseed crops, mustard, rapeseed, groundnut, soybean, and sunflower constitute the major varieties cultivated in the state. The increasing emphasis on crop diversification, sustainability, and the need to adapt to water scarcity and climatic challenges has shifted attention toward oilseeds as a viable alternative. As a result, the oilseed cultivation scenario in Haryana has undergone considerable spatio-temporal transformations over the last two decades.

Oilseed production in Haryana has seen a notable upward trend in both area and yield. According to the Statistical

Abstracts of Haryana and various agricultural reports, the area under oilseed crops, particularly rapeseed and mustard, has increased consistently from the early 2000s to the early 2020s. This shift is driven by several factors, including reducing dependence on water-intensive crops, government incentives like the Minimum Support Price (MSP), and advancements in oilseed technologies such as high-yielding varieties and improved agronomic practices. Moreover, oilseeds require less water and inputs than cereals like paddy, making them attractive for regions experiencing groundwater depletion and soil degradation due to intensive farming practices.

The spatio-temporal dimension of oilseed cultivation in Haryana provides a compelling narrative of agricultural change. Spatially, the spread of oilseed crops has been uneven, with concentration in areas where climatic conditions, soil texture, and irrigation availability favor their growth. Temporally, significant shifts are evident in the cultivation patterns, indicating farmers' changing

preferences, influenced by market demand, price volatility, and policy frameworks. Over time, areas that were earlier under monoculture cereals have shown an increased tendency to diversify into oilseeds, especially during the rabi season. This shift not only represents an adaptation to environmental constraints but also signals a strategic reorientation in the state's agricultural economy.

Technological and policy interventions have played a crucial role in influencing these spatio-temporal trends. Implementing agricultural extension programs, promoting oilseed-based cropping systems, and ensuring timely credit and input supply availability have encouraged farmers to embrace oilseed cultivation. The National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) and other state-level initiatives have provided subsidies on seeds, fertilizers, and farm machinery, enhancing production efficiency. Furthermore, integrating geospatial tools and satellite-based monitoring has enabled better assessment and forecasting of oilseed crop area and yield, contributing to more informed planning and policy decisions.

Environmental considerations have also influenced the expansion of oilseed cultivation. Haryana faces increasing stress on natural resources, particularly water. Though productive, the traditional rice–wheat cropping system is resource-intensive and unsustainable in the long term. In contrast, oilseed crops require fewer irrigation cycles and are relatively tolerant to varying climatic conditions. This makes them suitable for sustainable intensification, especially in areas where groundwater levels are receding and rainfall variability is increasing. As climate change projections indicate rising temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns, cultivating drought-tolerant crops like mustard and soybeans becomes crucial in ensuring food and economic security for the farming community.

Socio-economic factors have also shaped the spatial and temporal dynamics of oilseed production. Landholding size, access to institutional support, market proximity, and farmer awareness play a decisive role in adopting oilseed crops. Regions with better infrastructure, access to procurement centers, and active agricultural extension networks have shown a faster rate of oilseed adoption. On the other hand, marginal and small farmers with limited access to resources often face challenges in transitioning to alternative crops, highlighting the need for inclusive policy interventions.

Research and development in oilseed agronomy have significantly contributed to yield improvements and area expansion. High-yielding varieties with resistance to pests and diseases, coupled with precision farming techniques, have led to increased productivity. Additionally, timely sowing, integrated nutrient management, and

mechanization of harvesting processes have further enhanced the economic viability of oilseed farming. Public and private sector collaboration in research has ensured the continuous supply of improved seed material and information dissemination, which are vital for maintaining production momentum.

From a policy perspective, the spatio-temporal analysis of oilseed crops is a critical tool for agricultural planning and resource allocation. It helps identify high-potential zones for oilseed cultivation, assess regional disparities, and evaluate the impact of past interventions. Such analysis is vital for refining existing strategies and formulating targeted programs that address the unique agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions of different regions within the state. Moreover, it contributes to national goals of reducing edible oil import dependency, improving farmer incomes, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

The data from the last two decades indicates a rising trend in the area under oilseed cultivation and the productivity of these crops. This trend, however, is not uniform across the state, necessitating a district-level analysis to understand localized patterns and their underlying causes. The study of these patterns, through spatio-temporal analysis, provides a comprehensive understanding of how different factors—natural, economic, and institutional—interact over time and space to shape agricultural outcomes. It also enables the identification of emerging trends, constraints, and opportunities for further development of the oilseed sector.

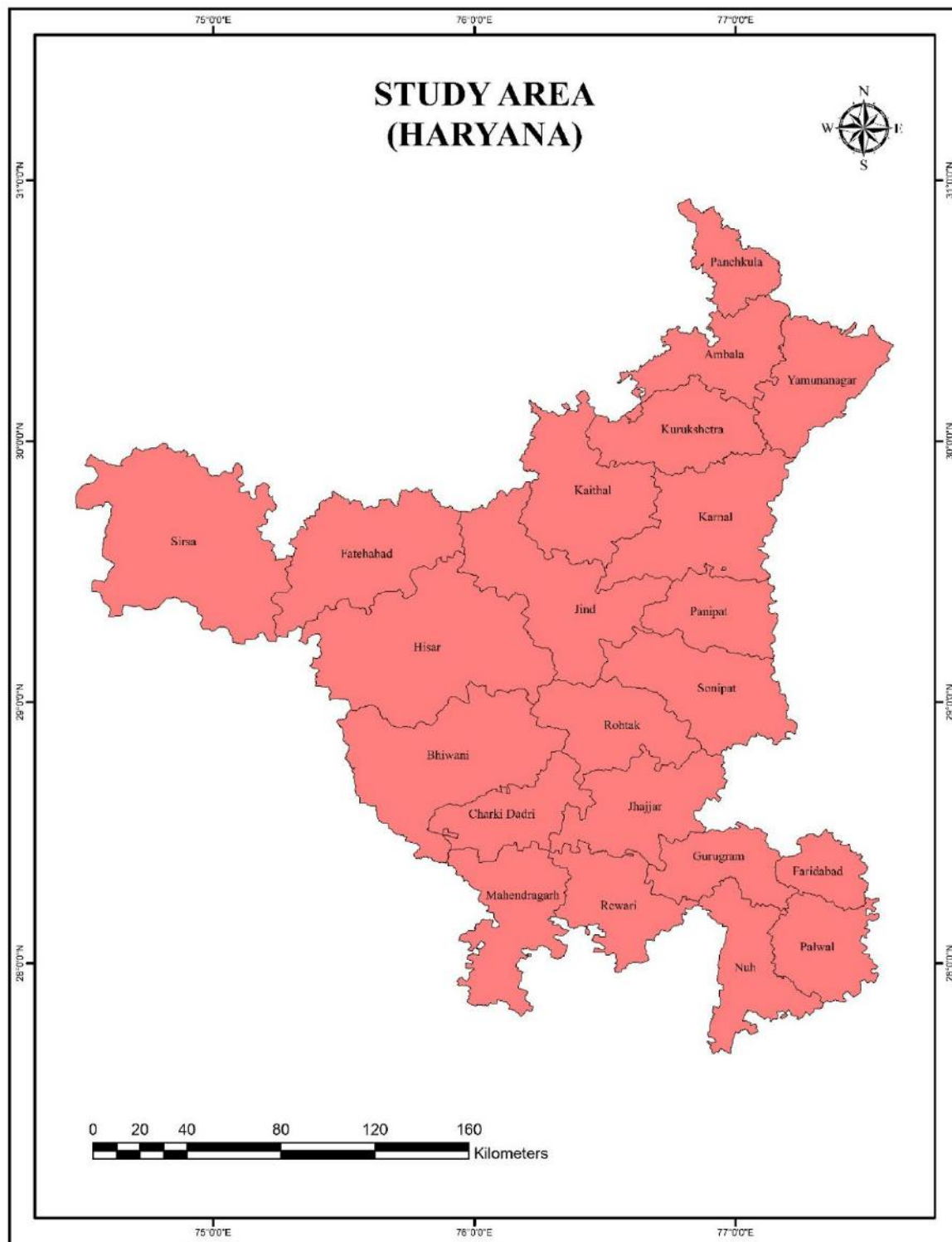
Significance of the Study: -

The significance of studying spatio-temporal trends in oilseed crop production in Haryana lies in its capacity to inform sustainable agricultural planning, resource optimization, and regional economic development. Haryana, predominantly an agrarian state, has historically focused on wheat and rice cultivation. However, overexploitation of water resources and declining soil fertility have raised concerns about the sustainability of traditional cropping patterns. In this context, oilseed crops—especially mustard, groundnut, and sunflower—have emerged as viable alternatives due to their lower water requirements, climate resilience, and economic potential. This study is crucial for understanding how oilseed cultivation has evolved spatially across different agro-climatic regions of the state and temporally over the years, reflecting responses to environmental, policy, and market changes. By identifying areas with increasing or declining trends in oilseed production, the study aids in recognizing the regions best suited for oilseed-based cropping systems. This enables policymakers to promote targeted interventions in high-potential zones, such as

input subsidies, irrigation management, and extension services.

Moreover, the study contributes to national efforts to reduce India's dependency on imported edible oils by highlighting the production potential of Haryana's agricultural landscape. It also supports the goals of

doubling farmers' income and promoting climate-smart agriculture. The district-level analysis enriches the academic understanding of regional disparities and agrarian transformation, providing a foundation for further research.



Map No. 1: Study Area

Source: Compiled by Researcher

Study Area: -

Haryana, situated in northern India, was established in 1966 following its separation from the former state of Punjab. Geographically, it lies between latitudes 27°39' N and 30°35' N, and longitudes 74°28' E and 77°36' E. The state shares its boundaries with Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, and strategically encircles the national capital, Delhi, on three sides. Covering a total area of approximately 44,212 square kilometers, Haryana is divided into 22 districts and administratively organized into six divisions: Ambala, Rohtak, Hisar, Gurugram, Karnal, and Faridabad.

According to the 2011 Census of India, the state's population exceeded 2.53 crore, with projections indicating an increase to over 2.9 crore by 2024. Haryana ranks among India's more economically progressive states, with significant industrial development, particularly in districts such as Gurugram, Faridabad, and Panipat. Despite this industrial growth, a large proportion of the population—around 65%—continues to reside in rural areas. The state has a literacy rate of 75.55%, and as per the 2011 Census, a sex ratio of 929 females per 1,000 males, a figure that has been gradually improving (Census of India, 2011).

Objectives: -

- i. To analyze the spatial distribution of major oilseed crops.
- ii. To assess productivity trends of oilseed crops and identify regions with high or low Productivity.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATABASE

The present study, titled "Spatio-Temporal Trends in Oilseed Crop Production in Haryana: A District-Level Analysis," is based entirely on secondary data sources and adopts a descriptive-analytical research methodology to examine the patterns and changes in oilseed crop cultivation across the state over a defined period. The study primarily utilizes data from the Statistical Abstract of Haryana for 2013–14 and 2023–24, published by the Department of Economic and Statistical Analysis, Government of Haryana. These abstracts provide comprehensive district-wise information on the area under oilseed crops and total production, allowing for a comparative analysis over the last decade. Additionally, Census of India 2011 data have been used to understand the demographic and socio-economic context of agricultural practices, particularly rural population distribution, that may influence oilseed production.

The methodology involves the total Area and Production of oilseed crops grown in Haryana, such as mustard,

sunflower, and groundnut, and a comparative assessment of their spatial distribution and production performance across different districts. Analytical techniques like graphical representation are applied to highlight shifts in cropping patterns. Furthermore, the study correlates changes in oilseed production with factors such as access to irrigation, level of mechanization, input availability, and government support policies, based on relevant government publications and reports. By focusing on a spatio-temporal lens, the methodology aims to reveal regional disparities, developmental gaps, and emerging trends in oilseed cultivation. The insights generated from this analysis are expected to contribute to more informed decision-making in agricultural planning and policy, especially concerning crop diversification and oilseed promotion in Haryana.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A critical component of the research process, particularly in agricultural studies like oilseed crop analysis, is the thorough examination and interpretation of data. This stage involves evaluating secondary data, such as area under cultivation, production levels, and yield rates, from official sources like the Statistical Abstracts of Haryana to extract meaningful insights. The process begins with analysis, which entails systematically organizing and reviewing raw data to identify trends, spatial disparities, and temporal shifts in oilseed crop patterns across the state. However, analysis alone is not sufficient. Without interpretation, these numerical trends remain incomplete and lack relevance. Interpretation brings data to life by contextualizing findings within the broader framework of agricultural policies, climatic factors, market dynamics, and rural socio-economic conditions.

In the case of oilseeds, interpretation may reveal how rainfall fluctuations or irrigation access influence productivity in certain regions, or how government initiatives have impacted the area under mustard or sunflower cultivation. Interpretation helps bridge the gap between statistical figures and real-world agricultural practices, making it possible to draw logical, policy-relevant conclusions. The mutual dependency of analysis and interpretation is especially vital in oilseed research because it ensures the findings are statistically sound and practically significant. Together, they enable researchers to assess performance, identify challenges, and recommend strategies for enhancing oilseed production in Haryana. This dual approach forms the foundation for evidence-based planning, resource allocation, and promoting sustainable crop diversification in the state's agriculture.

Table No. 1: Area and Production of Oilseeds in Haryana (2013-14)

Sr. No.	Districts	OilSeeds	
		Area	Production
1.	Ambala	1.5	2.5
2.	Panchkula	1.8	3.5
3.	Yamunanagar	3.5	4.3
4.	Kurukshetra	5.5	3.9
5.	Kaithal	0.9	2.0
6.	Karnal	1.1	2.0
7.	Panipat	0.9	2.0
8.	Sonipat	2.4	3.0
9.	Rohtak	13.7	20.1
10.	Jhajjar	35.6	19.2
11.	Faridabad	0.6	1.0
12.	Palwal	3.9	7.0
13.	Gurgaon	14.6	28.2
14.	Mewat	29.1	46.1
15.	Rewari	67.6	145.2
16.	Mahendragarh	96.7	165.1
17.	Bhiwani	162.6	265.4
18.	Jind	4.6	8.0
19.	Hisar	62.4	103.9
20.	Fatehabad	13.0	20.4
21.	Sirsa	45.6	77.2

Source: Statistical Abstract of India, 2013-14

The spatial distribution of oilseed cultivation across the districts of Haryana offers significant insight into the state's agro-economic dynamics. The data reveals pronounced disparities in the area under cultivation and the corresponding production levels of oilseed crops, reflecting differences in climatic conditions, soil fertility, irrigation facilities, and agricultural practices. A close examination of district-wise statistics shows a concentration of oilseed farming predominantly in the southern and western parts of the state. At the same time, the northern and eastern districts contribute relatively less in terms of both area and output.

Bhiwani district is at the forefront of oilseed production in Haryana, which leads with a vast cultivation area of 162.6 thousand hectares and a corresponding production of 265.4 thousand tonnes. This exceptional performance can be attributed to Bhiwani's semi-arid climate, large tracts of cultivable land, and traditional reliance on dryland farming systems suitable for oilseed crops like mustard. Mahendragarh follows with 96.7 thousand hectares and 165.1 thousand tonnes of production. Together with Rewari, which reports 67.6 thousand hectares and 145.2 thousand tonnes, these districts form the high-performing belt of oilseed agriculture. The dominance of these regions is primarily influenced by limited irrigation facilities, which make oilseed cultivation preferable over water-intensive crops like paddy. Furthermore, mustard—Haryana's leading oilseed crop—is well suited to these agro-climatic conditions.

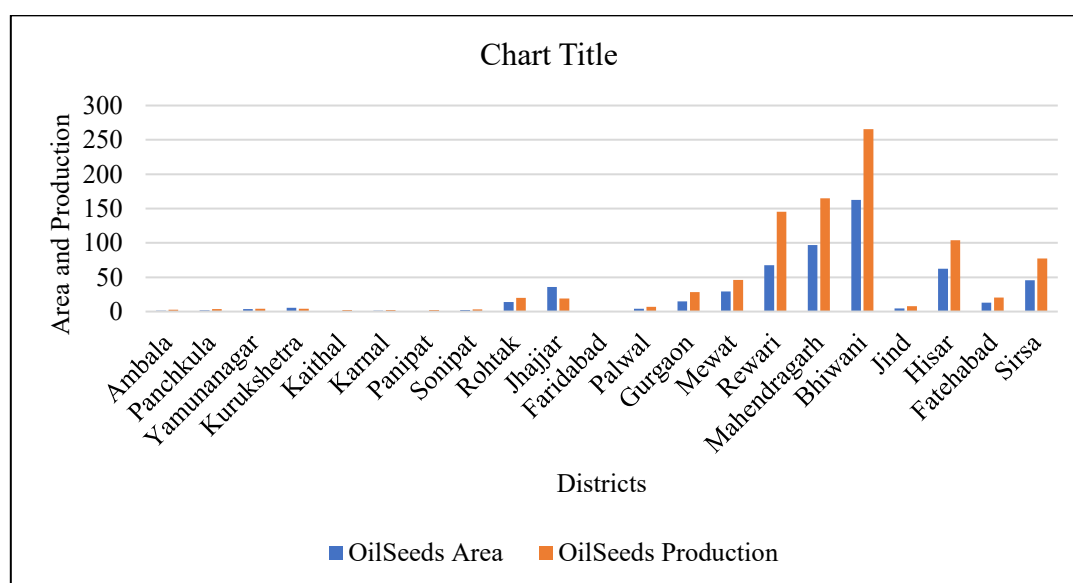


Fig 1. Area and Production of Oilseeds in Haryana (2013-14)

Source: Table No. 1

In contrast, districts like Faridabad and Panipat exhibit minimal engagement in oilseed farming, each with only 0.6 and 0.9 thousand hectares under cultivation and 1.0 and 2.0 thousand tonnes of production, respectively. The lower figures in these districts can be explained by their highly urbanized landscapes and industrial development, leading to a shrinkage of agricultural land. Similarly, Karnal, Kaithal, and Kurukshetra—although agriculturally intensive—tend to favor paddy-wheat crop rotations due to the availability of canal irrigation and better water management infrastructure, which are less compatible with oilseed farming.

Interestingly, Mewat (Nuh) and Gurgaon (Gurugram) also show substantial involvement in oilseed cultivation, with 29.1 thousand hectares and 46.1 thousand tonnes in Mewat, and 14.6 thousand hectares and 28.2 thousand tonnes in Gurgaon. Despite being close to the National Capital Region (NCR), these districts have maintained a strong rural agricultural identity. Mewat in particular has emerged as a significant contributor, which may be due to focused government interventions, schemes for dryland farming, and local dependence on traditional crops. The substantial production in Hisar (103.9 thousand tonnes) and Sirsa (77.2 thousand tonnes) also highlights the importance of western Haryana as a stronghold for oilseed cultivation. These districts benefit from extensive arable land and a combination of traditional agricultural knowledge and technological support.

The central districts show a mixed trend. Rohtak, for instance, presents a moderate level of cultivation with 13.7 thousand hectares and 20.1 thousand tonnes of output. In comparison, Jhajjar shows a large area under cultivation (35.6 thousand hectares) but a lower comparative yield (19.2 thousand tonnes), indicating possible inefficiencies or constraints such as soil degradation, low input use, or limited access to modern agronomic practices. On the other hand, Palwal, with 3.9 thousand hectares and 7.0 thousand tonnes, shows relatively higher productivity per hectare, suggesting the use of better inputs or more favorable growing conditions.

The figures remain on the lower side in the northern districts such as Ambala, Panchkula, and Yamunanagar. Ambala reports 1.5 thousand hectares and 2.5 thousand tonnes, Panchkula 1.8 and 3.5, and Yamunanagar 3.5 and 4.3, respectively. These figures reflect the region's stronger emphasis on sugarcane, paddy, and horticulture. Their better irrigation and proximity to markets likely influence cropping choices that are more profitable or aligned with local demand.

A notable observation is yield efficiency, inferred from the production ratio to area. Districts like Palwal,

Gurgaon, and Rewari demonstrate relatively higher productivity, indicating efficient use of inputs such as fertilizers, high-yielding seed varieties, and modern farming techniques. For example, with 67.6 thousand hectares, Rewari produces 145.2 thousand tonnes, nearly 2.15 tonnes per hectare, which is considerably higher than Jhajjar's approximate 0.54 tonnes per hectare. This variation indicates the need for location-specific agronomic interventions and extension services to improve outcomes in lagging districts.

The data also underscores the spatial imbalance in oilseed production, where a few districts disproportionately contribute to the state's total output. This has implications for agricultural planning and food security policies. Encouraging crop diversification in water-stressed regions by promoting oilseeds can be a sustainable solution. Moreover, enhancing oilseed productivity in underperforming but potential districts through better seeds, extension services, and financial incentives would help reduce import dependency and ensure farmers' price stability.

Table No. 2: Area and Production of Oilseeds in Haryana (2023-24)

Sr. No.	Districts	OilSeeds	
		Area	Production
1.	Ambala	11.8	17.5
2.	Bhiwani	170.6	298.1
3.	Charkhi Dadri	77.2	148.1
4.	Faridabad	1.9	3.6
5.	Fatehabad	26.1	45.4
6.	Gurugam	29.9	57.9
7.	Hisar	108.3	206.7
8.	Jhajjar	48.3	96.1
9.	Jind	14.2	30.5
10.	Kaithal	5.8	10.8
11.	Karnal	5.5	11.0
12.	Kurukshetra	17.5	21.7
13.	Mahendragarh	112.4	229.2
14.	Nuh	40.3	82.8
15.	Palwal	7.2	13.7
16.	Panchkula	2.7	5.6
17.	Panipat	3.8	8.6
18.	Rewari	85.8	166.3
19.	Rohtak	15.0	26.3
20.	Sirsa	106.6	205.9
21.	Sonipat	7.1	13.5

22.	Yamunanagar	5.6	7.1
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Source: Statistical Abstract of India, 2023-24

The spatial distribution of oilseed crop cultivation in Haryana reveals substantial regional disparities in both area under cultivation and total production. This data offers insight into how geographical, climatic, infrastructural, and socio-economic factors influence agricultural practices, particularly in oilseed farming. The 2023–24 data shows that oilseed cultivation is significantly more prominent in Haryana's southern and western districts, while northern and central parts show limited engagement in this crop sector.

Bhiwani emerges as the leading district, with 170.6 thousand hectares under oilseed cultivation and a production of 298.1 thousand tonnes. This performance can be attributed to Bhiwani's arid and semi-arid conditions, where oilseeds such as mustard are preferred due to their low water requirements. Similarly, Mahendragarh and Hisar also demonstrate substantial contributions, with 112.4 and 108.3 thousand hectares in area and 229.2 and 206.7 thousand tonnes in production, respectively. These districts benefit from large tracts of cultivable land, established agronomic practices for oilseeds, and relatively limited irrigation facilities that make oilseeds a more viable crop option than water-intensive alternatives like paddy.

Charkhi Dadri, a newer district carved out of Bhiwani, follows the same trend with 77.2 thousand hectares and 148.1 thousand tonnes, indicating its alignment with the oilseed-friendly agro-ecological zone of southwest

Haryana. Rewari and Sirsa are other significant contributors, registering 85.8 and 106.6 thousand hectares, and 166.3 and 205.9 thousand tonnes respectively. These figures establish the dominance of the western belt of Haryana in oilseed production. On the other hand, districts such as Faridabad (1.9 thousand hectares, 3.6 thousand tonnes) and Panipat (3.8 thousand hectares, 8.6 thousand tonnes) show minimal involvement in oilseed farming. These areas are characterized by rapid urbanization and industrial expansion, which has reduced the availability of cultivable land. Moreover, farmers in these regions are more likely to focus on high-return crops or shift away from agriculture altogether.

Despite being agriculturally rich, Kaithal, Karnal, and Kurukshetra have limited oilseed cultivation, ranging between 5.5 and 17.5 thousand hectares. This is mainly due to the strong presence of canal irrigation systems that favor crops like paddy and wheat, which form the basis of the region's crop rotation practices. The lower figures in oilseed production suggest that farmers here are less incentivized to adopt oilseed farming, possibly due to market conditions, procurement policies, or a lack of adequate extension services for alternative crops. Some districts show relatively better productivity despite smaller areas. For instance, Rohtak has only 15.0 thousand hectares under oilseeds but records a production of 26.3 thousand tonnes, indicating efficient crop management practices or favorable conditions during the cultivation period. Gurugram, despite its urban character, reports a noteworthy figure of 29.9 thousand hectares and 57.9 thousand tonnes, likely due to the persistence of agriculture in peripheral rural belts of the district.

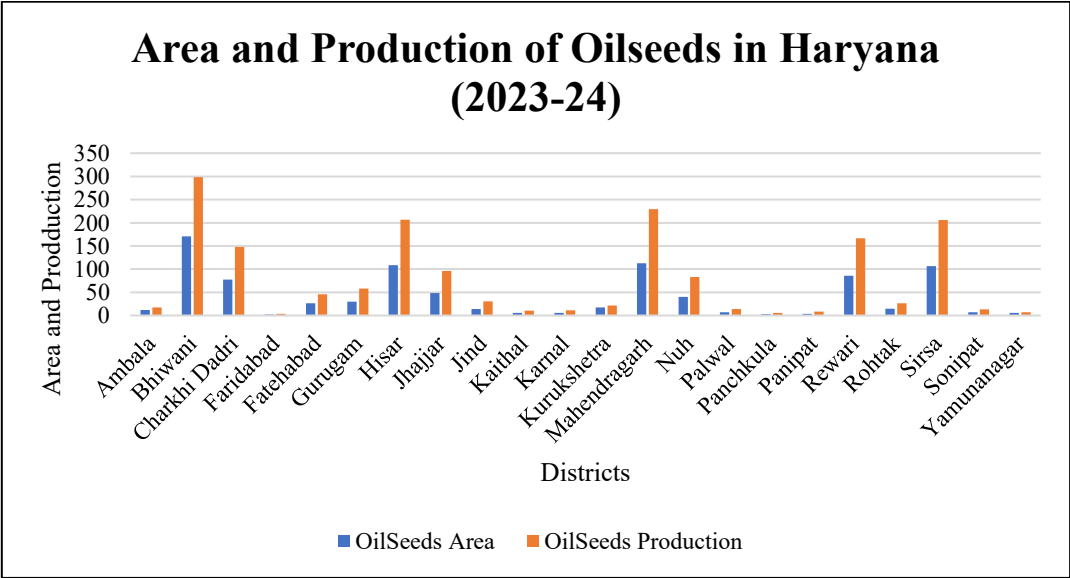


Fig 2. Area and Production of Oilseeds in Haryana (2023-24)

Source: Table No. 2

In Nuh (Mewat), the data shows 40.3 thousand hectares of oilseeds yielding 82.8 thousand tonnes. This is notable for a socio-economically backward district, suggesting potential for agricultural transformation if supported with inputs, training, and infrastructure. Similarly, Jhajjar and Fatehabad maintain a mid-level performance with 48.3 and 26.1 thousand hectares and 96.1 and 45.4 thousand tonnes, respectively. Districts such as Yamunanagar, Sonipat, and Palwal occupy the lower end of the spectrum, reflecting their geographical and land-use challenges. These districts, located in the eastern and central parts of Haryana, have seen significant industrial growth, and agricultural activities are now limited to high-value crops or shrinking plots. For example, Yamunanagar has only 5.6 thousand hectares of oilseed cultivation and a corresponding 7.1 thousand tonnes production.

IV. CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of oilseed crop data for Haryana across two timeframes—2013–14 and 2023–24—reveals significant spatial and temporal shifts in both cultivation area and production. Over the decade, a noticeable intensification in oilseed farming has occurred, particularly in the southern and western districts of the state. Districts such as Bhiwani, Mahendragarh, Hisar, Rewari, and Sirsa consistently lead in both area under oilseed cultivation and total production. For instance, Bhiwani increased from 162.6 thousand hectares to 170.6 thousand hectares, with production rising from 265.4 to 298.1 thousand tonnes. Similarly, Mahendragarh grew from 96.7 to 112.4 thousand hectares, and production surged from 165.1 to 229.2 thousand tonnes. These figures underline these districts' sustained dominance and potential in oilseed agriculture.

On the other hand, central and eastern districts such as Karnal, Kurukshetra, Panipat, and Yamunanagar continue to show limited engagement in oilseed farming. Their comparatively small cultivation areas and production figures suggest a continued preference for other high-yield or water-intensive crops like paddy and wheat. Urbanized and industrial regions such as Gurugram and Faridabad have shown marginal increases. Still, oilseed farming remains a secondary activity due to land constraints and better economic returns from other sectors.

The emergence of Charkhi Dadri and Nuh (Mewat) as notable contributors in the 2023–24 data also reflects the spread of oilseed farming into newer areas, possibly driven by state-led crop diversification policies and the promotion of sustainable, low-water crops. Districts such as Fatehabad and Jhajjar also demonstrated moderate yet consistent growth, indicating the effectiveness of improved

seed varieties, agronomic practices, and market interventions.

The data reveal an encouraging trend of increasing oilseed production across Haryana. However, the disparity between districts with high and low output indicates the need for region-specific strategies. Enhancing awareness, improving market access, and providing financial and technical support to small farmers can further boost oilseed production. Promoting oilseed crops in less saturated agricultural areas could also reduce pressure on water-intensive cropping systems, contributing to a more balanced and sustainable agrarian framework in the state. This analysis underscores the critical role of targeted policy, agronomic support, and adaptive regional planning in sustaining and expanding oilseed cultivation in Haryana.

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